

# General Synod Report – July Sessions 2023

This report is designed as feedback to Deaneries. Your representatives are happy to hear how you feel about the issues being debated and decided upon. For full details of debates and decisions made, go to: [www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/work-general-synod](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/work-general-synod). The Sessions were held over five days in July 2023. The sessions were 'hybrid' (people who were only able to join on Zoom were able to speak and vote as well as watch and listen to the debates). Topics included:

**Presidential Address** – this and other debates can be seen at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/general-synod/watch-general-synod-live>

**Church of England Youth Synod (GS2298)** Attempts to get Synod to have a younger profile amended and carried  
**Legal Officers (Annual Fees) Order 2023 (GS2299)** Increased fees agreed

**Questions** More than 230 questions had been asked and about half were considered for supplementaries

**Church of England (Misc Provisions) Measure Amending Canon 43 (GS2272/3)** Tidying up of legislation (including replacing 'Queen' with 'King').

**National Investing Bodies: Report on Jul 2018 Synod Motion on Climate Change (GS2302)** Report on progress of disinvestment and pressure on oil companies

**The Contribution of Faith to the Rehabilitation of Offenders (GS2294)** An excellent presentation on the work of the CofE with the Probation Service and calls for more effective liaison with Dioceses and Safeguarding Teams

**Presentation on Developments relating to the Independent Safeguarding Board Presentation (ISB)** also Questions & Answers with reps of the Archbishops' Council. Space was eventually made for the 2 members of the ISB who had been sacked to speak to Synod

**Archbishops' Council Audit Committee Annual Report (GSMISC1340)** Report noted

**Safeguarding Redress (GS2305)** Motion acknowledging contribution of victims and survivors to Church's ongoing safeguarding work and looking forward to further development of the Redress Scheme

**National Church Governance (GS2307)** Presentation on recommendations of Project Board as to reform on National Church Institutions and Governance Structure. Recommendations were accepted (with amendments to recommendations 13 and 14 (to include more input from General Synod). Draft regulation to be proposed by Feb 2024

**Archbishops' Council Annual Report (GS2308)** Presentation made and following motion about Safeguarding timed out – proposer, Gavin Drake, then resigned from Synod in protest

**Archbishops' Council Budget & Apportionment 2024 (GS2309)** Report noted and spends approved

**Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2023 (GS2310)** Changes simplifying Faculties - carried after amendment

**Clergy Conduct Measure (GS2311)** The measure was approved for 'revision in committee' which would lead to draft legislation coming back to Synod in 2023/24. The Measure was to replace the Clergy Discipline Measure

**Electronic Register Book of Services 2023 (GS2291)** The optional use of electronic registers in place of paper registers was approved

**Elections Review Group: Business Committee Report (GS2312)** Received and recommendations agreed

**Church Representation Rules (Amendment) (GS2313)** Changes approved

**Revitalising the Parish for Mission (GS2314)** Affirmation of the Parish System as the central component of church growth and vitality. Call for more lay and ordained vocations

**Review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure (GS2315)** The report and its recommendations were welcomed and draft legislation to come to Synod in 2024

**Safeguarding Code of Practice Review (GS2295)** Approved

**Church of England Pensions (Application of Capital Funds) Measure (GS2264)** Move of monies to fund pensions approved

**Responding to the Climate Emergency (GS2306)** Building on GS2159 various calls on: investors to scale up investment in renewable energy and climate solutions; CofE to review relevant policies; CofE to support the world's poorest; CofE to reduce Carbon Footprint in church buildings and vicarages; Bishops to add question in confirmation services; and the Government to review planning regulations on listed/conservation area buildings

**Reduce Parochial Fees for Marriages (GS2282)** Agreed to run a trial on providing weddings free of all statutory fees and report back to Synod on the impacts

**Synod Complaints Process (GS2316)** Presentation made

**Farewells** – Farewells to Canon John Spence (Chair of Archbishops' Council Finance Committee) the Bps of Exeter, Sodor & Man, Coventry and Carlisle

There were other (fringe) meetings held too.

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