

## OXFORD DIOCESAN SYNOD

### Elected Lay Representation on Deanery Synods, 2020–23

#### 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 2020 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. Bishop's Council considered whether to recommend any changes and after discussion **now proposes 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(2) 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
- 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.

##### *Consideration by Bishop's Council*

In its consideration earlier this month, Bishop's Council reflected first on the (few) points that had been raised in discussion three years ago which were essentially around mixed

rural/ urban deaneries; it endorsed the recommendation (which followed discussion I had had with those that raised the points) that no change should be made at this time in that regard. As regards Bishop's Mission Orders, it was agreed that the time to effect changes is on the next occasion, by which time new frameworks will have come into effect nationally and locally we expect to have rather more BMOs than are already in place (and we are only able to take account of those that are already in place, rather than those that may come into force over the period). Bishop's Council also considered whether a more radical review was needed but by a very clear majority decided against so recommending. Work will be put in train early in 2022 to allow time for changes to be considered at successive Bishop's Council meetings, but on this occasion the recommendation by Bishop's Council is that the existing formula should continue to be used.

In 2016 Diocesan Synod was also given a table showing the estimated total number of members of each Deanery Synod based on the formula. I regret that we are not able to do so on this occasion as we have only received declarations from a minority of PCC Secretaries of the 2019 Electoral Roll numbers and as 2019 is a major revision year there was therefore the potential for significant error to publish even provisional figures based on those we have. The outstanding returns are being actively chased now so that we are in a position to issue the final figures in good time for 2020 APCMs.

**Mark Humphriss**  
**Diocesan Secretary**

22 October 2019

**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