

OXFORD DIOCESAN SYNOD**DIOCESAN SYNOD AMENDED MOTION**

At the meeting of Diocesan Synod in November 2014 the following motion, initiated by the Bracknell Deanery was passed. It calls on the General Synod of the Church of England to debate a motion in the following form:

“That this Synod

- (a) urges the National Investing Bodies to disinvest from all coal companies (except those investing in carbon capture) and tar sand companies at the earliest possibility,
- (b) urges the National Investing Bodies to examine the possibility of disinvestment from oil companies but not before three years from now,
- (c) urges the National Investing Bodies to examine the possibility of disinvestment from natural gas companies but not before five years from now,
- d) calls on parishes and individual Christians to take steps to encourage the government and political parties to act quickly on climate change.’

The motion was forwarded to the General Synod office and has been in a queue of diocesan motions waiting to be debated. The Revd Darrel Hannah and the Revd Hugh Lee were the original proposer and seconder of this motion. In discussion with colleagues from other dioceses they have concluded that, given that the climate change and fossil fuel situation has changed markedly since 2014, it would be best to amend this motion, as below, so that General Synod would be debating something that is relevant to the current situation, rather than out of date. General Synod’s legal office have advised that SO 23(3) of the General Synod Standing Orders, allows that, “A motion may be moved in a form different from that of which notice has been given, if the Business Committee has given permission before the inclusion of the motion in the agenda for debate at a group of sessions.”

Bishop’s Council discussed the matter at its meeting in January 2018 and approved the amended motion. As the initial debate took place in the last triennium, it was felt appropriate to bring the amended motion to Diocesan Synod for endorsement.

Diocesan Synod are asked to approve the amended motion below which will then be forwarded to the General Synod’s Business Committee. If granted permission by them, it could be included for debate by the General Synod. This is hoped to take place in July 2018 when the agenda is planned to have an environmental focus.

The Revd John Tattersall, Chair of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance on behalf of the Bishop’s Council and Standing Committee will move

“That this Synod:

(a) welcome:

(i) the worldwide agreement in Paris in December 2015 to hold “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and to pursue “efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels”, requiring significant action “by 2020”;

(ii) the National Investment Bodies (NIBs) divesting from the most polluting fossil fuels, the establishment of the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) and the prominence given to responding to climate change by the Church Commissioners in their 2016-17 Annual Report;

(b) note the three-year review, due in 2018, of the NIBs’ policy on climate change and ethical investment which Synod welcomed in 2015; and

(c) call on the NIBs:

(i) to engage urgently and robustly with all fossil fuel companies, in which the NIBs have holdings; with the expectation that, if any company has not aligned their business investment plans with the Paris Agreement target of a global average temperature rise well below 2°C, the NIBs would disinvest from such a company by 2020;

(ii) to reduce to the minimum possible level the revenue threshold for disinvestment from companies involved in the extraction of thermal coal and the production of oil from tar sands;

(iii) to increase substantially their holdings in the renewable energy sector and other low carbon technologies, and encourage other investors to do the same; and

(d) request the Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) and NIBs to report to Synod in 2019 on progress, with a timetable for rapid continuing action.”