

THE DIOCESAN SYNOD

Statutory Provision: The Synodical Government Measure 1969; Church Representation Rules 30 + 31; Resolution of St. Albans Diocesan Conference on 1 November 1969.

Constitution and functions

Section 4 of the Synodical Government Measure 1969 provides:-

- 4 (1) Diocesan synods shall be constituted for all dioceses in accordance with Part IV of the Church Representation Rules contained in Schedule 3 to this Measure and the transitional provisions contained in Schedule 4.
- (2) The functions of the diocesan synod shall be:-
 - (a) to consider matters concerning the Church of England and to make provision for such matters in relation to their diocese, and to consider and express their opinion on any other matters of religious or public interest;
 - (b) to advise the bishop on any matters on which he may consult the synod;
 - (c) to consider and express their opinion on any matters referred to them by the General Synod, and in particular to approve or disapprove provisions referred to them by the General Synod under Article 8 of the Constitution;
 - (d) to consider proposals for the annual budget for the diocese and to approve or disapprove them;
 - (e) to consider the annual accounts of the diocesan board of finance of the diocese.

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.
- (3) It shall be the duty of the bishop to consult with the diocesan synod on matters of general concern and importance to the diocese.
- (4) Except as may be provided by standing orders or directions of the diocesan synod, the advisory and consultative functions of the synod under sub-sections (2) (b) and (3) of this section may be discharged on behalf of the synod by the bishop's council and standing committee appointed in accordance with rule 28 of the Church Representation Rules contained in Schedule 3 to this Measure, but either the bishop or the body so appointed may require any matter to be referred to the synod.
- (5) The diocesan synod shall keep the deanery synods of the diocese informed of the policies and problems of the diocese and of the business which is to come before meetings of the diocesan synod, and may delegate executive functions to deanery synods; and shall keep themselves informed, through the deanery synods, of events and opinion in the parishes, and shall give opportunities for discussing at meetings of the diocesan synod matters raised by deanery synods and parochial church councils.
- (6) The General Synod may by Canon or Regulation extend, amend or further define the functions of the diocesan synods, and if any question arises as to whether any matter falls

within the functions of the diocesan synod as laid down by sub-section (2) of this section or any such Canon or Regulation relating to that sub-section, it shall be decided by the bishop.

- (7) As soon as a diocesan synod has been constituted, the diocesan conference shall be dissolved and all functions exercisable by the diocesan conference shall be transferred to the diocesan synod, and any reference in any Measure or instrument to diocesan conferences shall be construed as references to diocesan synods:

Provided that nothing herein shall prevent the bishop from summoning a conference of persons appearing to him to be representative of the clergy and laity of the diocese, on such occasions and for such purposes as he thinks fit.

Membership

Rule 30 of the Church Representation Rules provides:-

30. (1) A diocesan synod shall consist of a house of bishops, a house of clergy and a house of laity.
- (2) The members of the house of bishops shall consist of the bishop of the diocese, every suffragan bishop of the diocese and such other person or persons, being a person or persons in episcopal orders working in the diocese, as the bishop of the diocese, with the concurrence of the archbishop of the province, may nominate.
- (3) the bishop of the diocese shall be the president of the diocesan synod.
- (4) The members of the house of clergy shall consist of:
- (a) the following ex-officio members, that is to say -
- (i) any person or persons in episcopal orders nominated by the bishop of the diocese, other than a suffragan bishop or a person nominated under paragraph (2) of this rule;
 - (ii) the dean or provost of the cathedral (including in appropriate dioceses, the Dean of Westminster, the Dean of Windsor and the Deans of Jersey and Guernsey);
 - (iii) the archdeacons;
 - (iv) the proctors elected from the diocese or from any university in the diocese (the University of London being treated for this purpose as being wholly in the diocese of London) to the Lower House of the Convocation of the Province;
 - (v) any other member of that House, being the person chosen by and from among the clerical members of religious communities in the Province, who resides in the diocese;
 - (vi) the chancellor of the diocese (if in Holy Orders); and
 - (vii) the chairman of the diocesan board of finance and the chairman of the diocesan advisory committee (if in Holy Orders);

- (b) members elected by the house of clergy of the deanery synods in the diocese in accordance with the next following rules; and
 - (c) not more than five members (being clerks in Holy Orders) co-opted by the house of clergy of the diocesan synod.
- 5) The members of the house of laity shall consist of -
- (a) the following ex-officio members, that is to say -
 - (i) the chancellor of the diocese (if not in Holy Orders);
 - (ii) the chairman of the diocesan board of finance and the chairman of the diocesan advisory committee (if not in Holy Orders);
 - (iii) the members elected from the diocese to the House of Laity of the General Synod;
 - (iv) any other member of that House, being an ex-officio or co-opted member of the House of Laity of the General Synod or a person chosen by and from among the lay members of religious communities in the Province, who resides in the diocese;
 - (b) members elected by the houses of laity of the deanery synods in the diocese in accordance with the next following rules; and
 - (c) not more than five members co-opted by the house of laity of the diocesan synod, who shall be actual communicants of eighteen years of upwards.
- 6) The bishop of the diocese may nominate ten additional members of the diocesan synod, who may be of the clergy or the laity and shall be members of the appropriate house. Except in regard to their appointment the nominated members shall have the same rights and be subject to the same rules as elected members. Where necessary the bishop's council and standing committee shall designate the deanery synod of which the nominated member shall be a member and, where a nominated lay person is on more than one electoral roll, he shall choose the parochial church council of which he is to be a member.
- 7) No person shall be entitled to be a member of more than one diocesan synod at the same time except -
- (a) the chancellor of the diocese;
 - (b) a suffragan bishop appointed to act as a provincial episcopal visitor for the purposes of the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 who, in addition to membership of the diocesan synod of the diocese of which he is suffragan, may be invited by the bishop of the diocese where he resides to be member of that diocesan synod in accordance with paragraph (2) or paragraph (4) (a) (i) of this rule provided that he shall exercise his vote on a matter referred by the
- General Synod under Article 8 of the Constitution only in the diocesan synod of the diocese of which he is suffragan.

- 8) The registrar of the diocese and any deputy registrar of the diocesan synod shall be disqualified from standing for election to the diocesan synod or from being a nominated, co-opted or ex-officio member of that synod.

Rule 31 of the Churches Representation Rules provides:

31. (1) The elections of members of the diocesan synods by the houses of clergy and laity of the deanery synods in the diocese shall take place every three years, and the members so elected shall hold office for a term of three years beginning with 1 August next following their election.
- (2) Any clerk in Holy Orders who is a member of the deanery synod shall be qualified to be so elected by the house of clergy of a deanery synod, and the electors shall be those whose names and addresses are recorded in the register of clerical electors being the persons referred to in rule 24(2) and not including the persons co-opted to the deanery synod under rule 24(7).

Provided that no clerk shall stand for election by more than one deanery synod.

- (3) Subject to the provisions of rule 1 (4), any lay person who is an actual communicant as defined in rule 54(1) of eighteen years or upwards and whose name is entered on the roll of any parish in the deanery or who is a lay person declared by the dean to be an habitual worshipper at the cathedral church of the diocese and to be associated with the deanery, shall be qualified to be so elected by the house of laity of a deanery synod, and the electors shall be those whose names and addresses are recorded in the register of lay electors other than persons co-opted to the deanery synod under rule 24(7).
- (4) The qualifying date for electors under paragraphs (2) and (3) of this rule and when a casual vacancy is being filled shall be 6.00 a.m. on the date on which the nomination papers are issued.
- (5) The register of clerical electors and the register of lay electors shall be open to inspection at the diocesan office and any errors and omissions in the list may be corrected until the close of nominations. Thereafter no names may be added or removed until the declaration of the result of the election and those persons whose names are entered in the register shall be the qualified electors entitled to vote in that election.
- (6) The diocesan synod shall, not later than 31 December in the year preceding any such election, determine the numbers of members to be so elected by the houses of the several deanery synods in the diocese, and the numbers shall -
- (a) in the case of elections by the houses of clergy, be related to the numbers of members of those houses in the respective deanery synods;
- (b) in the case of elections by the houses of laity, be related to the total numbers of names on the rolls of the parishes in the respective deaneries as certified under rule 4; Provided that at

least two members shall be elected by each house of every deanery synod.

- (7) For the purpose of such determination by the diocesan synod, the secretary of every deanery synod shall, not later than 1 June, certify to the secretary of the diocesan synod the number of members of the house of clergy of the synod as at 30 April.
- (8) The diocesan synod shall so exercise their powers under this rule as to secure that the number of members of the synod is not less than 150 and not more than 270 and that the numbers of the houses of clergy and laity are approximately equal.

For the avoidance of doubt it is hereby declared that the number 270 specified in this paragraph includes the maximum number of members who may be co-opted by each house or nominated by the bishop.

- (9) Not later than 31 December in each year preceding any such elections, the secretary of the diocesan synod shall certify to the secretary of every deanery synod the numbers determined under this rule for that deanery synod.

Diocesan Provision

The St. Albans Diocesan Conference, on 1 November 1969, in preparation for the introduction of Synodical Government, resolved that:

"The principles on which will be determined the numbers of clergy and of laity to be elected to the St. Albans Diocesan Synod by the houses of deanery synods shall be:-

- (a) that the houses of clergy and of laity of the deanery synods in the diocese shall each elect to the diocesan synod as nearly as possible 100 members, and
- (b) that the number of 100 shall be divided among the deaneries so that the number of clergy to be elected by the houses of clergy of the several deaneries shall be as nearly as possible proportionate to the number of members of those houses, and the number of laity to be elected by the houses of laity of the several deaneries shall be as nearly as possible proportionate to the total number of names on the rolls of the parishes within the deaneries."

This formula has subsequently been accepted by the Diocesan Synod for each triennium.

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