

Report of General Synod 8-10 February 2022

General Synod gathered in Westminster for its second session of this quinquennium on 8-10 February 2022.

Because of the recent upsurge in COVID-19 as a result of the omicron variant there were more restrictions in place than at the November session, and the meeting was held as a hybrid. More than 50 Synod members attended online and were able to speak and vote remotely.

The group of Derby representatives (including one member who attended online) spoke at a number of the debates and submitted questions to the question session.

Alongside general business and appointments to offices on the Synod, the session heard, debated and voted on a variety of issues concerning both the specific activities of the Church in England and matters of justice in the wider world.

All reports presented to Synod are available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/general-synod/agendas-papers/general-synod-february-2022#na>

Racial Justice: Introduction to the Archbishops' Racial Justice Commission, and update to Synod on racial justice work.

The report *From Lament to Action* published last year led to the setting up of the Archbishops' Commission for Racial Justice, chaired by Lord Paul Boateng.

Lord Boateng delivered a powerful speech laying out how there is so much more to be done both in and outside the church. The Commission will report further on its work at its website, where you can find more information.

[FromLamentToAction-report.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#)

[Racial Justice Commission | The Church of England](#)

Safeguarding

An item on safeguarding included information about work being undertaken by the National Safeguarding Team and Lead Bishops for Safeguarding.

General Synod members were invited to take note of the workstreams and projects that are set out in this paper.

Dame Maggie Atkinson, chair of the Independent Safeguarding Board spoke about the Board's work so far which led to a discussion about the governance and the fact that although the Board has identified some areas that need to be strengthened, they do not have the power to do so.

The full paper including Dame Atkinson's reflections is available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/GS%202244%20Safeguarding%20February%202022.pdf>

Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2022

The Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2022 was about amendments to how changes to church buildings are undertaken which will help the CofE become carbon neutral by 2030.

Changes to the faculty jurisdiction rules - the Church's equivalent of planning law - were proposed to ensure that the rules work in step with churches trying to reach net zero carbon. Nearly all the changes will make it easier for churches to make environmentally-friendly adaptations (see a summary of the changes on [page 7 of the Synod paper here](#)).

The amendments included one requiring that replacement of oil and gas boilers, and the replacement of oil tanks, will need a faculty application once the revised rules come into effect later this year. This was the most controversial of the proposals and an amendment was proposed to remove this requirement, but the argument was made that seeking a faculty would mean that those replacing the boiler would get advice about non fossil fuel alternatives.

All the amendments to the rules were passed and it will be helpful for PCCs to be made aware. Parishes will want to plan ahead and consider their options (see the [heating guidance](#) and [heating webinars](#) for help with this).

Challenging slavery and human trafficking.

In an item which will be of particular interest in Derby diocese, a pioneer in challenging slavery and human trafficking, the Synod passed the motion that they:

- a) acknowledge the leading role that Her Majesty's Government has played internationally in challenging slavery; and*
- b) ask Her Majesty's Government to introduce legislation to ensure proper provision for the ongoing support and protection of trafficked minors is enshrined in law.*

There is particular concern about new proposed legislation – the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill. The Lords Spiritual have supported amendments to this that would create a statutory definition of Child Criminal Exploitation.

The National and Borders Bill is progressing through the House of Lords and it is thought changes in it would mean that children might miss a new deadline for providing information about their exploitation and also that support would be denied to anyone who has committed serious crimes as those trafficked are often involved in criminal activity such as drug trafficking and prostitution. Section (b) of the motion aims to challenge this.

Report of the Review of Clergy Remuneration

A report of the review of clergy remuneration was received and noted. For more information, the report is at <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/GS%202247%20Clergy%20Remuneration%20Review%20Report.pdf>

God's People Set Free: Living as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ in the whole of life to bring transformation to the church and world

The Synod noted this report, receiving information and watching films about projects around the country where lay people are sharing their faith in their everyday lives. More information is available at <https://derby.anglican.org/en/faith-and-life/everyday-faith.html>; [The Calling Podcast \(buzzsprout.com\)](https://buzzsprout.com); [Everyday stories | The Church of England](#)

Report by the Governance Review Group

The motion was:

That this Synod:

- a. Welcome the Report of the Governance Review Group (GS 2249);*
- b. Invite the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners to engage with stakeholders in the Church and State on the Report's recommendations; and c. invite the Archbishops' Council, in the light of the outcome of that engagement, to introduce legislation for consideration*

This is a report following an earlier paper at the November Synod about potential changes to the church's governing structures. This is not at decision point yet – the report just asked for Synod to welcome the original report and invite further engagement.

The wording of the motion was changed from 'welcomed' to 'thanked'. This was because people did not want the report's recommendations to be taken forward without further debate on the basis that they had been 'welcomed'.

Persecuted Church in the World

The motion was:

That this Synod request that:

- a. the Church of England not only prays for the persecuted church, but that its dioceses offer support to link dioceses where the church is facing persecution, and*
- b. the next Lambeth Conference addresses the issue of the persecution of Christians.*

The Synod passed the motion and there was a general hope that parishes would be encouraged to inform themselves and to pray for the persecuted church. A member of the Derby group spoke about support offered to our link diocese in North India. Further helpful information about the persecuted church is available at <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/>