

# **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM FROM ST PAUL'S & ST GEORGE'S CHURCH EDINBURGH ON SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER 2020**

## **Welcome and Induction**

A training video was shown before the beginning of the meeting.

## **Opening Eucharist**

The Synod was constituted at a celebration of the Eucharist in St Paul's & St George's Church, Edinburgh via Zoom at 9.30am on Saturday 5 December 2020.

The Most Rev Dr Mark Strange, Primus, delivered his charge to the Synod during the Eucharist, taking as his text "the night is fast spent, the day is at hand: let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armour of light". Commenting on how different the year 2020 had been, the Advent message of being led out of darkness into the light of Christ had never been more powerful. Both the darkness and the hope of light had echoed in his own physical and spiritual life. Many things planned or dreamt of for the year had had to be cancelled or significantly changed. The year had been one which had brought issues for both society and the Church to face up to. The Bishops had engaged in bullying awareness training in response to the Clergy Wellbeing report of 2019 which had hopefully enabled members of the College to understand and modify their own behaviours and to consider how to seek to change the behaviour of others. The training needed to be shared across the Church and processes prepared to enable everyone to have the courage to name bullying for what it was and to deal with it. The College of Bishops was in the process of agreeing an anti-bullying statement. In addition, it was planning to undertake a programme of bias training and racism awareness, following the realisation of Scottish Episcopal Church history in matters of slavery. There were many issues about which the Church needed to be prepared to speak out: international aid, gender violence and modern slavery. Many such issues had been difficult to consider, made all the more difficult by the lack of person-to-person interaction during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

The Primus thanked members of the Church for their letters and emails of support. Such communications had enabled him to speak with confidence to Government officials, Scottish Ministers and Anglican Primates about the care and effort displayed across the Scottish Episcopal Church. Members of the Church had served the people of Scotland in so many ways, including the running of food and clothing banks, deliveries to the housebound and letters to the lonely.

At the current time, the question was whether the Church wanted simply to go back to where it had been before the pandemic. The opportunity to watch nature during the year and the visual impact of atmospheric changes in some cities had indicated what could be achieved if better care was taken of the planet. There were questions about how the Church should invest its money, about how church buildings were heated, the extent of travel undertaken on church business and the resources needed to run the institution. There was a need for the Church to put its own house in order if pressure

were to be exerted on governments and industry. The Church could not challenge others if it did not challenge itself.

Looking forward, the Primus said he saw a bright future – not a return to the past but a future as a living, breathing community of faith. Administering Communion in the first face-to-face service following lockdown, had been a moment of joy and hope for those present and a sadness for those not able to be there. However, at that moment and in subsequent weeks he had seen and felt the overwhelming desire of a church filled with the power of the Spirit seeking to lead others into a relationship with Christ. “Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia”.

During the Eucharist, an offering was taken to support the work of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Anglican Communion Fund “Together in Unity” Appeal. The offering amounted to £547.50 (including Gift Aid).

## **SESSION 1: THE MOST REV THE PRIMUS IN THE CHAIR**

### **1.1 Preliminary Business**

#### **1.1.1 Welcome**

The Primus welcomed all members to Synod and urged that they be kind to each other and exercise good grace.

#### **1.1.2 Appointment of Tellers**

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Mr Jim Gibson (Convener, Administration Board) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That Malcolm Bett and Miriam Weibye be appointed as tellers for the meeting.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 96 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention.

#### **1.1.3 Appointment of Prolocutors**

The Very Rev Alison Simpson proposed, and the Rev Canon Dave Richards seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Very Rev Kenneth Rathband be appointed as Clerical Prolocutor for the meeting.”*

The Motion was put to the vote in the House of Clergy and passed *nem con*, 62 in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions.

The Very Rev Alison Simpson proposed, and the Rev Canon Dave Richards seconded, the following Motion:

*"That the Rev Dr Sophia Marriage be appointed as Clerical Vice-Prolocutor for the meeting."*

The Motion was put to the vote in the House of Clergy and passed by majority, 54 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Ms Jenny Whelan seconded, the following Motion:

*"That Dr Nicola Mills be appointed as Lay Prolocutor for the meeting."*

The Motion was put to the vote in the House of Laity and passed by majority, 39 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Ms Jenny Whelan seconded, the following Motion:

*"That Hugh Morison be appointed as Lay Vice-Prolocutor for the meeting."*

The Motion was put to the vote in the House of Laity and passed *nem con*, 39 in favour, 2 abstentions.

#### **1.1.4 Permission to Speak**

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Mr Jim Gibson (Convener, Administration Board) seconded, the following Motion:

*"That Alan McLean QC be given permission to speak to Synod."*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed unanimously, 107 in favour.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Mr Jim Gibson (Convener, Administration Board) seconded, the following Motion:

*"That David Strang be given permission to speak to Synod."*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed by majority, 104 in favour, 1 against, no abstentions.

#### **1.1.5 Minutes of General Synod 2019**

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Mr Jim Gibson (Convener, Administration Board) seconded, the following Motion:

*"That this Synod approve the minutes of the meeting of the General Synod held on 6-8 June 2019".*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 96 in favour, 11 abstentions.

#### 1.1.6 Elections

The Rt Rev Kevin Pearson (Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway) proposed, and Ms Jenny Whelan seconded, the following Motion:

*“That Bridget Campbell be appointed as Convener of the Standing Committee.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 104 in favour, 2 abstentions.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and the Rt Rev Ian Paton (Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Very Rev Sarah Murray be appointed as Convener of the Mission Board.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed by majority, 98 in favour, 2 against, 7 abstentions.

The Rt Rev Kevin Pearson (Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway) proposed, and Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Rt Rev Anne Dyer be appointed as Convener of the Institute Council.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed by majority, 96 in favour, 5 against, 8 abstentions.

The Rt Rev Kevin Pearson (Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway) proposed, and Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Rev Marjory McPherson be appointed for a second term on the Institute Council.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed by majority, 92 in favour, 1 against, 11 abstentions.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and the Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Rev Deborah Davison be appointed as a member of the Administration Board.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 97 in favour, 9 abstentions.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and the Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That Fraser Falconer be re-appointed for an additional term on the Clergy Discipline Tribunal.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed by majority, 97 in favour, 1 against, 9 abstentions.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and the Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That Susan Horne be re-appointed for an additional term on the Clergy Discipline Tribunal.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed by majority, 90 in favour, 1 against, 14 abstentions.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and the Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Rev Canon Professor John Richardson be re-appointed for an additional term on the Clergy Discipline Tribunal.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed by majority, 93 in favour, 2 against, 12 abstentions.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and the Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That John Whittall be re-appointed for an additional term on the Clergy Discipline Tribunal.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed by majority, 92 in favour, 2 against, 12 abstentions.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and the Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the appointment by the Standing Committee of Robert Phillips as a member of the Preliminary Proceedings Committee be ratified and that his current term of office continue until General Synod 2024.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 101 in favour, 5 abstentions.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Mr Jim Gibson (Convener, Administration Board) seconded, the following Motion:

*"That the term of office of Richard McIndoe as Chair of the Pension Fund Trustees be extended until General Synod 2021."*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 102 in favour, 5 abstentions.

The Rt Rev Kevin Pearson (Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway) proposed, and Ms Jenny Whelan seconded, the following Motion:

*"That Robert Gordon be appointed as a General Synod Trustee."*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed by majority, 102 in favour, 1 against, 5 abstentions.

### **1.1.7 Roll Call**

The roll call of Synod members was taken from the electronic records of the meeting. A total of 110 members attended.

## **1.2 Standing Committee – Accounts, Quota and Strategic Direction**

### **1.2.1 Accounts**

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) explained that this would be his final appearance before Synod as he completed his term of office. He expressed thanks to General Synod Office staff for their significant work including, under that umbrella, the staff of the Scottish Episcopal Institute. A particular debt of gratitude was owed in the current year as they had laboured assiduously throughout a period of disruption, most of them having the mixed blessing of working from home whilst facing additional demands, notably in relation to digital communication and broadcasting, keeping abreast of and advising upon the Government regulations and guidance on church gatherings and making the arrangements for a virtual meeting of General Synod.

He offered personal thanks to the Treasurer, Malcolm Bett, for his assiduous work in relation to accounts and budgets and also thanked members of the Standing Committee for their support. He was delighted that Bridget Campbell had been appointed as his successor.

Mr Gordon turned to the Annual Report and Accounts for the General Synod for the year ended 31 December 2019. The Standing Committee's plan had been to avoid adding surpluses in 2019 by budgeting for a deficit of £136,000. In fact, the year had ended better off with a deficit of £75,000

giving an outcome £61,000 better than budgeted. On the income side, the distribution from the Unit Trust Pool had been £10,000 better than anticipated and an unexpected legacy of £32,000 had been received. Set against that had been the impact of departing congregations where, as discussed at Synod the previous year, it had been agreed that the Province would bear the impact of loss of provincial quota in an amount of £23,000. That had avoided having to increase quota requested of those dioceses which had no departing congregations. On the expenditure side, savings of £50,000 had arisen because the Child Poverty Grant Scheme budgeted to start in 2019 had taken longer than planned to implement. Payments had, however, been made in 2020. Additional expenditure of £19,000 had been incurred in areas which were notoriously difficult to predict such as legal and advisory services. The net effect of these was an outcome of £61,000 better than budget.

Mr Gordon then proposed, and Mr Jim Gibson (Convener, Administration Board) seconded, the following Motion:

*"That this Synod accept the Annual Report and Accounts of the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church for the financial year ended 31 December 2019."*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 103 in favour, 2 abstentions.

Mr Gordon then turned to the projected out-turn for 2020. The 2020 Accounts would be for approval at General Synod 2021, but he thought it would be helpful to share with Synod the current financial position and how that assisted in thinking for the future, when it was hoped to see churches across the Province emerging from the pandemic and implementing plans for an impactful future in the service of God, the support of communities and the protection of the planet.

In 2020, so as to avoid building up further surpluses, a deficit of £232,000 had been budgeted. At the time of preparing the finance report for Synod, contained in the Synod papers, a broadly breakeven position (a surplus of £7,000) was being forecasted. Since then, the surplus had increased by a further £31,000 because of additional receipts from the Unit Trust Pool. Mr Gordon paid particular tribute to the work of the Investment Committee and the Fund Managers for the performance of the Unit Trust Pool. The effect of these was that it was expected that 2020 would result in a position £270,000 better than budgeted.

Savings had accrued in various areas, as might have been expected for a period of lockdown, such as travel and meeting costs, residential and conference costs including the Glenalmond Youth Camp, and in relation to salaries with some staff on furlough, and delays in making other staff changes. Child poverty grants amounting to half of the Church in Society budget of £50,000 were expected to be disbursed but that Committee had recommended, and Standing Committee had agreed, £50,000 of

exceptional year grants divided between Aberlour, Scottish Women's Aid and Scottish Association for Mental Health.

Mr Gordon then spoke to the Standing Committee's proposal for spending in the three-year period 2021-2023. The Committee's thinking had been influenced by three factors: the need to acknowledge the financial challenges because of Covid-19; a strong desire to sustain ministry, support services and initiatives to which the Church was intentionally committed; an aspiration to support and foster new opportunities for service such as sharing the good news of Jesus, finding space for community building, reaching out to those in dire need and engaging in practical steps to save the planet.

Standing Committee proposed three actions. Firstly, it sought Synod's agreement to cut provincial quota from £742,000 in the current year to £600,000 in 2021, with the aim of rebuilding to the current level in stages by 2024. This would give dioceses a measure of relief and allow them discretion to determine how best to address needs within their respective areas. Secondly, Standing Committee intended to maintain provincial spending specifically in support of charges in dioceses, in giving to others and in delivering corporate services from the GSO as required. It would also look closely at the experience of different ways of working adopted during lockdown to determine whether there were lessons which could be applied to allow the Church to operate more effectively and efficiently in more normal times. Thirdly, Standing Committee planned to deploy the bulk of the unplanned underspend against the 2020 budget – of the order of £270,000 – on a Recovery and Renewal Fund. That would be overseen by the Standing Committee and dioceses would be able to apply to take advantage of new opportunities opening in the wake of the pandemic. Precise criteria were still being developed and the breakout groups during the current meeting would provide an opportunity for Synod members to offer ideas to help inform further discussion within the Standing Committee. The aim was that applications would be considered in the second half of 2021 at the earliest to give time for charges and dioceses prayerfully to seek out and scope possibilities.

Mr Gordon reminded Synod that at General Synod 2019 he had referred to the possibility of joint working between the Standing Committee and the College of Bishops in early 2020. The intention had been to consider a revised overarching narrative for the Scottish Episcopal Church which would help sharpen priorities for action and spending in the 2020s. The ambition to have secured a concise, coherent and compelling vision for the future had not been possible because of the demands of responding to the Covid-19 crisis. However, the Primus and he had proposed, and the Standing Committee had agreed, the formation of a short life Task Group comprising two Bishops, two clergy and two lay members supported by the Secretary General and Treasurer, to identify and scope a range of short and longer-term emerging issues from a provincial perspective and to identify where action, further work and further thinking was required. That remained work in progress, but four main strands were being pursued. These comprised:

- Managing through the pandemic: this included giving guidance on Government restrictions on communal worship and responding to detailed questions from dioceses and charges; identifying sources of support to those who were exhausted by the demands of the pandemic; ensuring that the communications team were adequately resourced to enable those unable to attend church to have access to regular worship; keeping abreast of the financial impacts of the crisis through regular contact with Diocesan Treasurers; conducting as much ongoing provincial business as possible remotely through home working and digital means.
- Exploring governance models and support for charges which were concerned about viability and sustainability: the pandemic appeared to have brought to a head concerns in some charges with smaller and ageing congregations about their ability to continue to discharge governance responsibilities such as finding volunteers to serve on vestries. The Task Group would look at possible models which could involve stronger diocesan support.
- New opportunities: the intention was to ensure that the Church was alert, and ready, to take initiatives where new opportunities emerged. Work was underway to better understand digital opportunities – how, in more normal circumstances, could geographically dispersed, but digitally linked, groups develop community, worship effectively and grow in faith. Also, what were the opportunities for new or renewed forms of mission and engagement given anecdotal and research evidence of a growing interest in faith and service arising from experience of the pandemic. The Mission Board had already decided in principle to establish a new committee to address how local mission development could be encouraged and supported provincially.
- GSO role: this included opportunity to reflect on how business was transacted both until the pandemic was over or contained but also thereafter. What benefits of lockdown could be retained for the future and what was the appropriate balance between home and office working, remote and face-to-face meeting? Such issues, including office and room space requirements would need to be addressed in the coming months.

### **1.2.2 Breakout Groups**

Synod members were then transferred into breakout groups on Zoom to discuss the following questions set by the Standing Committee Task Group:

1. Despite the difficulties of the pandemic, what have you found encouraging in the course of the last few months?
2. As we reflect on our experience since March, and as we look forward, what new missional or pastoral opportunities might there be for your local situation and which might benefit from some provincial funding, if available?

### **1.2.3 Quota**

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Mr Jim Gibson (Convener, Administration Board) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That this Synod, having examined the proposed budgets for the General Synod for the year 2021, agree to a quota figure of £600,000 for that year.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 100 in favour, 2 abstentions.

The Primus thanked Mr Gordon for his presentation.

## **SESSION TWO: THE MOST REV THE PRIMUS IN THE CHAIR**

### **2.1 Faith and Order Board**

#### **2.1.1 Review of Canon 4**

The Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) reported on the work of the Canon 4 Review Group of which he was the Chair. He explained that the consultation document produced by the Group was set out in the Synod papers for information and represented the thinking of the Group to date. He reminded members that they had already received that document with an earlier invitation to respond to the consultation in advance of Synod and he expressed gratitude to those who had done so.

He assured the Synod that the consultation to date had been wide-ranging. The Group had considered processes for the appointment or election of Bishops from other parts of the Anglican Communion and had sought comment from those who had had first-hand experience of their workings. It had invited each diocese to comment on the present Canon 4 and had invited all involved as candidates in recent elections or as members of Preparatory Committees to share their experiences and advice. From those conversations and other pertinent and wise insights, the Group had shaped the proposals contained in the paper.

Bishop Armes explained that the paper put forward two options: one, a thorough revision of the Canon, and the other a radical rethinking of it. The first held to the long tradition within the Province that each diocese ought to have the opportunity to elect its own Bishop. The second departed from that tradition but offered a process more in step with patterns of discernment and appointment appropriate to the 21st century. He could not emphasise too strongly the import of the choice. The Review Group could not ignore cogent arguments put to it in favour of an electoral council rather than an electoral synod but was not willing quickly to disregard a tradition that was so much part of the identity of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Consequently, the Group wished to put both options before the Church before travelling further down the path of canonical revision. The key point

to be borne in mind was that the election of a Bishop was a matter of spiritual discernment. Which of the two proposals would provide the best framework and setting for prayerfully discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit? The Canon could assist discernment but could not replace it.

The Group continued to seek the mind of the Church. It was delighted that 25% of Synod members had already responded to the request for feedback and would be pleased if more Synod members were to join in over the next phase of the consultation. In a change to the sequence set out in the paper, the Group was rolling out the next phase of consultation to vestries and individual members prior to Diocesan Synods in the hope that that would feed and energise a conversation at such Diocesan Synods in March 2021. Members of the Review Group would be available to attend such Synods to listen and to answer questions.

Time pressures meant that all questionnaires would require to be returned to the Group by the end of March 2021 to allow the feedback to be processed and reported upon to General Synod in June 2021. Bishop Armes emphasised that the purpose of the consultation was advisory and should not be regarded as a referendum or plebiscite. The ultimate decision about the Canon belonged with General Synod. The report in June 2021 would not offer a first reading of a new Canon but would be an opportunity for the Review Group to share its sense of the direction of travel and for Synod to confirm that, or not, as the case may be. Following that, the hope would be to present a Canon for first reading in 2022.

Mr Hugh Morison (Moray, Ross and Caithness) congratulated the Review Group on its paper. He noted that one option being put forward paid full attention to the need for discernment training on the part of those involved in the process but discounted the role of the diocese to a greater extent than he would wish. The other option largely followed present rules but possibly did not give sufficient scope for the expertise required. He suggested that the difficulty might be addressed by a two-stage process incorporating what was proposed in option one as set out in the paper but with a stronger Preparatory Committee, similar to that proposed for the second option. That Preparatory Committee would make recommendations to a Diocesan Synod comprising electors chosen by the diocese of possibly no more than 20 people. Those members would be people able to give the necessary time to acquiring the necessary expertise if that route were to be followed. He did not think it appropriate that the Preparatory Committee should present just a single name to the decision-making body because that would discount to a large extent the role of the diocese.

The Very Rev Dr Emsley Nimmo (Aberdeen and Orkney) thanked members of the Review Group for the report. He concurred with some of the objections raised under item 7 of the report, for example, the reduction of the shortlist to one name, why candidate names needed to be made public and the fact that if the appointment fell to the Bishops their nominee should be homologated by the Diocesan Synod. He was opposed to certain

aspects of the proposal for an electoral council. Referring to section 18 of the report he would be alarmed that the task would be undertaken by a group of people chosen on the basis of their gifts and experience. He asked on what criteria such a decision would be arrived at – he considered it was a charter for a cabal. He was disappointed that circumstances meant that a motion from the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney to make Robert Lyon a hero of the faith would not be debated and he hoped that opportunity would obtain at the next General Synod to do so. Robert Lyon had believed that it was the inherent right of a diocese to elect its own Bishop and that that was synonymous with the liturgy and doctrine of the Church. To suggest otherwise was to hack at the roots of the Scottish Episcopal Church's cherished tradition which was respected in other provinces of the Anglican Communion. A diocesan electoral synod knew the needs of the local area best and the Bishop Elect needed the empowering support of the majority of the clergy and laity of the diocese. He urged members of Synod to reject the option of a diocesan council.

Bishop Armes responded to comments made. He hoped that Mr Morison would take the opportunity to complete a feedback form in the consultation if he had not already done so and pass on his considered thoughts to the Review Group. Bishop Armes also noted the points made by Dr Nimmo and thanked him for contributions made previously by him to the Review Group which had weighed significantly with the Group. Bishop Armes emphasised that in relation to the proposal for a diocesan council, it would be intended that members of such a council would be elected either by their own diocese or by other dioceses and so it would not be a self-appointed body. Bishop Armes assured Synod members that all such matters would be considered fully by the Review Group before it brought proposals to General Synod in 2021 and members would have an opportunity to debate matters then.

The Primus expressed thanks to the Review Group for its work.

## **2.2 Safeguarding Committee (Committee for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults)**

Mr Richard Baker (Convener, Committee for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults) invited Mr David Strang to speak to the Safeguarding Audit Implementation Progress Report.

Mr Strang explained that he was the Chair of the Safeguarding Audit Implementation Group. He reminded Synod members that General Synod 2019 had received the report of an audit of safeguarding across the Scottish Episcopal Church. The Implementation Group had been established after that Synod in order to implement the recommendations contained in the report. The Group comprised representatives drawn from bishops, clergy and laity and the most significant product of the Group's work to date had been the development of a new Safeguarding Policy which would replace the existing Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy Statements and Guidelines. That new Policy was being presented to the current meeting for approval and adoption. The new Policy was based on the five commitments contained in the Anglican Communion Safe

Church Charter: promoting a safeguarding culture; ensuring the suitability of people for ministry and positions of trust; developing standards for the practice of ministry; responding effectively to allegations of abuse; providing support where abuse had occurred. The emphasis arising from those principles was that of prevention of harm and the promotion of a culture of safety and well-being. It was so important that everyone in the church felt safe. Fundamentally, therefore, this was not solely an issue about compliance but more about ensuring that safeguarding was wholeheartedly embraced as part of the mission of the Church. The recent reports of the independent enquiry on child sexual abuse in churches in England and Wales reinforced that need.

Mr Strang explained that there remained a need to address the wider cultural and structural issues associated with safeguarding. A short-life working group had been established including membership drawn from the Safeguarding Committee and the Safeguarding Audit Implementation Group. It would examine more widely the existing barriers to effective safeguarding and explore potential solutions to improve and raise awareness of safeguarding in the Church. Following that the existing procedures and guidance would be revised along with accompanying training.

Mr Strang explained that the results of the audit reported upon the previous year had been analysed in detail. Summary reports had been sent to each diocese and detailed feedback in relation to each charge was available from the provincial Safeguarding Office.

Mr Baker then spoke to the report from the Safeguarding Committee and specifically to the motion contained in the Synod agenda for the approval and adoption of the new Safeguarding Policy: Principles and Commitments. He thanked all those who had contributed to the development of the new Policy, including the members of the Safeguarding Audit Implementation Group. The Church was fortunate to have been able to draw on the great expertise of David Strang to chair the Group.

Mr Baker reminded Synod that the audit had been taken forward by the Committee because it recognised the need not only for improved auditing and reporting on safeguarding but also to ensure that, as a province, that responsibility was given the necessary priority. Fulfilling the Church's obligations in relation to safeguarding was not solely about compliance with legislation and disclosure processes, important as they were, but there was a broader responsibility to promote a culture in the Church where everyone felt safe. The Implementation Group had been tasked with taking forward the work arising from the audit and had concluded that the current policy statements were no longer adequate and needed to be replaced with the new Policy being proposed to the current meeting. The schedule to Canon 65 referred to policy statements on the protection of children and vulnerable adults adopted by Synod respectively in 1998 and 2006. Approaches to safeguarding had developed significantly during the intervening years and the proposed adoption of a single safeguarding policy would be much more comprehensive and reflect current safeguarding practice. The new Policy included a much broader commitment than the existing policy statements, to promote safeguarding and was founded on the Anglican Communion Safe Church Charter which had been adopted by General Synod in 2016.

It was clear from the findings of the Safeguarding Audit that there was much more work to be done. The Committee was currently considering how support for those who had experienced abuse could be improved and it had welcomed opportunity for discussion with the Canonical Review Group as the latter considered potential reform to Canons 54 and 65. The proposed new Safeguarding Policy would provide a strong foundation and focus for that work.

In closing, Mr Baker expressed thanks to his predecessor as Convener of the Committee, Mr Chris Townsend, who had stepped down in May having served for about 10 years as member and subsequently Convener. He also expressed thanks to the Provincial Safeguarding Officers and all those who gave their time and commitment to safeguarding work throughout the Church.

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and the Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) seconded, the following Motion:

*"That the Safeguarding Policy: Principles and Commitments set out in the Synod Papers for this Synod meeting be adopted and added at paragraph 1 of the Schedule to Canon 65 in substitution for the Policy Statements and Codes of Good Practice referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of that Schedule and that the remaining paragraphs of the Schedule be renumbered accordingly.*

The Rev David Paton-Williams (Edinburgh) expressed thanks for the work which had been done and which had been discussed in his Area Council. It had been appreciative of the Policy in every respect, except one area. The question was what provision there would be for clergy and laity to feel safe in the face of malicious accusations? He recognised the need for every accusation to be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly, but what pastoral provision and support would be available while such an investigation was underway, rather than such individuals feeling they were being "hung out to dry"? There was a need, if possible, for people to be protected from malicious accusations. If it was not appropriate for this to be embodied in the Policy then how else might it be addressed?

Dr Anthony Birch (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) expressed thanks to the Group for producing the Policy and Principles which covered well the overarching aim of safeguarding. He considered that there had been some technical oddities in the audit survey including the possible misinterpretation by some vestries of certain questions. No audit was complete until the findings had been returned to those who had provided the original data. He considered that the length of time it had taken to make findings available had been grossly excessive.

Mrs Victoria Elliot (Edinburgh) asked how the Church could implement a culture of safety. Culture in organisations could take a long time and be very difficult to change. It needed to go beyond a training exercise. Also, in relation to preventing abuse she wondered about mechanisms for whistleblowing. That might be helpful in identifying patterns of behaviour before they became abuse. She wondered whether the Policy needed to be strengthened in relation to pre-empting abuse. She also wondered how much thought was being given to the virtual world and issues such as cyber abuse and also the fact that if members of the Church were

maintaining a Facebook page or similar presence they needed to be aware that they would be perceived as representing the Church. There was a need for training for them also.

Ms Jan Whiteside (Glasgow and Galloway) expressed thanks for the work which had been done. She noted that the Policy talked about the provision of support for those who had been abused. Mr Paton-Williams had asked about malicious allegations. She emphasised that the Church was a place of forgiveness. She wanted to ensure that there were support mechanisms for those who had abused because they were part of the Church as well. They needed support as well as victims.

The Rev Canon Neil Brice (Aberdeen and Orkney) had had some experience recently of malicious allegations. He supported the comments made by both Mr Paton-Williams and Ms Whiteside.

The Rev Dr Sophia Marriage (Edinburgh) explained that she had been going to propose an amendment to the motion because she identified a serious omission in the Audit Report and she had been pleased to hear Mr Strang indicate that the results of the audit were now available to charges and dioceses. She wished to urge charges to make themselves fully aware of those results. The proposed policy addressed the question of change within the Province, made complete sense and was comprehensive. She wished to raise the question of the audit which had asked for responses at a busy time within a short timescale. The report which had been produced was a good one and had been presented to Synod 2019. The Synod had been told there were a number of charges deemed to have "red flags" but there had been no further information after that. She indicated that her Congregational Co-ordinator had made enquiries as to whether there were red flags against her congregation but had not been possible to find that out. Once evidence was available, it was essential to support churches to update their practices as necessary. She believed the matter was one of urgency. She hoped that by the time of the next Synod all charges would have had an opportunity to reflect on the information relevant to them arising from the audit. The Synod itself was partly responsible if things had gone unchecked in the previous two years.

Mr Baker expressed thanks for the comments which had been made. The level of interest in the motion was very welcome. If he failed to respond fully to comments which had been made, he encouraged Synod members to come back to him afterwards. On the question of malicious complaints, the Policy referred to effective responses to allegations and outlined the need for impartial determination of abuse allegations. It sought to be supportive of all. On the question of feedback following the audit, provision of information back to dioceses had been done in February 2020. The importance of feedback was understood. There would be more work and dialogue undertaken with dioceses in advance of the next meeting of General Synod. It was recognised that changing culture in the Church was a significant undertaking and that was why the short-life working group to which David Strang had referred was being established. It would examine broader cultural issues and recommendations would be brought forward in due course. It was hoped that that group would report by the spring of 2021. On the question of digital and social media impact on safeguarding issues, it was the case that power relationships and bullying could be encountered. The Committee was engaged in

addressing safeguarding in such a context. Ms Whiteside had highlighted the issue of pastoral support for those accused of abuse. There was also the question of support for those bringing allegations. There was a need to provide support to all those who needed it and the Committee believed that there could be more guidance and support provided than was the case at present. The Committee had had specific meetings during the summer to consider such matters and further recommendations would be brought forward.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 90 in favour, 0 against, 5 abstentions.

The Primus thanked Messrs Baker and Strang and the members of the Committee and the Implementation Group.

### **2.3 Administration Board**

Mr Jim Gibson (Convener, Administration Board) reported on behalf of the Board. He likened the Scottish Episcopal Church to a motor vehicle in that it needed a driver to be competent and enabled to drive, bodywork which was in good repair and fuel. The role of the Administration Board was to share in the oversight of the driver, the bodywork and the supply of fuel by the support of clergy, the maintenance of church buildings and the management of investments which provided around 60% of the funds needed by the Province.

In relation to investments, Mr Gibson paid tribute to the diligence and professionalism of the Investment Committee and, Fund Managers, Baillie Gifford. Thanks to their efforts, the Province had a carefully invested portfolio which as at the end of November 2020, was worth approximately £114 million and which had escaped the worst of the ravages wrought by Covid-19. Since the Synod papers had gone to press, the Investment Committee had been able to announce an increased distribution for the second six months of 2020 resulting in a total distribution of the year of 58p per unit (compared with 55.5p for 2019) which represented a 4.5% increase.

The Board had been considering the issue of Standard Stipend and had established the Clergy Remuneration Package Interim Review Group in 2019 to consider the level of stipend, housing and pension in the wake of the 2019 Clergy Wellbeing Survey. The Group had met over a five-month period in 2020 and had undertaken a confidential online survey with stipendiary clergy. The Board had received the Group's report at its September meeting and had had a full discussion of the issues raised. The report looked at comparisons with other denominations, the level of inflation as well as the responses from the survey. A major question posed by the report was whether to break the link between Standard Stipend and the Church of England National Stipend Benchmark. Some of the issues related to stipend which were in consideration included: whether stipend had adequately kept pace with rises in the cost of living; congregations' ability to pay, especially in the light of Covid-19; the level of pension contributions and the effect of the forthcoming actuarial review; the career structure, or lack of it, in the Church; additional responsibilities undertaken by clergy; and the relationship between stipend and the energy efficiency of rectories. Any change in the process of setting Standard Stipend required the agreement of Synod. The issues merited fuller

reflection and discussion by the Board which would bring a recommendation to General Synod 2021.

Ms Jan Whiteside (Convener, Personnel Committee) reminded Synod that the Clergy Wellbeing Survey undertaken in 2019, as well as raising issues concerning stipend upon which Mr Gibson had commented, had highlighted the fact that too many clergy had felt bullied or harassed. At Synod 2019, she had offered to listen to those who wished to tell her of their experience and their stories had allowed the Committee to explore a range of options. The matter remained work in progress. A culture where bullying was an accepted practice and unchallenged was not a culture that could be changed in the course of a year. The process was a long-term one and was a responsibility not simply of the Personnel Committee or College of Bishops but was a problem for the whole Church to address.

The involvement and support of the College of Bishops had been crucial and she expressed gratitude to the Bishops for that support. The approach being adopted would include prevention and support. In relation to prevention, this had commenced with the College of Bishops undertaking a half-day bullying awareness training session during the summer, subsequently followed up with a second half-day session looking at policy and strategy matters. Such bullying awareness training could easily be offered to clergy and vestries over a period of time. From the conversations which she had had, it appeared that vestry members were not always as supportive as they could or should be and work was being undertaken to consider how that might best be addressed. A clear policy statement that bullying in the Church was unacceptable would be a starting point. A further measure, agreed in principle in discussions with the College of Bishops, was to implement a way in which vestries and priests could discuss a variety of issues of common interest and establish common values, for example around conduct within vestries. She had to believe that most bullying behaviour was not deliberate and that by building relationships based on honesty and a willingness to listen some of the unpleasant behaviour might disappear.

In terms of support, her conversations with clergy had been very helpful. It had been clear to her that, for some, the opportunity to talk in confidence and without fear of negative consequences had been helpful and had offered a measure of support. For others, more professional support and guidance would be appropriate. Consideration was being given to "buying in" such a service which would allow access to totally confidential professional support where required.

Ms Whiteside also commented that she personally had been keen to consider the issue of clergy "days off". It was her hope that the Church could look actively at how an additional day off every four weeks could be offered in addition to the weekly day off currently enjoyed by clergy. She understood there were issues in connection with superannuation and so the practicalities of how this might be managed would need to be worked out.

The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) commented that since clergy were officeholders, it was up to the clergy themselves to decide how much time to take off. He encouraged any statement on that matter to indicate that what was proposed was a minimum provision, not a maximum one. He himself took

more than four days per month off and that enhanced his ability to minister. He urged that thought be given to how the recommendation was made.

The Rev Peter Mead (Brechin) concurred with the comments made by Provost Holdsworth. However, he urged that the first and second parts of the discussion be put together namely the connection between stipend and time off. Taking the points that the provision was a minimum, that the pandemic was continuing, that the majority of clergy had not been able to take time off and that there was to be a stipend freeze for 2021, he suggested that the Church should say to clergy that they should take an extra day per week in 2021, not five days per month. Clergy were exhausted at the present time and under pressure – he had in the past week undergone blood tests for possible lead poisoning as a result of lead pipework in an old rectory. It was inappropriate in the context of the pandemic, and a pay freeze, to offer one extra day per month. He believed that clergy should as a minimum take one and a half days, if not two days, off per week.

The Rev Markus Dünzkofer (Edinburgh) expressed thanks to Ms Whiteside for the work which she was doing, and he recognised it was an uphill struggle. If clergy were to aspire to a Benedictine model of priesthood there was a balance of prayer, study, play and rest. The idea of five days off per month was not enough. Vestries should be required to hold clergy accountable to take off two days per week.

Ms Whiteside responded to points which had been made. She understood that in relation to days off there was an issue to be resolved in relation to superannuation. In principle she had no difficulty in pushing for more than one additional day off per month. She agreed it had been a very difficult year. She encouraged those who were under particular pressure to speak to their Bishop with a view to taking appropriate time off. Her suggestion of an additional day off per month was intended as a step in the right direction.

Mr Gibson commented that the level of stipend and of pension contribution were factors to be taken into account in the Administration Board's further deliberations on the question of stipend.

The Primus thanked the Administration Board and Personnel Committee for their work.

## **2.4 Standing Committee - Ethical Investment**

Mr Robert Gordon (Convener, Standing Committee) reminded Synod members that General Synod 2019 had passed a motion under Rule 10 of the Rules of Order on ethical investment. Standing Committee had taken stock of that motion and had engaged in several conversations with members of the Church in Society Committee, of the Investment Committee and others in order to inform subsequent action. Such discussions had assisted the Standing Committee in developing terms of reference for an Ethical Investment Advisory Group, to identify membership with a range of experience and views, to seek a skilled independent chair and to organise a well-attended and hugely informative seminar at the end of 2019. That seminar had featured a substantive presentation by institutional investment advisers Mercer on the challenges of decarbonisation.

The Standing Committee had been delighted to receive the Interim Report of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group in September 2019 and was grateful for the thorough and thoughtful report now provided to Synod members. He expressed the thanks of the Standing Committee to the Chair of the Group, Alan McLean QC, and the Group's members for the sterling work which they had undertaken. The Standing Committee acknowledged that this represented just the beginning of a process and much more remained to be done.

The Rev Diana Hall (Edinburgh) spoke as a member of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group. She explained that the central motivation behind the motion which she had proposed under Rule 10 to Synod in 2019 was to catalyse action on climate change. In passing it, Synod had affirmed that the Church must address the climate crisis, develop and model good practice and offer prophetic witness as part of its mission. Climate change was only one of a number of concerns that an ethical investment strategy might address but the magnitude and urgency of the need to limit global warming meant that addressing fossil fuel investment had been the immediate priority for the Group's work.

The work of the Group was complex and nuanced and ethical investment principles required to balance moral and ethical imperatives, legal responsibilities and practical needs. As a Church there was a need to be faithful to spiritual and moral values under God, to be wise stewards of money entrusted to the Church and to be attentive to the practical implications for the Church's mission. The last of those had particular resonance for the Scottish Episcopal Church because as a denomination, the Church relied significantly on investment income to fund work.

During 2020 the last direct investment held in the Unit Trust Pool in a fossil fuel extraction company had been disposed of. That was not the end of the story. There was no "standard" definition of fossil fuel divestment. One common definition was to avoid investment in "any company that generates more than 10% of its turnover directly from extracting fossil fuels". However, it was fossil fuel burning that was the main cause of human induced climate change. That in turn opened up a demanding exercise even in relation to a single ethical concern: if there was divestment from fossil fuel extraction companies but continued investment in those which burnt significant volumes of fossil fuels, the Church's actions would be scientifically and ethically inconsistent. How should the Church respond?

The Group proposed focusing for the present on fossil fuel extraction and recommended an updated definition of divestments as "divestment from fossil fuels means the avoidance of any investment which results in the UTP holding, directly or as part of a pooled fund, any interest in any business which generates more than 10% of its turnover directly from extracting fossil fuels". That would create an additional "red line" applicable to UTP investment in any individual holding or pooled fund.

The Group had also considered whether it was possible to operate within ethical investment criteria while continuing to invest in pooled funds at all. The good news was that the investment market was in a period of rapid change, responding to increased demand for ethically screened funds. There were now several funds on

the market that matched or exceeded the Church's current ethical investment criteria. There remained much work for the Group still to do.

Mr Alan McLean QC (Chair, Ethical Investment Advisory Group) outlined some of the many difficult questions with which the Group had wrestled and would continue to wrestle including:

- How to decide what the SEC's ethical views actually were at any given time and how to provide for such views developing in the future?
- On the issue of fossil fuels, what ethical advice might be given about investment in companies which did not extract fossil fuels but nevertheless made significant use of them?
- How to treat companies which, although involved in extraction, were now looking to become leading investors in green energy, such as Total or Shell?
- To what degree should the focus of advice shift from "fossil fuel divestment" to "carbon neutral investment"?
- How to go beyond the SEC's existing exclusionary rules towards positive engagement, given the limitations in the Church's resources as a small church and as a relatively small investor?
- Practically how and how often to monitor investments over time to check that exclusionary rules were being adhered to?
- How to set appropriate guidelines for the use of pooled funds when members of the Group had agreed that they would provide a highly appropriate way of managing the UTP?
- How to maintain for the Investment Committee the reasonable leeway needed to continue to fulfil its mandates to preserve the UTP and support the mission of the Church?
- How to select and monitor any fund manager advising on investments?

The Group had found such questions challenging and there were no simple answers. There was a wide variety of different approaches which had been adopted by churches, charities and other institutions and whilst they provided helpful models, none were likely to fit the Scottish Episcopal Church's specific needs without modification. The playing field, in terms of investment options, was also changing rapidly and offering more alternative approaches. Given the pace of change, in various respects the interim report was already out of date. However, the Group had a mandate from the Standing Committee to carry on the work which had been started and that would be done. The plan was to produce advice which was not only ethical but also practical. The Group would greatly value and reflect upon any comments that Synod wished to offer on the Interim Report.

The Very Rev John Conway (Edinburgh) spoke in support of the work of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group. The work was complex and it was clear that the Group had undertaken a thorough investigation of the issues involved for which he expressed thanks. The report, together with the motion shortly to be proposed by the Church in Society Committee, demonstrated the commitment of the Scottish Episcopal Church to action in relation to climate change. Responding to the

climate emergency was the most urgent task facing all people and needed all the spiritual and intellectual resources available. To speak with any authority about that spiritual task required the Church and its members to put its own house in order. The report set the Church on that road as a first step. It was important for the Church to do the right things and also to be seen to do the right things, particularly since the world would look to Scotland in the year ahead in the run-up to COP 26 in Glasgow. He asked whether the report gave the College of Bishops, if it so wished, scope to sign a pledge on behalf of the Scottish Episcopal Church committing the Church to the process of divestment. Such pledges were readily available, and he would commend the one offered at the present time by Eco-Congregations Scotland and would encourage the Primus to sign it as soon as the report was welcomed by Synod and, he hoped, when the subsequent motion was passed.

The Rev William Shaw (Edinburgh) agreed that it would be good to sign the Eco-Congregations pledge referred to by Provost Conway. He noted that the report referred to the Unit Trust Pool and asked whether a similar approach could be adopted for the Pension Fund.

Mr Colin Sibley (Argyll and The Isles) noted the distinction between extracting and burning fossil fuels. However, a missing piece in the equation was that of the use of plastic. Whilst it was easy to transfer from plastic to paper bags, how, for example, was it possible to move from plastic spectacle frames (which he noted many speakers at the current Synod were wearing). There was a need to identify those applications of fossil fuels to products which were necessary in today's life and to distinguish such applications from those which could be discontinued for the sake of climate change. He agreed on the need to cut back on burning fossil fuels but if part of the policy was to discontinue investment in the burning of fossil fuels, should access to funds generated by fossil fuels similarly be restricted? Many members of the Church would derive their pensions from occupational pension funds run by oil companies.

Mr McLean thanked Synod members for their contributions. The Group had not considered the issue of signing pledges and, therefore, he did not have a view on that. He suspected that there might be other considerations to take into account in the light of the debate which was to follow shortly. On the question of Pension Fund investments, the remit of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group did not extend to the Pension Fund. However, he believed that the Pension Fund Trustees were committed to reviewing the situation once the Group's guidelines had been completed. He noted the comments regarding the use of plastics and suggested that that was a good example of the complexities which arose. The Group had sought to divest from direct investment in fossil fuel extraction, including oil which might be used to make such plastics, as well as producing fossil fuel which was burnt. Also, in divesting from Total, the Group realised that it was divesting from a company which was shortly about to make a significant investment in renewable energy off the coast of Scotland. The example of oil related pension funds was also a good one to illustrate the complexities. The Group would carry on wrestling with such issues.

The Primus expressed thanks to Mr McLean, the Ethical Investment Advisory Group, the Investment Committee and everyone else who had been involved in the discussions since Synod 2019.

## **2.5 Church in Society Committee - Climate Change**

The Rev Elaine Garman (Acting Convener, Church in Society Committee) noted that humanity was face-to-face with two global threats to humankind's way of life. One was immediate – Covid-19; the other was climate change which had even more far-reaching effects. During the previous nine months people had changed their lives to protect themselves and others during the pandemic restrictions. What if people had worked on reducing their carbon footprint in the same way? The Covid-19 pandemic had showed that it was possible to make changes, some of which had helped to reduce carbon footprints, but there was much more to do. There was a climate emergency and there was a need to mobilise like never before. For too long, the Anglican Communion's fifth mark of mission "to safeguard the integrity of creation and to renew and sustain life on Earth" had been seen by many as something that one would get around to at some point or that someone else would deal with it. It did not work that way. There was a need for everyone to act now and the Church needed to lead.

Burning fossil fuels on a global scale had altered the very climatic systems of the planet. Weather patterns had become more unpredictable and that risked health, threatened food and water security and increased the likelihood of conflict and displacement of peoples. Those most adversely affected were those who already suffered the greatest inequalities. There was a compelling need to listen to all voices but particularly those of young people who would inherit the successes and challenges of what was done, or not done, now. Salvation in Christ called Christians to responsibilities beyond themselves.

In 2015, the Paris Agreement had adopted universal legally binding targets to limit the impact of climate change: to keep the increases in world temperature to well below 2°C above preindustrial levels, and aiming at 1.5°C, to be carbon neutral by 2050, with increasing levels of ambition as the deadline approached. Some current estimates were to the effect that 1.5°C was only a decade away and that it was now too late for gradual, incremental steps.

The motion being presented to the Synod was designed to engage the Scottish Episcopal Church formally in reducing negative impact on the climate. It headlined the issue, made a commitment to working towards the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and to the drawing up of a programme of actions to make practical changes. Many wanted to make changes but were not sure how to do it. Other churches, other Scottish faith communities and various organisations were making similar commitments and good material and practices were available which could be drawn upon. The motion signalled an intention to draw up a programme to be brought formally to General Synod 2021 but that did not stop everyone doing what could be done already and, indeed, the Church in Society Committee would encourage that. The Committee wanted to avoid charges and others feeling put upon by a mandate from on high but wished to stimulate those seeking to make lives better for the least well off in local communities.

Change was already happening but the Church had a role to make it happen faster, to put its own house in order and to be part of Scotland's preparation for COP 26 in 2021. The Church had a responsibility to demonstrate courage and stir

up complacency. Humankind had great ingenuity and capacity to solve problems when it had the ambition to do so. The Church had an important place to drive that ambition making a positive contribution in its own right and to build connection between people which drew everyone into a common aim. That could be the Church's legacy.

The Rt Rev Ian Paton (Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane), proposed and the Very Rev Sarah Murray (Convener, Mission Board) seconded, the following Motion:

*"That this Synod, expressing the need for urgent action in relation to the global climate emergency, call on the Church in Society Committee, working in conjunction with other appropriate bodies, to bring forward a programme of actions to General Synod 2021 to resource the Scottish Episcopal Church in working towards achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030".*

Mr James Gardner (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) welcomed the motion. He noted that Ms Garman had referred to the fact that young people would inherit the legacy of the current generation. Young people were part of the Church already and in the previous week he had been contacted by some young people within the Church who had asked him to ask a question of the Synod. They had been pleased to see that the Church intended to set a target to achieve net zero carbon emissions, but they wished to know at next year's Synod what action was likely to be taken and whether the Committee had considered how to monitor progress over the following decade.

The Rev Canon Cedric Blakey (Convener, Interfaith Relations Committee) spoke in favour of the motion. He noted that it called upon the Church in Society to work with "other appropriate bodies". It had been good to hear that other churches and faith groups were regarded as falling within that remit but he wished to underline the need to work alongside other faith communities in Scotland. The 18 members of the Scottish Religious Leaders Forum, which included the Primus, were currently drafting a statement of commitment on the subject of climate change. This would express a commitment to do three things: to give deep reflection in prayer, meditation and worship to discern how to care for the Earth; to make transformational change in their own lives as individuals as well as in their communities, including how such actions would be audited; to be advocates for justice by calling on governments, businesses and others to put into effect the commitments of the Paris Agreement and to commit to science-based targets which were aligned to a healthy, resilient and zero emissions future. The task was enormous and he urged that it be addressed along with other faith communities in Scotland wherever possible. The Interfaith Relations Committee, including his successor as Convener, would be happy to support the Church in Society in its work.

The Rev Professor David Atkinson (Aberdeen and Orkney) spoke in support of the motion and expressed agreement with all of the contributions made during the debate. Whatever the Church did, however, needed to go beyond the secular agenda. There were things beyond that agenda which the Church ought to consider. It was important to take a broad view of what the Church could contribute. An example of this was that earlier in the week the Trustees of the

Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum had had a meeting on Zoom with representatives of the Church in northern Germany and Denmark. There had been discussion about the role of pilgrimage in raising awareness of the climate change agenda by encouraging people out into the environment and discussing it in both scriptural and other terms. This was helpful in developing a message which could be communicated. The Church could say more than the secular approach was able to and there was an opportunity to strengthen links between the Church and the community.

The Rev David Paton-Williams (Edinburgh) asked what was meant in the motion by "Scottish Episcopal Church". He assumed that it meant more than diocesan and central offices. He assumed that it included church buildings but it was the case that collective emissions from church buildings would represent a very small proportion of emissions generated by church members. How could congregational members be helped to make change a reality in their own lives. In his own church a series of webinars was being run as COP 26 approached focusing on how individuals could respond to the climate crisis.

Ms Jan Whiteside (Glasgow and Galloway) supported what had been said. She was aware that the heating of rectories could be difficult and she wondered whether financial support might be offered by the Province to churches which did not have sufficient funds of their own to change buildings or rectories to be more carbon neutral.

Ms Garman responded to comments which had been made. She agreed that there was a need to respond to every member of the Church, including young people. The Committee would look at other existing programmes as it considered possible actions and future monitoring since there was no desire to reinvent the wheel. At the present time she was not in a position to provide specific detail. She agreed that responding to the climate emergency was not just about practical steps but included wider theological considerations and how this affected doctrine and liturgy. The Committee wished to draw in the whole Church in thinking about such issues. On the question of what was meant by reference to the Scottish Episcopal Church in the motion, she agreed that it was about individuals as well as charges, dioceses and the provincial structure. There was a role in raising awareness on the part of individuals in relation to matters such as travel, leisure, etc. There was a need to help imbed a change in people's way of living. She also agreed that there was a need to consider what financial support might be available in relation to the heating of rectories and churches.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con*, 98 in favour, 5 abstentions.

## 2.6 Youth Presentation

A video from the Youth Committee was shown in which young people spoke about their experience of lockdown during the pandemic, the virtual Glen 2020 gathering which had taken place and involvement in Black Lives Matter.

The Rev Tembu Rongong (Convener, Provincial Youth Committee) expressed thanks to all involved in the work of the Committee, including Mrs Claire Benton-Evans the Youth Committee Enabler. The Primus expressed thanks to all leaders involved in the work of the Committee.

## **2.7 Thanks from the Primus**

The Primus expressed thanks to all Synod members for their participation, to the Rt Rev Kevin Pearson, Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, for being willing to step into the Chair of today's meeting had it been necessary, to those who had acted as facilitators and to the Rev Canon Dean Fostekew who had co-ordinated the facilitators and breakout groups. The Primus also expressed thanks to the Assessor and all those Conveners and members who were stepping down at the current Synod or had done so during the year including Bishop Pearson from the Institute Council, Canon Blakey from the Interfaith Relations Committee, Dr John Davies from the Liturgy Committee, Ms Rebecca Cadie from the Buildings Committee, the Rev Canon Jane Ross from the Mission Board, Mr Chris Townsend from the Safeguarding Committee and Mr Robert Gordon from the Standing Committee. He paid particular tribute to Mr Gordon who had led the Standing Committee and many parts of the Church through a number of changes. At times it may have felt that he had been pushing at a door which was difficult to open but the Primus wished to assure him that the fact that at all times Mr Gordon had walked alongside many in the Church through the complications and difficulties with great humour and determination had been greatly appreciated.

The Primus thanked Sanctus Media who had supported the technical aspects of the current virtual meeting, the staff of St Paul's & St George's, those who had arranged the Eucharist and would lead Evening Prayer and the staff of the General Synod Office.

Mr Robert Gordon expressed gratitude to the Primus for his remarks and thanked him for having chaired the meeting.

## **2.8 Report Back from Breakout Groups**

The Rev Canon Dean Fostekew reported on the feedback from the breakout discussion groups which had taken place earlier in the day. A copy of the feedback from the discussion groups is attached to these minutes.

## **2.9 Evening Prayer and Close of Synod**

The Synod closed with Evening Prayer at the end of which the Primus confirmed the Acts of Synod and gave the Blessing.