



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

**DIOCESE OF  
ST ALBANS**

SYNODICAL GOVERNMENT

**RULES FOR  
DEANERY SYNODS**

**June 2011  
(updated March 2015)**

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## The Functions of a Deanery Synod

### **The functions of a Deanery Synod :**

- (a) To consider matters concerning the Church of England and to make provision for such matters in relation to their Deanery, and to consider and express their opinion on any other matters of religious or public interest;
- (b) To bring together the views of the parishes of the Deanery on common problems, to discuss and formulate common policies on those problems, to foster a sense of community and interdependence among those parishes, and generally to promote in the Deanery the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical;
- (c) To make known and so far as appropriate put into effect any provision made by the Diocesan Synod;
- (d) To consider the business of the Diocesan Synod, and particularly any matters referred to that Synod by the General Synod, and to sound parochial opinion whenever they are required or consider it appropriate to do so;
- (e) To raise such matters as the Deanery Synod consider appropriate with the Diocesan Synod:  
Provided that the functions referred to in paragraph (a) hereof shall not include the issue of any statement purporting to declare the doctrine of the Church on any question.

## Membership, Elections and Co-options

### **Roll of Members**

1. The Secretary shall keep a roll of the members of the Synod constantly up to date. This shall include the name, address and parish of any person notified to him/her by the Secretary of the Diocesan Synod and qualified as an ex officio member.

### **Variation of membership by resolution of Diocesan Synod**

2. A resolution of the Diocesan Synod under Rule 26 of the Church Representation Rules shall, unless otherwise provided, take effect at the conclusion of the term of office of the members appointed under any previous resolution in force.

### **Procedure for co-options**

3. The co-option of additional members shall be in accordance with Rule 24 (7) of the Church Representation Rules. The co-option of additional members shall be by resolution of the respective house passed on a motion moved either on behalf or by permission of the Standing Committee of the Deanery Synod.

### **Co-opted members**

4. Co-opted members shall retire on the 31<sup>st</sup> day of May in the year of the triennial elections, unless the House concerned fixes a shorter period of office.

### **Participation by non-members**

5. The following shall have the right to attend and speak but not to move any motion or amendment or to vote in the Synod:-
  - (i) The Bishop or a duly appointed commissary;
  - (ii) The Archdeacon;
  - (iii) The Registrar of the Diocese;
  - (iv) The Diocesan Secretary;
  - (v) Visitors invited by either of the Joint Chairmen or the Standing Committee;

- (vi) Persons appointed by the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod under the next succeeding rule.

**Members of General Synod appointed to attend meetings**

6. If there is no member of the Deanery Synod who is a member of the General Synod, the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod shall appoint one or more members of the General Synod who represent the Diocese. Such persons shall be entitled to receive copies of notices and other documents circulated to full members of the Deanery Synod and to attend and speak at its meetings but not to move any motion or amendment or to vote.

**Officers of the Synod**

**Election of Lay Joint Chairman (updated March 2015)**

7. Before the first meeting of the Synod after any triennial election or in the event of a vacancy in the office, the House of Laity shall hold a meeting to elect the Lay Joint Chair. The Synod shall elect a Lay Joint Chair from among its number who may serve normally for not more than two consecutive terms of three years. However, in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the Synod, the Lay Chair may serve for a further term of three years but no more than three terms. A member of the House appointed by the Rural Dean shall act as Chair for such meeting. Whoever so presides shall have a vote but no casting vote in the election and in the case of an equality of votes the decision shall be taken by lot. The Lay Chair, unless he/she resigns or ceases to be qualified, shall continue in office until the commencement of the meeting at which his/her successor is elected.

**Chairing the Synod**

8. The Rural Dean and the Lay Chairman shall be joint chairmen of the Deanery Synod. They shall agree between them who shall chair each meeting of the Synod or particular items of business on the agenda of the Synod.

**Chairing separate meetings of the Houses**

9. The Joint Chairmen shall preside over any separate meetings of their respective Houses, but if either is absent a member of the House, chosen by the members present, shall take the chair.

**Powers of Chairman**

10. Subject to these rules, the procedure of the Synod and its Houses shall be regulated by the respective Chairman of each.

**Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer**

11. At the first meeting after each triennial election the Synod shall appoint a Secretary, an Assistant Secretary and a Treasurer from among its own members; provided that of the Secretary and Assistant Secretary, one shall be a member of the clergy and the other a lay person. If no member is appointed Secretary the Synod shall appoint some other fit person so to act, with such remuneration (if any) as the Synod shall think fit. The persons so appointed, unless they resign or cease to be qualified, shall serve until the conclusion of the meeting at which their successors are appointed.

## Arrangement of Meetings

### **When and where held**

12. The Synod shall hold two meetings at least in every year at such times and places as the Joint Chairmen shall decide after consulting with the Standing Committee and taking account of the dates fixed for meetings of the Diocesan Synod.

### **Notice of ordinary meetings**

13. The date, time and place of ordinary meetings of the Synod, when fixed, shall be announced to members as soon as possible in such manner as the Joint Chairmen shall approve; provided that not less than six weeks before each meeting a notice specifying any proposed business and inviting other business shall be posted or delivered to every member.

### **Meetings by request**

14. The Joint Chairmen may summon a meeting of the Synod at any time. If they receive a requisition for that purpose signed by not less than 20 members of the Synod, they shall summon a meeting of the synod which shall be held within 28 days following receipt of the requisition. If they fail to summon a meeting within the prescribed period of 28 days, the members signing the requisition may summon a meeting.

### **Notice of special meetings**

15. In case of sudden emergency or other special circumstances, the Joint Chairmen may convene a special meeting at not less than 7 days' notice but the quorum for the transaction of any business at such a meeting shall be a majority of the members of each House and only business specified in the notice may be transacted.

### **Form of notice**

16. Every notice under rules 13 and 15 shall be in writing and signed by the Secretary.

### **Notice of Items for the agenda**

17. Subject to rules 15 and 23, notice of any business for a meeting of the synod shall be in writing, signed and delivered to the Secretary by hand or by post not later than the period before the meeting which is specified in rule 18.

### **Length of notice**

18. The following periods of notice shall be required :
- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| New business for the agenda                    | 28 days |
| Motions and amendments arising from the agenda | 7 days  |

### **When notice not required**

19. Notice of the following business shall not be required :
- (i) A motion or amendment moved by permission of the Chairman presiding provided that the full **written** text of such motion or amendment, except by permission of the Chairman presiding, shall be handed to the Secretary before it is moved;
  - (ii) Business adjourned under rule 58 or 59 to a specified time or meeting;
  - (iii) A procedural motion specified in rule 52 (subject as provided in that rule).

### **Preparation of minutes**

20. The Secretary shall prepare minutes of every meeting which shall be circulated to members and shall record the names of those attending.

## Agendas and Conduct of Meetings

### Content of agendas

21. The Standing Committee shall settle the agenda for each of the Synod's meetings, subject to these rules and any resolution of the Synod, and without prejudice to the rights of individual members to a reasonable opportunity within the time available of bringing matters before that Synod. The agenda shall specify all business :
- (i) Of which due notice has been received and which is in order;
  - (ii) All business of the Diocesan Synod which is of concern to the Deanery Synod, and particularly any matters referred to the Diocesan Synod by the General Synod;
- and the Standing Committee shall determine the order in which the business so included shall be considered.

### Circulation of agendas

22. The Secretary shall post or deliver an agenda paper to every person entitled to receive a notice of meeting, at least 14 days before a meeting, or in the case of a special meeting called at less than 14 days' notice, at the same time as the notice.

### Business permitted to be considered

23. Save for urgent or other specially important business added thereto by direction of the Joint Chairmen, and such matters as may arise therefrom, no business shall be considered at a meeting other than that specified in the agenda (or any notice paper relating thereto) or arising from business so specified.

### Order of business

24. In considering the order of business, the Standing Committee shall give special consideration to items referred to the Deanery Synod by the Diocesan Synod or General Synod.

### Varying the order of business

25. The order of business may be varied by resolution of the Synod or, unless any member objects, by the Chairman presiding.

### Quorum

26. One-third of the members of each house shall form a quorum of the Synod, except as provided in rule 15, which shall be necessary for the consideration of all business except the adjournment of the Synod under rule 52 or of a debate under rule 52 or 58.

### If quorum not present

27. If a quorum is not present, the Chairman presiding shall adjourn the synod until such time as he/she shall determine. Any member may call the attention of the Chairman presiding to the absence of a quorum at any time before the question is put on a motion or amendment. A quorum shall thereafter be deemed to be present and it shall not be in order further to query the presence of a quorum until after the Chairman presiding has conclusively announced the result of the vote on that question.

### Informal discussion

28. The Chairman presiding may, with the consent of a majority of those members present and voting, permit informal discussion outside the usual rules of debate for such period as he/she determines, during which period rules 26-27, 32-45 and 51-61 shall not apply.

### **Procedure determinable by Chairman**

29. The Chairman presiding shall determine the procedure for any part of a meeting during which the item under consideration is not a motion or amendment but is:-
- (i) An address or the presentation of a paper, whether a report or other document by a member or a visiting speaker;
  - (ii) A general discussion, whether or not introduced by such address or paper.

### **Addresses, papers and discussions**

30. Either of the Joint Chairmen, or, with the consent of the Standing Committee, any other member, may give notice for the agenda of a subject for an address, paper or general discussion without the moving of a formal motion. An address or paper may be given by the member signing the notice or by a visiting speaker, and then be followed by a general discussion, if the Standing Committee so decide.

### **Report of proceedings to Parochial Church Councils**

31. Within 6 weeks after a meeting of the Deanery Synod the Secretary shall prepare and circulate to the secretaries of the Parochial Church Councils in the Deanery a report approved by the Standing Committee of the proceedings of that meeting. Such report may be in the form of the minutes.

## **General Rules of Debate**

### **Order of speeches**

32. The Chairman presiding shall call upon members who desire to speak and may require them to give their names to the Secretary. He/she shall also determine the order in which they speak.

### **Breach of order**

33. The Chairman presiding shall call a member to order for failure to address the chair, irrelevance, tedious repetition of arguments previously put forward by the same or any other member, unbecoming language, reading a speech without permission of the Chairman presiding, disregard of the authority of the Chairman presiding, or any other breach of order, and may order the member to end any speech which he or she is making.

### **Speaking more than once**

34. A member may speak only once on a question before the Synod (whether the question is a motion or an amendment) except :-
- (i) By permission of the Chairman presiding and with the consent of the Synod;
  - (ii) The mover of a motion (but not an amendment) may reply; such reply shall not introduce any new matter and shall close the debate;
  - (iii) The mover of an amendment to a rule may speak twice.
- For the avoidance of doubt, a motion and each amendment to a motion are deemed to be separate questions.

### **Speaking to the chair**

35. Every speech shall be addressed to the chair and shall be succinct and relevant to the matter under debate.

### **Length of speeches**

36. The Chairman presiding may at any time impose a limit of not less than five minutes on the length of speeches and may vary or revoke such limit; provided that he/she shall inform members of each ruling which shall not be open to question.

### **Moving motions or amendments**

37. If the member, who gave notice of a motion or amendment, on his/her name being called chooses not to move it another member may do so in his/her stead.

### **When amendments are permitted**

38. Except as provided in rule 39, any member may move an amendment to a motion which has been duly moved and such amendment shall be disposed of before that motion is put or any further amendment is moved.

### **When amendments are not permitted**

39. Amendments to the following shall not be permitted :
- (i) A procedural motion under rule 52;
  - (ii) A motion to receive the report of a committee;
  - (iii) A motion under rule 66(i) in reply to any question referred by the Diocesan Synod.<sup>8</sup>

### **Amendments to amendments**

40. No amendment may be moved to an amendment.

### **Content of amendments**

41. An amendment shall be relevant to and shall not have the effect of reversing the main motion or amendment.

### **Order of consideration**

42. Amendments shall be moved and put to the vote in the order in which they first affect the main motion to which they relate, and if more than one amendment has been received affecting the same place in that motion or amendment, they shall be moved and put to the vote in the order determined by the Chairman presiding. By his/her permission, during the debate on an amendment, other amendments may be discussed but not moved.

### **Withdrawal of motions or amendments**

43. A motion or amendment, once moved, may be withdrawn by the mover or at his or her request, with the consent of the Synod.

### **Reconsideration and rescission**

44. No motion or amendment to the same effect as, or dependent upon, one which has been rejected within the preceding twelve months and no motion to rescind a resolution passed within the same period shall be proposed without the agreement of the Standing Committee or the consent of the Synod.

### **Division**

45. The Chairman presiding may, with the consent of the mover, divide any motion or amendment in such manner as to enable the Synod to express its judgement separately upon each part of the motion or amendment so divided.

## **Voting**

### **Procedure for decisions**

46. Questions relating only to the conduct of business shall be decided by the votes of all the members of the Deanery Synod present and voting, and every other question shall be decided in like manner, the assent of both Houses being



presumed.

### **Voting by Houses**

47. A separate vote of each House shall be taken if :
- (i) The Chairman presiding requires;
  - (ii) Any five members require;
  - (iii) The matter has been referred by Diocesan Synod.
- The voting on a vote by Houses shall be recorded in the minutes.

### **Majority required for decisions**

48. Decisions of the Synod when no separate vote is taken by each House shall require the votes of a majority of all the members of the Synod present and voting, subject to any statutory requirements. Decisions of the Synod when a separate vote is taken by each House shall require the votes of a majority of all the members of each House present and voting.

### **Mode of voting**

49. The Chairman presiding on putting any question to the vote shall take a show of hands, the result of which as announced by him/her shall be conclusive, and may at his/her discretion order the hands to be counted. A vote by Houses shall always be counted and recorded in the minutes.

### **Requests for separate voting by Houses**

50. Where any members request a separate vote of each House such a request shall be made before the question is put or immediately upon the announcement of a show of hands, whether counted or not.

## **Interrupting Business**

### **Procedural motions**

51. A procedural motion mentioned in these rules may be moved without notice, unless express provision is made to the contrary.

### **Content of procedural motions**

52. Subject to these rules, the following procedural motions may, with the consent of the Chairman presiding, be moved with or without notice but not so as to interrupt the speech of any member :
- (i) "That the Synod do pass to the next business" ("next business");
  - (ii) "That the Synod do now adjourn" ("adjournment of the Synod");
  - (iii) "That the debate be now adjourned" ("adjournment of debate");
  - (iv) "That the debate be now closed" ("closure");
  - (v) "That the matter under discussion be referred back" ("refer back");

### **When not permitted**

53. A procedural motion shall not be moved :
- (i) For next business, the closure or reference back on any question referred by the Diocesan or General Synod;
  - (ii) For next business on an amendment or another procedural motion.

### **Seconding of procedural motions**

54. The seconding of procedural motions shall be formal and without speech.

### **Limit of speeches for procedural motions**

55. The debate shall be limited to a brief speech by the proposer of not more than two

minutes and, unless the Chairman presiding permits further speeches, a brief reply by the mover of the original motion or, failing him/her, one other member.

#### **Amendments and other procedural motions**

56. The adjournment or closure may be moved on an amendment or another procedural motion but a motion to pass to the next business or to refer back shall not be so moved.

#### **Effect of procedural resolutions**

57. In the event of any procedural motion being passed, the debate to which it relates shall be closed or stand adjourned, as the case may be, except that in the case of a motion that the debate on a motion be closed the mover thereof shall have a right to reply before the matter is put to the vote.

#### **Adjourning amendments**

58. The adjournment of an amendment shall be deemed to adjourn the debate on the original motion.

#### **Resumption of business interrupted**

59. Unless otherwise resolved, business interrupted by an adjournment of the Synod shall be resumed at the next meeting, and on an adjournment of debate, if and when the Standing Committee so decides.

#### **Reference back**

60. If a motion to remit specifies no one to whom the matter is to be referred, this question shall be decided by the Standing Committee.

#### **The closure**

61. The following rules of debate shall apply :
- (i) If such motion is permitted by the Chairman presiding, it shall be put forthwith without discussion.
  - (ii) If the closure is carried, the member, if any, who has a right of reply on a motion superseded by the closure shall be given an opportunity to speak for not more than two minutes in reply, and the motion or amendment shall be put without further debate.

### **Meeting in separate Houses**

#### **When and where held**

62. Each house shall meet separately when :
- (i) It is required so to do under these rules;
  - (ii) It has so decided in accordance with its own standing orders;
  - (iii) The Chairman of the House has so directed, or
  - (iv) The Synod has so directed
- and subject to any directions by the Synod or the House concerned, the date, time and place of any separate meeting shall be fixed by the Chairman of that meeting. The procedures of each House shall be governed, with necessary changes, by the rules of the Synod, subject to such further standing orders not inconsistent therewith as each House may from time to time decide.

### **References by the Diocesan Synod**

### **When considered**

63. References by the Diocesan Synod shall be included in the agenda of such meeting as the Standing Committee shall consider appropriate.

### **Prior notice and documents required**

64. Unless the Standing Committee decide to the contrary for any reason:
- (i) At least 28 days notice of any matter referred shall be given to every member; and
  - (ii) a report or other document prepared by or on behalf of either the General Synod, Diocesan Synod or the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod shall be circulated.

### **Consultations within the parishes**

65. Subject to any timetable laid down by the Diocesan Synod, the Deanery Synod before voting on a reference may refer any question to the Parochial Church Councils in the Deanery.

### **Procedure of debate**

66. (i) When the reference by the Diocesan Synod is in the form of a question requiring the answer Yes or No, the question shall be put to the Deanery Synod as a formal motion in the affirmative sense. No amendment shall be in order and a separate vote of each House shall be taken under standing order 47. If the motion is defeated, the question shall be decided in the negative.
- (ii) When the reference invites a fuller statement of opinion, a motion containing a draft of such statement shall be moved on behalf of the Standing Committee and amendments to such a motion shall be in order.
- (iii) When all motions under the foregoing paragraphs (i) and (ii) have been decided, other motions arising therefrom may, if otherwise in order, be moved by any member.

### **Report on result**

67. The decisions on such motions and on any related motions not specifically included in the reference, shall be reported by the Secretary of the Deanery Synod to the Secretary of the Diocesan Synod. The number of votes cast in each House shall be included in the report.

## **Matters raised by Parochial Church Councils**

68. Any Parochial Church Council in the Deanery may, on a motion moved by a member representing that parish, bring before the Deanery Synod any matter either of general Church interest or affecting that parish and may move that a representative of the Deanery Synod on the Diocesan Synod be instructed to bring such matter before that Synod on behalf of the Deanery Synod. Subject to any direction by the Deanery Synod, the Standing Committee shall appoint such representative.

## **Financial business**

### **Duties of Standing Committee**

69. The Standing Committee shall not later than 1<sup>st</sup> May in each year submit to the Synod:-
- (i) a report and audited accounts for the preceding financial year;

- (ii) a statement showing the estimated expenditure of the Synod during the next financial year;
- (iii) proposals for raising the income required to meet such expenditure.

## General provisions

### **Admission of press and public**

70. Subject to any directions by the Synod or the Standing Committee, any member of the Synod may move that the representatives of the press and members of the public shall withdraw during the whole or part of the business before the Synod. If the motion is carried, the Chairman presiding shall request the representatives of the press and the public to withdraw.

## The Standing Committee

### **Membership of the Standing Committee**

71. There shall be a Standing Committee of the Synod consisting of the Joint Chairmen, the Secretary and Assistant Secretary (if members of the Synod), Treasurer and not less than six persons elected by the members of each House in equal numbers from among their members. This committee shall have no power to co-opt additional members. The Secretary of the Deanery Synod shall be Secretary of the Standing Committee.

### **Elected members of the Standing Committee**

72. Elected members shall retire on the election of their successors or on ceasing to be qualified. Elections shall be triennial and immediately after elections to the Synod. Voting shall be by Houses and procedure otherwise the same, with essential modifications, as for elections at an Annual Parochial Church Meeting but so that the outgoing Standing Committee shall make no nominations.

### **Functions of the Standing Committee**

73. The functions of the Standing Committee shall be :
- (i) To plan the business of the Synod, to prepare the agenda for its sessions and to circulate to members information about matters for discussion;
  - (ii) To ensure that members are adequately informed on questions raised and other matters of importance to the Deanery
  - (iii) To transact the business of the Synod when it is not in session, subject to any directions of the Synod;
  - (iv) To make such appointments as directed by the Synod;
  - (v) To carry out such other functions as the Synod may delegate to it.

## Other Committees

74. The Synod may constitute additional committees with such chairmen, membership, term of office, functions, mode of appointment and other procedure as it thinks fit.

### **Procedure of committees**

75. Subject to these rules and any resolution of the Synod, the chairmanship and other procedure of a Committee, including the Standing Committee, shall be determined by itself.