

OXFORD DIOCESAN SYNOD

Amendments to Standing Orders: Bishop's Council membership changes

Over the last year, the Bishop's Council and Standing Committee has been discussing changes to its membership to take account of the creation of the fourth archdeaconry. At its May 2014 meeting, the Council agreed the following revised scheme of membership, which preserves the existing total number of elected members so as to prevent the Council becoming too large overall:

Ex-officio members

Bishops of Oxford, Buckingham, Dorchester and Reading
Dean or Sub-Dean of Christ Church
Archdeacons of Berkshire, Buckingham, Dorchester and Oxford
Chair and Vice-Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance
Chairs of the Diocesan Synod Houses of Clergy and Laity

Elected members

3 laity and 2 clergy each from Berkshire, Buckingham and Dorchester archdeaconries
2 laity and 1 clergy from Oxford archdeaconry
3 laity from anywhere in the Diocese

Nominated members

4 Bishop's nominees, chosen in such a way as to ensure an overall lay majority

Underpinning this revised scheme are the following three guiding principles, agreed by the Council following discussion at its December 2013 and February 2014 meetings:

- a) the Archdeaconry of Oxford should have lower elected representation than the three larger archdeaconries;
- b) a majority of the Council's overall membership should be lay (this is to meet the Charity Commission's concerns around the Council in its role as Standing Committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance voting with a clergy majority on matters connected with clergy stipends);
- c) elected members should be in the majority.

In addition, to facilitate the implementation of the guiding principles, the following two working principles were agreed:

- (i) one at least of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board of Finance should be lay;
- (ii) if the Chair of the House of Clergy or Laity occupies an elected place on the Council before being chosen as Chair, the elected place should be vacated.

What is now required for the above revised scheme of membership to be implemented is for the Synod to approve appropriate amendments to its Standing Orders.

Action

At its most recent meeting, the Council considered the amendments to Standing Orders set out in the Appendix, which it was agreed unanimously should be recommended to the Synod for approval.

The addition to Standing Order 5 is intended to implement working principle (ii), and the amendments to Standing Order 73 the overall revised scheme of membership. The opportunity is also being taken to streamline the drafting of Standing Order 73, which in its existing state is somewhat cumbersome.

The implementation of working principle (i) would require an amendment not to Standing Orders, but to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Diocesan Board of Finance. It is proposed to take this amendment on a future occasion, as part of a wider revision of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the drafting of which is outdated in a number of respects.

The Synod is accordingly asked to approve the proposed amendments to Standing Orders set out in the Appendix, to take effect from the start of the 2015–18 synodical triennium on 1 August 2015.

Howard Cattermole
Electoral Registration Officer

October 2014

APPENDIX

Proposed amendments to Standing Orders 5 and 73

Standing Order 5, as proposed to be amended

“THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS

Election of vice-presidents

5(a). Before the first meeting of the synod after the triennial elections or in the event of vacancy in either office the houses of clergy and laity shall each hold a special meeting to elect one of their number to be a vice-president of the synod. A member of the appropriate house appointed by the president shall act as chairman for such meeting. Whoever so presides shall have a vote in the election and in the case of an equality of votes the decision shall be taken by lot.

Deputies for Chairmen of Houses of Laity and Clergy

5(ab). A vice-president of the synod may appoint a member of the bishop’s council of the same house as himself or herself to act as vice-president of the synod in his or her place for a particular meeting of the synod or of the appropriate house. A person so appointed shall have all the powers of a vice-president of the synod for the duration of that meeting.

Vice-presidents not to serve as elected members of the standing committee

5(c). A vice-president of the synod shall on being elected to that office be deemed to vacate his or her seat on the standing committee if previously elected to that committee under standing order 73, and shall for so long as she or he holds that office remain disqualified from being elected under that standing order.”

Standing Order 73, as proposed to be amended

THE BISHOP’S COUNCIL AND STANDING COMMITTEE

Composition

73. The bishop’s council and standing committee (in these standing orders referred to as “the standing committee”) shall consist of:

Ex-officio members

The president and the vice-presidents
All other members of the house of bishops
The archdeacons
The chairman and the vice-chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance
The Dean of Christ Church or such other member of the Chapter of Christ Church (being a member of the diocesan synod) as the Dean may appoint for the purpose

Elected members

The following persons elected from amongst the members of the synod;

One~~Three~~ clergy person to be elected by the members of the house of clergy representing beneficed in, licensed to any parish in, licensed to any institution in or resident in the Archdeaconry of Oxford, from among their number.

~~Two~~^{Three} clergypersons to be elected by the members of the house of clergy representing beneficed in, licensed to any parish in, licensed to any institution in or resident in the Archdeaconry of Berkshire, from among their number.

~~Two~~^{Three} clergypersons to be elected by the members of the house of clergy ~~beneficed in, licensed to any parish in, licensed to any institution in or resident in~~ representing the Archdeaconry of Buckingham, from among their number.

Two clergypersons to be elected by the members of the house of clergy representing the Archdeaconry of Dorchester, from among their number.

~~Two~~^{Four} laypersons to be elected by the members of the house of laity representing being on the electoral roll of a parish in the Archdeaconry of Oxford, ~~from among their number and elected by the members of the house of laity representing deaneries or resident in that Archdeaconry.~~

~~Three~~^{Four} laypersons to be elected by the members of the house of laity representing being on the electoral roll of a parish in the Archdeaconry of Berkshire, ~~from among their number and elected by the members of the house of laity representing deaneries or resident in that Archdeaconry.~~

~~Three~~^{Four} laypersons to be elected by the members of the house of laity representing being on the electoral roll of a parish in the Archdeaconry of Buckingham, ~~from among their number and elected by the members of the house of laity representing deaneries or resident in that Archdeaconry.~~

Three laypersons to be elected by the members of the house of laity representing the Archdeaconry of Dorchester, from among their number.

Nominated members

Up to four persons being either ordained or lay may be nominated by the president from among the members of the synod, in such a way as to ensure that a majority of the members of the standing committee are laypersons.

NOTE: The persons who are members of the standing committee are also members of the standing committee of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance and the directors of that company.