

OXFORD DIOCESAN SYNOD

Elected Lay Representation on Deanery Synods, 2017–20

Context

By 31 December in years preceding deanery synod elections, the Diocesan Synod must approve the formula by which elected lay representation from parishes on deanery synods is to be determined. (Clergy members of deanery synods are almost all ex-officio, as set out in rule 24(2) of the Church Representation Rules ('CRR').) Deanery synod elections will take place next at the 2017 round of annual parochial church meetings.

The Diocese has used the same approach since the early 1990s. A detailed consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of this and alternative formulae was undertaken by before Bishop's Council in 2013. **They now propose that the same formula, shown in Table 1, is used, unchanged, in the next elections for deanery Synod.**

Considerations

Statutory

According to the Church Representation rules:

- 25(1) Numbers of elected lay representatives are to be determined by reference either to electoral roll size or to the number of parish churches or districts in each parish, or by some combination of these methods
- 25(2) No parish with fewer than 26 names on its electoral roll may have more than one elected lay representative (CRR rule 25(2))
- 25(6) So far as practicable, deanery synods should have 50 or more members (laity and clergy combined)
- 25(6) No deanery synod may have more than 150 members, except to "secure that the house of laity is not less in number than the house of clergy".

Special provisions exist whereby the Diocesan Synod may depart from the statutory provisions; however, such departures require the consent of the General Synod.

Practical

Chart 1 in the appendix shows the distribution of Electoral Roll sizes for our 621 parishes. Electoral rolls range from 2 to 732, but the vast majority of parishes have very small electoral rolls, with 255 parishes having a roll of 40 or less (41% of the total). At the top end there are 55 parishes with rolls larger than 200.

The proposed formula will not dramatically change the size of Deanery Synods, shown in Table 2. Based on the best available Electoral Roll figures, the effect of the current formula is to make 1,359 lay representatives (was 1,331 for 2014) for an Electoral Roll of 52,183, that is, on average, one representative per 38 Electoral Roll members.

The clergy figures for deaneries have not yet been finalised, so the figures for the total size of the deaneries are provisional only. Based on these, the largest deanery is likely to be Reading (141), and seven of our deaneries (Buckingham, Chipping Norton, Claydon, Mursley, Newport, Vale of White Horse and Wantage) have synods below the guideline minimum of 50. Increasing the lay representation on them would result in very large deaneries elsewhere.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Current and proposed formula for elected lay representation on deanery synods

Electoral roll size	Elected lay reps
up to 40	1
41–80	2
81–160	3
161–240	4
241–320	5
321–400	6
401–500	7
501–600	8
601–720	9
721–840	10
841–1000	11
>1000	12

Table 2: Likely effects of formulae set out in Table 1 on deanery synod sizes

Deanery	2014 laity	2014 Total	2017 laity	2017 total, provisional
Bracknell	44	65	48	68
Bradfield	42	62	43	62
Maidenhead & Windsor	52	79	54	84
Newbury	68	97	71	103
Reading	81	131	87	141
Sonning	62	95	63	96
Amersham	70	115	68	109
Aylesbury	58	82	58	86
Buckingham	24	33	24	35
Burnham & Slough	56	85	57	87
Claydon	33	46	33	44
Milton Keynes	33	56	34	62
Mursley	28	37	29	39
Newport	31	44	31	44
Wendover	36	50	37	55
Wycombe	74	113	69	110
Abingdon	43	77	46	78
Aston & Cuddesdon	74	110	74	112
Bicester & Islip	43	59	47	67
Chipping Norton	35	53	33	49
Deddington	43	67	47	74
Henley	42	59	43	60
Vale of White Horse	31	39	32	41
Wallingford	33	47	34	51
Wantage	21	28	23	30
Witney	49	70	49	76
Woodstock	34	52	34	50
Cowley	34	74	33	69
Oxford	59	126	58	133