

# **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH HELD IN HYBRID FORMAT AT ST PAUL'S & ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH AND ONLINE ON 8-10 JUNE 2023**

## **Freshers' Meeting**

A meeting was held prior to the start of Synod to introduce new members to the programme and to the Synod's business procedures.

## **Opening Eucharist**

The Synod was constituted at a celebration of the Eucharist in St Paul's & St George's Church, Edinburgh at 10.30am on Thursday 8 June 2023.

The Most Rev Mark Strange, Primus, delivered his charge to the Synod during the Eucharist. Taking as his text "this is the way, walk in it" he reflected that when he asked people in the Province what they thought of the Church, he received many answers but invariably people commented that they loved their Church. In describing the Church, one could look to doctrine, liturgy, mission and ministry, canons and committees but all of those were simply a vehicle to allow the Spirit of God to be heard, followed and lived. Amidst all that could hinder, the Scottish Episcopal Church was a Church which was listening to the left and right and to St Paul's words "who shall separate us from the love of Christ?".

As the Primus reflected on all that had happened in the previous year he wished to recognise that people in the Church were in pain, one of his colleagues was not present at the Synod and there were those present in the Synod who were hurting but the Church was taking seriously the call to care and face difficulties both internally and in the world. Congregation after congregation had stepped up to support refugees and the Synod offering was for the Scottish Refugee Council. He called on the leaders of the nation to care for those arriving in the UK rather than declaring them to be illegal and moving them on.

Commenting on Synod business the Primus noted that for the previous three years the Church had started its work towards achieving net zero carbon emissions and had prayed its way towards a renewed understanding of the custodianship of creation. He expressed thanks to the Provincial Environment Group for the work they had undertaken.

The churches of Scotland had continued to work together to attempt to bring healing to many of those areas troubling society. The historic visit by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to the current Synod meeting would mark a deepening of that working together. The Primus believed that something had changed and that denominations were now working more closely together evidenced by the St Andrew Declaration with the Church of Scotland, continuing conversations with the Roman Catholic Church and a growing fellowship within the Episcopal Methodist United Reformed partnership.

The Synod would have debates about internal matters, but the Church was concerned not only about itself but about the life of the communities and the world which the Church

served. St Paul had noted that that would not always be easy but the Primus encouraged all to continue to pray that the Scottish Episcopal Church would continue to serve God and neighbour. He urged Synod members to reach out to one another, take up the banner of hope and walk together towards the light of Christ.

An online offering was taken to support the work of the Scottish Refugee Council. The offering amounted to £1,390.02 including Gift Aid.

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

### **1.1 Statement about Matters in the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney**

The Primus made a short pastoral statement regarding the situation in the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney. During the course of the summer and autumn of 2022, formal "accusations" had been received under Canon 54 and Bishop Anne Dyer had been suspended. During the period of her suspension, Bishop John Armes had served as the Acting Diocesan Bishop and he expressed the thanks of the College to him for undertaking that role. Accusations under Canon 54 were sent to the Preliminary Proceedings Committee which was independent of the College of Bishops. That Committee had been working hard to discharge its responsibilities in the context of a process which inevitably took time to complete and he expressed thanks to its members. Since a formal process was under way he was unable to provide any detailed comment or to respond to questions on the subject but asked members of Synod to continue to pray earnestly for all those involved and for a fair and just resolution. He confirmed that the offer of pastoral support had been made to those involved.

### **1.2 Preliminary Business**

#### **1.2.1 Welcome**

The Primus welcomed all members of Synod including the following delegates representing other churches and faiths:

The Rev Fiona Bennett (United Reformed Church)  
The Rev Ross Blackman (Church of Scotland)  
Major David Cavanagh (Salvation Army)  
The Rev Andy Downie (United Free Church of Scotland)  
Msgr Philip Kerr (Roman Catholic Church)  
The Rev James Patron Bell (Methodist Church in Scotland)  
Lindsay Taylor (Interfaith Scotland)  
Mary Woodward (Religious Society of Friends)  
Bishop Adrian Wilkinson (Church of Ireland)

The Primus also welcomed the Rev Dr Michael Hull who would take up a new role as the Principal of the Scottish Episcopal Institute from the beginning of July, Mr Paul Williams who would take up the new role of Net Zero Delivery Director during the course of July and Mr John Wyllie who had started as Head of Safeguarding a number of weeks previously.

### 1.2.2 Appointment of Tellers

Ms Bridget Campbell (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Mr Jim Gibson (Convener, Administration Board) seconded, the following Motion:

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

The Motion was put to the vote and passed unanimously.

### 1.2.3 Appointment of Prolocutors

The Rev Canon Dave Richards (Edinburgh) proposed, and the Very Rev Alison Simpson (Moray, Ross and Caithness) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Very Rev Sarah Murray be appointed as Clerical Prolocutor for the meeting.”*

The Motion was put to the vote in the House of Clergy and passed unanimously.

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

*“That the Very Rev Margaret Campbell be appointed as Clerical Vice-Prolocutor for the meeting.”*

The Motion was put to the vote in the House of Clergy and passed *nem con* as follows: 54 in favour, 1 abstention.

Ms Bridget Campbell (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Mr Jim Gibson (Convener, Administration Board) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That Dr Anthony Birch be appointed as Lay Prolocutor for the meeting.”*

The Motion was put to the vote in the House of Laity and passed *nem con* as follows: 48 in favour, 2 abstentions.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Mr Gibson seconded, the following Motion:

*“That Jeanette Whiteside 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* as follows: 48 in favour, 1 abstention.

#### **1.2.4 Permission to Speak**

Ms Bridget Campbell (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Mr Jim Gibson (Convener, Administration Board) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Rev Jim Benton-Evans, the Rev Elizabeth Crumlish, Canon Alistair Dinnie, the Rt Rev Sally Foster-Fulton, Cathy Johnston, the Rev Kim Lafferty, Lexy Plumtree, Robert Woodford, the Rev Dr Michael Hull, Elizabeth Mills, Jadon Rongong, Olivia Smith, and other members of the Provincial Youth Committee, and invited representatives from other churches and faiths be given permission to speak to Synod.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed unanimously.

#### **1.2.5 Minutes of General Synod 2022**

Ms Bridget Campbell (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 9-11 June 2022.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con* as follows: 99 in favour, 10 abstentions.

#### **1.2.6 Roll Call**

The roll call of Synod members was taken by the completion of a registration sheet as members had arrived at the meeting of Synod. A total of 120 members attended.

### **1.3 Synod Rules of Order**

Ms Bridget Campbell (Convener, Standing Committee) explained that she wished to propose certain changes to the Rules of Order on behalf of the Standing Committee. Because of the fact that recent meetings of Synod had been held online or in hybrid mode, an electronic voting system had been adopted. It had worked well in practical terms and she expressed thanks to Sanctus Media for their technical support. The main change to the Rules of Order which Standing Committee wished to propose was a change to reflect the use of electronic voting. That was in the form of an amendment to Section (d) of Rule 12, as set out in Motion 9 on the Synod agenda. However, since the papers for the Synod meeting had been circulated it had been pointed out that there remained certain questions about the implications of electronic voting which would benefit from further exploration in the year ahead before any permanent change to the Rules was proposed. That included consideration of how transparent electronic voting was compared with a show of hands. Standing Committee had therefore agreed to propose a slightly different version of Motion 9 as it appeared in the printed agenda, the effect of which would be to allow votes to be taken electronically at the current

meeting. If the Motion were passed the Primus intended to exercise the power given to the Chair to direct that votes be taken electronically for the current meeting.

The Committee also proposed a minor amendment to Section (c) in Rule 12 as set out in Motion 8. That was a "tidying up" amendment since the subject of elections was already dealt with fully in Rule 13.

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

*“That Rule 12 (c) of the Rules of Order of the General Synod be altered by the deletion of the words “Where the matter which is the subject of the vote relates to the appointment of a member of the Synod to any particular office or committee, voting shall be by ballot.””*

The Motion was put to the vote, it being noted that it required a two thirds majority, and was passed *nem con* as follows: 108 in favour, 2 abstentions.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Mr Gibson, seconded the following Motion:

*“That, for the meeting of General Synod 2023 only, the Rules of Order of the General Synod be altered by the addition at the end of Rule 12 (d) of the following words:*

*“The Chair may direct that votes be taken electronically. Where the meeting is being conducted by members being present by an audio or audio-visual link, votes may be cast by some form of visual indication, or by use of a voting button or similar, or by way of a message sent electronically - and providing the Chair has no reasonable grounds for suspicion as regards authenticity, any such action shall be deemed to be a vote cast personally.””*

Mrs Victoria Elliott (Edinburgh) indicated that she would vote in favour of the Motion but suggested that during the following year other means of voting which were not necessarily electronic should be considered – for example for those who did not possess an electronic device or have internet access. She was keen that the Synod should be as inclusive as possible.

Mrs Jan Whiteside (Glasgow and Galloway) suggested that one advantage of electronic voting was that it removed the possibility for potential bullying. For example, if she voted against a Motion, might she be subject to bullying by those who had proposed it? It was important not to leave people feeling vulnerable.

Dr Martin Auld (Aberdeen and Orkney) proposed that those who were voting online should have their screens turned on so that those present in person could see them.

Ms Campbell thanked those who had made comments which would be taken into account.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 103 in favour, 1 against, 3 abstentions.

The Primus then directed that votes for the remainder of the meeting would be taken electronically.

## **SESSION 2: THE REV CANON DAVE RICHARDS IN THE CHAIR**

### **2.1 Standing Committee – Accounts, Budget and Quota Overview**

Ms Bridget Campbell (Convener, Standing Committee) reminded the Synod that the members of the Standing Committee were the charity trustees of the General Synod and acted as its executive committee between Synod meetings. She hoped that the focus of the current meeting would be on renewing strength as a Church, learning from one another and committing to work together on ways in which the Church could grow. Growth was vitally important because of the challenge faced by the Church. The total number of members across Scotland was recorded in 2022 at just under 24,000 and the number of communicant members was under 17,000. Overall, numbers were smaller than a few years previously.

She expressed gratitude to the members of the Standing Committee and thanked Canon Dave Richards and the Dean Alison Simpson, the two members of Standing Committee who were standing down, and also to Jenny Whelan who had stood down the previous year. She also thanked the staff of the General Synod Office who worked in support of the Committee.

Ms Campbell presented the Report and Accounts for the General Synod for the year ended 31 December 2022 and illustrated particular items by PowerPoint slides. The total annual income across the entire Church was in the region of £20 million, with the bulk of income and expenditure being at congregational level. The income of the General Synod represented only about 10% of the Church's total income. In 2022, the boards and committees of the General Synod had spent nearly £3 million. The income arose from two main sources: investments (which accounted for 68% of income) and quota from dioceses (representing 22%). The investment income came mainly from the Synod's holdings in the Unit Trust Pool, overseen by the Investment Committee. That Committee worked effectively, and she expressed gratitude to Mark Harris, its Convener and the other members. The Standing Committee had met representatives of the Investment Committee the previous year and had asked them to undertake a review of the potential for releasing more of the funds held in the Unit Trust Pool to support future actions. Later in the current meeting, Mr Harris would give a presentation about that. Throughout the previous year, the Standing Committee had been continually aware of the multiple challenges faced by congregations and the Church as a whole arising from the general state of the economy, rates of inflation and the cost of living crisis.

Ms Campbell noted that in 2021 the General Synod had agreed a policy for increases in clergy stipend, recognising that stipend had not kept pace with inflation. The Synod had agreed a period of catch up and the stipend increase for 2023 had been set at 1% above the rate of inflation. That policy had resulted in an increase in Standard Stipend for 2023 of 11.1%, with a consequent increase in pension contributions. Recognising that such an increase was likely to be challenging for

many congregations, the Standing Committee had agreed to apply £365,000 of reserves over 2023 and 2024 to ease the transition to the new rate. That funding was known as Transitional Stipend Assistance and was available to dioceses to enable them to provide financial support to charges facing the greatest difficulty. However, that funding was intended to address only the challenges of transition and in future it was for charges and dioceses themselves to consider how to adjust to the increased levels.

Ms Campbell explained that the General Fund provided a good indication of the underlying financial position. In 2022, the final figures for both income and expenditure had turned out to be different from estimates drawn up before the year had started. There had been a surplus of approximately £79,000 on the General Fund (compared with a budgeted deficit of £113,000). That had been mainly because the income from the Unit Trust Pool had been larger than expected. Also, total expenditure had been less than budget for various reasons including fewer grant applications, staffing changes which had taken longer to implement than planned, and the fact that many meetings had continued to take place using videoconferencing facilities. Offsetting those underspends, there had been certain areas where the Standing Committee had had to spend more than had been budgeted – for example, the ongoing situation in the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney and action arising out of the tragic accident in Peterhead, which had sadly resulted in the deaths of two church volunteers, had meant that there had been greater expenditure on legal and advisory fees.

Following the Peterhead accident, the Health and Safety Executive had issued Statutory Notices on various bodies in the Church including the Province and these had been the subject of legal process which was still ongoing. Following the incident, the Buildings Committee had undertaken significant work in developing comprehensive new health and safety resources, in consultation with congregations, with an emphasis on risk assessment. The new materials to support congregations had been rolled out in February 2023 and Ms Campbell thanked the Convener of the Buildings Committee, Peter Sharp, and its other members for the work which they had undertaken to support dioceses and congregations to fulfil their health and safety responsibilities.

Overall, the Standing Committee, as it was required to do, had carried out an assessment of the General Synod's ability to continue as a going concern financially and had concluded that it expected the Synod to have adequate resources to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

In setting the budgets for 2023-2025, Standing Committee had agreed deficit budgets to ensure that the ongoing work of various boards was adequately funded. Deficits were projected on the General Fund for 2023 of £627,000, for 2024 of £370,000 and for 2025 of £298,000. The deficits in 2023 and 2024 were larger than they would otherwise have been due to the provision of Transitional Stipend Assistance. Whilst the actual financial outcome had in the past often been better than budget, the scale of the projected deficits meant that Standing Committee expected that deficits would actually be incurred in the following three years and that was likely to continue. These would be funded initially from surpluses generated in the recent past but would also require funding from the sale of investments. That meant that Standing Committee was planning to reduce the Synod's reserves.

Ms Campbell turned to consider matters which the Standing Committee would take into account in finalising budgets for the General Synod for 2024 and beyond. Everyone was going to have to make changes in response to the climate change emergency, particularly in reassessing how to heat and light church buildings and, indeed, whether the Church still needed and could afford all of its existing buildings. In 2020, the Synod had passed a Motion seeking the development of a programme to resource the Church in working towards achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. In 2021, the Standing Committee had established a Provincial Environment Group under the convenership of Bishop Ian Paton. The challenge faced by the Church was enormous and needed engagement at every level. The Provincial Environment Group had reported on progress to Synod 2022 and had since consulted widely including the publication in February 2023 of a draft Net Zero Action Plan. The Standing Committee was grateful to Bishop Paton and the Provincial Environment Group and to all who had participated in the consultation exercise. The challenge was not just about working out what needed to be done, and funding it, but also about devising the best model for supporting the activity and changes required. The responsibility for determining and carrying out action locally lay with congregations and dioceses and the Provincial Environment Group had demonstrated a way in which that work could be supported. The financial projections provided to Synod included expenditure on the appointment of the provincial Net Zero Delivery Director but did not include the other costs envisaged for delivery of the Net Zero Action Plan. While the Provincial Environment Group continued to gather information there would inevitably remain considerable uncertainty about the precise costs of implementing many of the proposals in the Plan. However, considerable funds would need to be identified. Current projections suggested that additional provincial funding of several hundreds of thousands of pounds would be needed every year totalling several millions of pounds over the following seven years to 2030. Standing Committee wished to enable the Synod's commitment towards net zero by 2030 to be fulfilled and therefore intended to ensure that sufficient funding was available to implement the Action Plan. Standing Committee also remained committed to other priorities, in particular ensuring that sufficient funds were available to providing appropriate training for ministry and new mission initiatives.

Ms Campbell explained that an innovation at the current Synod meeting was a composite Workplan covering the work of many boards and committees. They had contributed to the first version of a composite forward-looking Workplan, as set out in the Synod papers. Standing Committee expected the Plan to develop over time but it had already proved useful in providing, in a single document, clarity on board and committee objectives and some insight into their future direction. For boards, the Workplan supported their management and oversight of the work of the committees which reported to them. The Workplan also encouraged focus and transparency in their work. The Workplan might in future be useful to Standing Committee if it became necessary to make decisions about budget allocation between potentially competing priorities. Standing Committee was grateful to the boards and committees, and particularly their Conveners, for their help in developing the Plan. Later in the Synod there would be the opportunity for Synod members to meet the Conveners to discuss the Workplan.

In closing, Ms Campbell expressed gratitude to all those who had served as Conveners or members on the Synod's boards and committees.



She 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 2022.”*

Ms Lesley Whitwood (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) commented that the statistics in the Annual Report took no account of non-eucharistic services which were greatly valued in many congregations including Morning Prayer, Evensong, remembrance services and also online services. The Liturgy Committee had provided splendid resources and the fact that attendance figures were not recorded suggested to her that the Province was not interested in non-eucharistic services. If such services were not valued, it was unsurprising that only one person had entered training for lay readership. Such an approach diminished the value of all lay ministers and those who valued non-eucharistic services.

Ms Campbell responded that there was no intention to devalue such services or individuals. The statistics which were collected were very minimal. The question of how best to capture all the activity going on in the life of the Church was a matter which would need to be addressed in future years.

Mr Brian Harris (Aberdeen and Orkney) was delighted to see the innovation of the map of the Province in the Annual Report which showed Orkney and Shetland in their proper places. He suggested that a similar change should be made to the provincial website.

The Very Rev Elizabeth Thomson (Brechin) commented that, in ecumenical outreach, services were likely to be non-eucharistic. In mapping the way in which the Church responded to local communities it was important to capture that non-eucharistic activity.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed as follows: 102 in favour, 1 against, 3 abstentions.

## **2.2 Investment Committee**

Mr Mark Harris (Convener, Investment Committee) gave a presentation on the Unit Trust Pool (UTP). He explained that the UTP had been established in 1960 to enable professional management of the Province's investments and had subsequently been expanded to enable dioceses and individual charges to co-invest. Baillie Gifford had been appointed as the fund managers in 1995. The role of the Investment Committee was to determine strategic investment allocation, select and monitor performance of the fund manager, declare twice yearly distributions and ensure compliance with the Church's ethical investment policies. The fund manager selected the funds and investments within the strategic investment allocation, reported on performance and also ensured compliance with the ethical policies. The Committee could not provide advice on whether or not to hold units in the UTP. The overarching investment objective was to earn a return on the assets over the long-term which was sufficient at least to maintain the real value of the distribution. It was a long-term investment vehicle and not suitable for short-term investment. The key investment criteria were taking a long-term view

(based on rolling periods of five years), the Fund being managed on a total return basis, and ensuring that the strategic investment allocation created appropriate balance between investment returns and investment risk. The total value of the UTP as at 30 April 2023 had been £116 million of which 63% was owned by the Province. 186 charges were invested in the UTP. The Fund pursued a diversified investment strategy with 35% applied to an income focus, 30% in a combined growth and income focus and 35% in a growth focus. Using PowerPoint slides, Mr Harris reported on the performance of the UTP which had been very good with average annual total return since 1995 of 9.6% and, in the previous three years, 14.2%. Those performance figures had been achieved notwithstanding three points of downturn resulting from the dot-com bubble burst, the global financial crisis in 2008 and the current geopolitical crisis concerning the war in Ukraine. Actual distributions until 2008 had more or less tracked the objective of maintaining the real value but the distribution had been cut at that point owing to the financial crisis. Since then, the distribution had been increased over time and, measured from 2001, there was a shortfall of 7p between the actual distribution and the objective. The Committee was determined to continue to endeavour to close that gap.

Mr Harris reported on the current outlook for the UTP which was generally positive but there remained at the present time certain headwinds particularly in relation to inflation and interest rates. Changes of holdings within the three strategies had been minor, reflecting Baillie Gifford's confidence in the positions held for the long-term. The full year distribution for 2022 had been an increase of 15% on the 2021 figure and the interim distribution for 2023 represented an increase of 16% on the equivalent distribution in 2022. These reflected the Committee's ongoing confidence in the UTP's strategic positioning. The Committee was in full compliance with the ethical investment policy which excluded certain classes of investments, including for pooled funds. Ethical investment was given a high priority by Baillie Gifford and screening embedded into Baillie Gifford's approach across all three strategies meant that attention was paid to impact on the environment not just because it was the right thing to do but also because it was good for business.

The Committee had been asked to consider possible realisation of some of the Province's investment in the UTP. Mr Harris explained that the Committee had considered the possibility of releasing of £5 million or £10 million from the UTP. Releasing £5 million would involve the sale of 7% of the Province's units and to realise £10 million would involve selling 14%. Mr Harris explained that if the Province had expected a total return of 7.5% from its holding in the UTP over the previous five years that would have produced £18.5 million. The actual total return over that period had in fact been £30.8 million and in that sense an "excess" total return of £12.3 million had been generated. That £30.8 million comprised £8.5 million of actual distributions and £22.3 million of actual gain in valuation. Consequently, the hypothetical realisation of £5 million or £10 million to which he had just referred were well within the "excess" total return achieved over that five years period. He likened any such realisation not to "raiding the cookie jar" but rather to picking up the cookies which had overflowed from the cookie jar. Selling units would of course mean that there would be a reduction in future income because there would be fewer units held in future. Based on a unit price of £26.63 and the level of the distribution in 2022, the reduction in income would be approximately £141,000 if £5 million were realised and £282,000 if £10 million were to be realised. That represented 6% or 12% respectively of the Province's 2023 total budgeted income. It also took no account of future UTP performance and

distribution increases. It was in any event unlikely that any such large realisation of units would be undertaken as one lump sum. It was more likely to be phased over a period. If it were necessary to top up income by selling additional units, only 5,000 (or 10,000) units would need to be sold annually to replace the cash flow.

The Rev Canon Dr James Currall (Moray, Ross and Caithness) explained that in the area of work in which he was involved before ordination “UTP” stood for “unshielded twisted pair” which was a form of cabling. He thanked Mr Harris for a very clear presentation which enabled him to have a new understanding of the term “UTP”.

The Chair expressed thanks to Mr Harris.

### **2.3 College of Bishops**

The Most Rev Mark Strange (Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness and Primus) explained that the College wished to open a dialogue about what a "call" by the Bishops to the Church for Scotland might comprise. The terminology of "call" came from the Lambeth Conference 2022. The process of "calls" at that Conference had enabled groups of Bishops to discuss the subject matter of those calls and for different opinions to be heard. It had allowed most Bishops to leave the Conference with a sense of continuing fellowship with those with whom they had met. The College considered that the concept of a call was something on which the Synod could work with the Bishops for the SEC. During the current session the members of the College would give glimpses of how the Five Marks of Mission could be lived out. After the presentations, the table groups at Synod would be asked to consider what questions Synod members believed it raised for the Bishops. The intention was that one question would come forward from each group. The Bishops were not looking for a new scheme or programme but rather to how the Synod and its boards and committees could frame a call to the Church in Scotland so that all were moving in the same direction.

The Rt Rev Kevin Pearson (Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway) spoke on the first Mark of Mission, namely "to proclaim the good news". Asking Synod members to remember their confirmation he reminded them that all the confirmation affirmations revolved around the question "do you turn to Christ". When an individual responded "I do" their life was turned around as Mary Magdalene's had been in the garden of the Resurrection. At Confirmation the question led to a recognition of the gift and power of the Holy Spirit at work in the individual. He suggested that the way to proclaim the good news that God is love was to use the SEC motto "Evangelical Truth and Apostolic Order". Truth was a journey not a destination which was why the truth of Scripture needed to be discovered and journeyed with day by day. It enabled the building of trust in God. As to apostolic order, the Church's sacramental life made the presence of Jesus and God's love real in the world. The Church had the power to share the good news and he urged Synod members to bring Scotland to God through trust, confidence and hope.

The Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) spoke on the Mark of Mission "to teach, baptise and nurture new Christians". It was more vital than ever to "continue in the apostles' teaching" in an age where the Christian truths were understood only hazily. Christian nurture was not about transferring knowledge but rather about accompanying people as they grew into the stature of Christ. When he had

ministered in an industrial part of Lancashire, the congregation had decided to run the Emmaus programme. He had been surprised that regular church attenders had turned up to undertake the course but newcomers had also come and by the end there had been more people in church than had been the case before. The best examples of nurture which he had learnt at that time were the ones which engaged the whole person and helped people develop a faith which touched their whole life, moving from being passive recipients to active agents. Such courses invited people into community and gave the opportunity to ask questions and offer honest answers. No church was required to do that alone. In his diocese, some congregations were joining together, or with other denominations, to offer nurture programmes. To see people being nurtured was one of the most rewarding aspects of ministry.

The Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) spoke on the third Mark of Mission "responding to human need by loving service". This mark manifested in every part of life. Already in Synod, the Primus had mentioned responding to the needs of refugees. Since the earliest days of the Church, it had responded in loving service to human need. Referring to the description of the early church in Acts 2, he noted that Christians had sold property in order to support those in need. There were plenty of current examples – projects in churches such as food banks, helping those on the margins, work with refugees. When congregational numbers were small, and the church roof needed fixed, the danger was always to become inward focused. What could the Church do to help its communities grow to respond again in loving service, even when circumstances felt overwhelming?

The Rt Rev Ian Paton (Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) spoke on the fourth Mark of Mission "to transform unjust structures in society, challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation". There were remarkable people in the Province who were doing just that – the members of the Mothers' Union. The injustice which the Mothers' Union were working against was endemic in society – the evil of gender-based violence and domestic abuse. Gender-based violence did not just affect women but according to NHS Scotland four out of five incidents had a female victim and a male perpetrator. One in five women and one in 25 men experienced gender-based violence or abuse during their lives. Not all such violence was physical – some was verbal – but it was always dehumanising. The Mothers' Union had been working hard and for many years had supported the Thursday in Black initiative. Its members were helping women's aid centres to support survivors. In December each year they organised events around the country to support the United Nations' 16 Days of Action against gender-based violence. In 2023, the theme would be "changing the story". An empty red chair would symbolise those who had been killed or dehumanised by that kind of violence. The Mothers' Union would be starting conversations on this topic in vestries, with Bishops and with SEI and would offer training and resources to raise understanding and change behaviour. Like racism, homophobia and transphobia, gender-based violence were evils that shamed society. Dame Helena Kennedy, when introducing the Government's report on misogyny in Scotland, had said that the members of her committee had been shocked that over 50% of the population in Scotland were experiencing misogyny, all of the time. The Mothers' Union was not taking up what some liked to dismiss as woke militancy but rather was helping to wake the Church up to challenge unjust structures of society and violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation. He hoped the Church would listen.

The Rt Rev Dr Keith Riglin (Bishop of Argyll and The Isles) spoke on the fifth Mark of Mission "to strive to preserve the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth". The challenge and delight of that Mark of Mission was that it did not address "something else" but rather something of which everyone was a part. When the psalmist proclaimed "the Earth is the Lord's and all that therein is, the compass of the world and all that dwell therein" the delight included humankind. Humankind was included in the affirmation of Genesis when God declared that creation was "very good". That reminded the Church that as it rose to the challenge of the Net Zero Action Plan it was engaged in a challenge but also in a delight. In Argyll and The Isles one charge was looking to replace its current rectory, recognising that it was no longer fit for purpose in the light of net zero. Another charge had recognised that because of the inefficiency of its heating it was no longer practical to pay £100 every time 15 people gathered together for public worship to heat the building. The Diocese was looking at how to use its resources to affirm the gift of God. In Skye, the congregation had turned an unused piece of land into a delightful quiet garden. On Mull, the church was looking at doing something similar. Such steps did not specifically reduce carbon footprint, but they expressed fine steps along the path. He hoped that as the Church responded to the challenge it could join with creation, with the valleys being "so thick with corn that they laughed and sang".

In closing the session, the Primus asked the table groups to engage in conversation and formulate questions for the College of Bishops which it hoped to answer in the second session the following day.

## **2.4 Anglican Consultative Council**

Canon Alistair Dinnie spoke as one of the SEC representatives at the 18th Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) meeting which had taken place in Accra in February. It had met in the warm, hospitable, entrepreneurial energy of Ghana and also in the shadow of a controversial Communion development relating to differences on the issue of human sexuality, namely the recent Church of England response to same-sex issues. He had attended with the Rev Lee Johnston, the SEC's other representative, and also Amie Byers who had attended as a youth representative. The remit of the ACC was to facilitate the co-operative work of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, exchange information between the Provinces and to help co-ordinate common action. It advised on the organisation and structures of the Communion and sought to develop common policies with respect to the world mission of the Church, including ecumenical matters.

Over the course of five business days members had worked together around tables which had created space for deep and honest sharing. The work had been grounded in daily Bible study and worship, each day themed by one of the five Anglican Marks of Mission rendered in their short form: tell, teach, attend, transform, treasure.

"Tell" had set the scene with an opening address from the Archbishop of Canterbury. "Teach" had involved group discussion of intentional discipleship, theological education in the Communion and church planting, concluding with a fringe event on the outcome of the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith process.

"Tend" had scheduled conversation around the Health and Family Networks, the Unity Faith and Order Commission, the Liturgical Commission and the network for Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion with an evening fringe event about the Church of England Commissioners' recent research into the Church of England's links with the transatlantic slave trade, which had resulted in a proposal to set up a £1 million impact fund to invest in a better and fairer future for all, particularly communities affected by historic slavery. The following day had comprised a visit to Cape Coast Castle where the links to historic slavery were laid horribly bare. The visit had been a powerful and dislocating experience with the officers' quarters standing in utter contrast to the claustrophobic horror of the slave dungeons beneath where up to 1,500 enslaved people could be held in appalling conditions for up to three months before being shipped to the New World. There was one window into the series of interconnected dungeons from outside the castle's chapel, apparently designed to allow those in the dungeon to hear church services when they were being conducted. Astonishingly, that appeared to have been conceived as a compassionate gesture. Fittingly, the theme for the following day of business had been "transform" – "to transform the unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation".

On the final working day the theme of "treasure" had allowed a focus on the Communion's Environment, Indigenous, Youth and language-specific networks.

Details of the meeting and its outputs were available on the website ACC18.org. Once again, Canon Dinnie said that he had returned from an ACC meeting barely able to comprehend the range, depth and vitality of the work in which the Communion was engaged. Since ACC18 had been his last meeting, he offered thanks to the Synod and the Province for the honour of being able to serve and for the opportunity of participating in the work of the Synod during that time. He asked for prayers for all who would take forward the work of the ACC and those who shouldered the work between meetings.

In a final reflection, he noted that over the previous seven years there had been occasions where conversations in which he had been involved had sought to identify why the Anglican Communion was a Communion. In all cases he had observed a similar dynamic, namely that instead of identifying unifying features the query tended to elicit analogies. He had heard the Communion compared to a flotilla of ships, all moving in much the same direction but under their own steam, or on another occasion prized recipes for a traditional dish all with their slight regional variations exciting fierce argument over which version was the most authentic. Often liturgy was named as a relevant factor but he had found himself wondering whether there were not issues of access to power, status and money that the Communion was too afraid to name. Being part of the Communion could be challenging in ways that were not always expected or constructive. For him, the most challenging point of the Ghana meeting had been the fringe event on Living in Love and Faith where the tectonic plates of the Communion differences on human sexuality had crashed into each other with some heat, but little light. Whatever the challenges, the Communion engaged in vital work and encompassed a diversity which gave opportunity for conversation across nation, culture and language at a time when structures which enabled that seemed to be increasingly under threat. In that context, his reflection was that perhaps the reason why the Anglican Communion was a Communion mattered less than the fact that its members made the active choice to be a Communion.

The Chair closed the session by thanking Canon Dinnie.

### **SESSION 3: THE RT REV THE BISHOP OF BRECHIN IN THE CHAIR**

- 3.1** The Chair explained that an additional procedural motion was to be put to Synod to give permission to speak to all members of the Provincial Environment Group.

The following motion was then proposed to Synod:

*"That members of the Provincial Environment Group be given permission to speak to Synod."*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 91 in favour, 1 against, no abstentions.

The Rt Rev Ian Paton (Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) spoke as the Convener of the Provincial Environment Group. Referring to the New Testament reading at the Synod Eucharist earlier in the day which had referred to the whole creation groaning in labour pains, and indeed, to those who had the first fruits of the Spirit similarly groaning while waiting for adoption, he explained that the current session would deal with the fruit of the labour pains with which the Provincial Environment Group (PEG) had laboured. The Net Zero Action Plan before Synod was a response to the decision of the General Synod in 2020 to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The revised version of the Action Plan contained in the Synod papers was one which had been revised following the consultation which had taken place earlier in the year. He thanked all those who had taken part in the consultation. He also thanked the members of PEG, the Vice Convener Cathy Johnston, the Rev Dr Valerie Cameron, the Rev Willie Shaw, the Rev Lewis Shand Smith and Robert Woodford. Mr Woodford had acted as a consultant and produced much of the material included in the Action Plan. He also thanked General Synod Office staff, particularly Miriam Weibye and Fiona Campbell, and, prospectively, Paul Williams the incoming Net Zero Delivery Director.

The Action Plan was being offered to give information and resources for local decisions to be made in moving towards 2030. It was a whole church challenge, not a green agenda on the part of enthusiasts. It was about mission, as the Church helped to lead society in its response to the climate emergency. It was not just about technology but about behaviour, for example, using less energy.

Cathy Johnston (Vice Convener of PEG) reminded Synod that at Synod 2022 she had talked of the Church as being an ecosystem. During the year PEG had been discovering the realities of the interconnections within that church ecosystem. The timeline for PEG's work had been crammed into a relatively short timescale and the Group had been very busy. Robert Woodford had been appointed a consultant following Synod 2022 and an initial webinar had been presented. The consultation undertaken earlier in the year on the Action Plan had been done over a relatively short period but was part of the engagement strategy which PEG had set out from the beginning. She thanked all those who had participated. PEG had worked with various committees, in particular the Provincial Buildings Committee and others, including the College of Bishops. PEG had developed the consultation document into the Net Zero Action Plan presented to the current meeting.

Ms Johnston reported on the responses to the consultation. The process had enabled PEG to learn about many things which were already under way within the Church as a whole. Part of the task had been to identify where PEG could be involved in the different structures of the Church as well as how local charges would be affected. The consultation could not have been undertaken without the assistance of GSO staff. Many people had responded positively to the questions in the consultation document. The issue of deliverability was the area in which the greatest degree of uncertainty had been demonstrated by respondents. There was a clear understanding of the urgency of the issue and also that the Plan was a credible way of proceeding. Narratives which people submitted as part of the consultation had been very varied and very valuable. Some had indicated that too much was being asked whereas others had said not enough was being proposed. Several areas of technical expertise had been revealed. There had been a significant reaction to the tone and language of the first draft and that had been changed in the final version of the Action Plan. Whilst not everyone would be able to undertake everything at once, everyone could at least be thinking about the values identified in the Action Plan such as discipleship, justice and hope. The final version retained the lens of discipleship, justice and hope but the suggested outcomes had been reformulated and were focused particularly on the issue of support. The objectives had been retained but were confined to emphases on energy consumption, moving to cleaner energy and issues of active travel. Importantly, there were also outcomes associated with shared governance. The concerns about deliverability highlighted the need for support. The Net Zero Delivery Director was one aspect of such support. Other areas of support needed were in relation to expertise and finance. The projection contained in the Synod papers was based on the best modelling available at the present time.

Robert Woodford then addressed Synod. He outlined three supporting resources which PEG was announcing at the current meeting, all of which aligned with the Net Zero Action Plan. These comprised an update to the Net Zero Toolkit, a new resource in the form of Net Zero cards, and a new Net Zero Workshop Programme.

The updated Toolkit would bring it into alignment with the 10 objectives of the Action Plan. The Toolkit would continue to be the first port of call and a central resource available to the Church. PEG intended to release the Toolkit as a living online document ensuring that it included the most up-to-date information. PEG would work with other provincial committees to ensure that the expertise of those other bodies was fully embodied in the Toolkit. He provided a visual outline of the new Toolkit. Lana Woolford had been commissioned to assist with that.

The Net Zero Cards comprised suggestions which churches could consider on their journey towards net zero. Some such actions might already have been completed but others would be new. The cards also aligned with the Net Zero Action Plan and were designed for use in small groups. PEG had worked with HeatHack to develop the cards. All of the content generated for the cards would be available under a creative Commons Licence so that any denomination or interfaith partner could make use of them. They would be made available as a set of 55 tactile printed cards as well as online to maximise access to them. A set of the cards was laid out for the Synod to see.

PEG intended to pilot a new programme of workshops in conjunction with its partner HeatHack. Those would help provide a facilitated forum in which groups of non-



technical stakeholders could discuss and plan practical actions for net zero. A broad range of topics would be included. The existing HeatHack format was already being used by a number of Scottish Episcopal churches. St Mary's, Dalkeith had undertaken such a workshop and was already achieving significant savings in their energy bills. PEG's intention was to pilot a customised version of the workshop in 2023 and roll it out more broadly in 2024.

Mr Woodford also referred to a heating resilience plan template which was available to help congregations in the planning of any replacement of their heating system.

Mr Woodford recognised that there was much work to be undertaken and that there was limited resource available to many vestries. PEG therefore believed it was essential that dedicated qualified people were available to help drive the work forward. That was why PEG was proposing five local Net Zero Champions within the Plan. They would help in bringing understanding of the Toolkit, the cards and the workshop but would be able to meet face-to-face with charges to offer support, including assistance with grant funding applications, on completing the energy footprint tool and appraise and contextualise local action plans. The combination of the resources to which he had referred earlier and the availability of the local Net Zero Champions, PEG believed, would help all charges to accelerate their progress towards net zero by 2030. Finally, he unveiled to Synod a stained glass window illustration created by Lana Woolford based on the PEG logo and the 10 petals of the Net Zero Action Plan.

Bishop Paton then proposed, and Ms Bridget Campbell (Convener, Standing Committee), seconded the following motion:

*“That this Synod, having expressed in 2020 the need for urgent action in relation to the global climate emergency and having resolved to work towards achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030, receive the Net Zero Action Plan (2023-2030) for the Scottish Episcopal Church and affirm the direction of the Plan as enabling fulfilment of that resolution.”*

Synod then spent time in discussion in table groups, following which plenary debate resumed.

The Rev Dr James Currall (Moray, Ross and Caithness) said he found much that was encouraging in the report to Synod. However, the environmental crisis was much more than just global warming. The "elephant in the room" was the abuse of God's creation in the overconsumption in the developed world and consequent broken relationship with neighbours worldwide especially the poor and those in less developed countries. These matters were not simply caused by using the wrong technology for energy generation. The issue was frequently ignored because it needed real change and not just a greening up of business as usual. The values and vision section in the Action Plan did not even hint at that. There was a radical inequality in the way the earth's resources were used and there was no solution other than one underpinned by a drastic reduction in consumption. The high rate of consumption produced consequences which were felt particularly in the Global South. Christians needed to treat the resources of the world as part of a relationship with God. Access to resources was not a right, and gratitude was essential. Social justice was key to tackling the issue. Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope Francis had

pointed out the link between ecological justice and social justice. A church which failed to pray for the natural environment was one which denied food to a suffering humanity. The environmental crisis was a series of interrelated complex problems to which no one had the answer. Pope Francis had written that to seek only a technical remedy to an environmental problem was to mask the deepest problems of the global system. When faced with such problems, the people of God had historically turned to prayer and lament. In an age when much of the prevailing narrative was that humanity could overcome problems by scientific endeavour or technological advance, it was counter-cultural to suggest that perhaps part of the approach for the Church must be to turn to God rather than engage in ceaseless activity. The Church's approach had to start and end with God. Church and theology had to have something constructive to say since otherwise the Church risked being irrelevant. A truth that did not offer life was empty of meaning. What was the Church's hope-filled vision for the rest of the world? There was a responsibility not only to take action to contribute less to the problem but to be a prophetic voice in the world.

Bishop Paton commended Dr Currall for what he had said. None of what he had said was counter to what PEG was proposing, namely a whole Church and Gospel issue, not simply a technological one.

The Rev Willie Shaw (member of PEG) said that he was also a member of the Church in Society Committee which was taking on the responsibility for three of the ten petals of the Action Plan. He invited Dr Currall to bring his passion to building a wider movement and encouraging individual discipleship.

Dr Martin Auld (Aberdeen and Orkney) said that practical simplification of delivery was essential. Complex strategies were a barrier to people's engagement and he urged that the strategy be made simple and available. It was about changing people's lives. He reminded Synod of the five 'Rs' (refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle). The provision of case studies would be very helpful. Climate change was leading to a biodiversity crisis and so there was a wider issue. Referring to Earth Overshoot Day, the date in the year when consumption of resources exceeded the resources produced by the Earth, he noted that the date had moved from 29 July in 2021 to 28 July in 2022. The period was therefore shortening. For the UK, the date had been 19 May which meant that the UK was a bigger user of resource than the Earth in general. He reminded Synod of the Brundtland Declaration in 1987 which had led to the understanding that the issues were social, environmental and economic. Sustainable development was development which met the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There was a need for a strategy which helped people to understand that.

Cathy Johnston responded and appreciated the comments about the need to break down the strategy so that it could be understood. That was why PEG wished to develop the Toolkit so that it could be accessed easily. The proposed work with HeatHack would also assist in that. PEG was hoping to build case studies with assistance from diocesan groups. PEG recognised the importance of biodiversity and that was covered in the material.

Dr Stephen Goodyear (Aberdeen and Orkney) explained that prior to his retiral he had held a senior global role in Shell and had been heavily involved in energy

transition projects. He was passionate about reducing emissions but the question was whether the Plan which had been presented to the Synod was credible. It asked for £35 million to be spent to reduce 6,000 tonnes per annum of CO<sub>2</sub>. The Plan assumed that £25 million of that funding requirement would come from public bodies. Most church buildings were not used very often and were difficult to insulate. It was therefore extremely expensive to achieve that level of abatement for every tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>. The figures were so high that they did not fit with any reasonable metric for a sensible project. The charity trustees might have a difficulty justifying the use of resources in that way. However, he did not think that funds would be available from public sources. Grants were only available for buildings with high utilisation. He had checked the position for his own church which had a utilisation of three hours per week and had received a response to the effect that it would be highly unlikely that funding would be available. He therefore found that element of the Plan profoundly disturbing. He believed that the Plan set the wrong balance between reducing CO<sub>2</sub> and offsetting. If that were to be reconsidered, an offsetting strategy could address some of those deficiencies, including taking account of biodiversity. He would be happy to talk with anyone who was interested about such matters. He had shared more information with PEG.

The Rev Lewis Shand Smith (member, PEG) explained that for 10 years he had been the Energy Ombudsman for the United Kingdom. He sat on the Scottish Energy Advisory Board chaired by the First Minister, and was a member of the Green Heat Buildings Finance Task Force and chaired the Energy Consumers Commission. The question about funding was a good one. PEG was aware that church buildings were not used often and that there could be a difficulty in raising finance but that did not mean that congregations should not be doing their best to prepare their buildings to make them as energy efficient as possible. The Plan also encouraged charges to consider how church buildings were used. For example, could they be used more often and made more available to communities? He agreed with Dr Currall about the need to change behaviour. PEG was trying to help Christian people begin their journey towards net zero. The offsetting issue was an important one. There was a concern about how much more carbon the oceans could actually absorb. The first step had to be to reduce emissions. Offsetting would help with the residual emissions but there was a need to start somewhere and that was what the Plan proposed.

The Rev Denise Herbert (Breachin) agreed with comments made by Dr Goodyear. When at St John's, Jedburgh, she had been involved in fundraising and she appreciated how difficult it was to raise funds. Grant-making bodies were careful about how they allocated funds. She understood that the Green Energy Fund was no longer giving grants for homes and was only providing loans. Did the Church have the courage to consider selling Victorian rectories, which were difficult to heat, and to buy more appropriate properties, or even to stop providing rectories. Also, was there a need to dispose of some church buildings?

The Rev Bonnie Evans Hills (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) explained that she was the Convener of the Inter-Faith Relations Committee. She noted that many people carried a sense of burden about the issue. The cards would, no doubt, be useful but it would be helpful to have cards with prayers. The Church had decades of theological experience of engaging with climate change and she encouraged use of such resources. There was already liturgy for Creationtide but there were many other resources available such as Forest Church and Forest School which helped

people connect with nature locally. She also wished to encourage working with ecumenical and interfaith partners. Each church also needed to connect with its own communities. Leven, where her church was, was an area of high deprivation but there were local eco-groups and there were local organic farmers. She was also aware of fisherfolk concerned about the preservation of the seabed. There was a wider ecology with which to engage.

Ms Susan Rowe (Brechin) explained that she had run one of the Millennium Commission projects. When she had applied for the job she had been informed that there was £12 million available to spend on churches who wished to convert their space to dual use. By the time she had been appointed, the amount had reduced to £2.5 million. People had been excited about the prospect of such financial resource. Her plea was that indications about how much money might be available should not be provided until there was certainty about how much would in fact be available. Also, she urged that the Church should not be carried away by one issue. There was a need to think holistically and bite the bullet as to whether church buildings were being used properly or should they be disposed of.

The Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) agreed with much of what had been said during the debate. It was very hard not to support doing good things. She recognised the efforts which PEG had made to engage the Church on climate change. PEG was, however, focused on a particular area in the life of the Church but she was not convinced that everyone had understood the holistic context of the charges. If she were to close mouldy buildings, she would probably need to close all six churches in her charge, as well as the rectory. Financially, the charge supported her and a full-time youth worker and there was more to being church than simply dealing with one particular issue. She intended to vote against Motion 12 on the agenda (regarding the provision of funding) since she was not comfortable writing a blank cheque. She was a member of the Investment Committee and she realised that it would be possible to release finance in a fiscally responsible way but there was a need to be holistic.

The Rev Dr Sophia Marriage (Edinburgh) indicated that she wholeheartedly supported the work that PEG had done. The project was a seven-year one. The Plan involved putting the money where one's mouth was, and it was a critical issue for the world. It was one of many issues the Church needed to face but it was one of justice and of the future of the planet. She asked the Bishops to help clergy and others who were exhausted to know what other work could be dropped in order to take on the new priority. Permission from Bishops was needed for that.

Mrs Victoria Elliott (Edinburgh) thanked PEG for its work, but she had concerns about whether the Plan was too stringent. She considered it would be helpful to approach the subject in a doctrinal and theological way, leading to practical action. Her Diocesan Standing Committee had discussed matters earlier in the week and questions had been raised about the proposal for Net Zero Champions including their line management and funding. Also, there was a need to recognise work which had already been done by some charges, since there was a danger that the Plan might be perceived as a top-down requirement from the Province. She was undecided as to how to vote.

Mr Brian Harris (Aberdeen and Orkney) noted that Dr Auld had referred to the Brundtland definition of sustainable development. He believed that Brundtland

needed to be redefined in terms of the biblical imperative of the second Great Commandment to love one's neighbour. There were responsibilities to neighbours in time as well as in space.

Mr Hugh Morison (Moray, Ross and Caithness) agreed with much of what had been said. He believed the Plan was a good one. It was very useful to have the Toolkit. He welcomed the proposals for staff to be made available to give advice to congregations. Speaking as a member of a very small congregation in a rural area, he wondered whether the resource was available to implement matters locally. He asked PEG to bear that in mind. He also had concerns about Motion 12 and could not see how it fitted in with the overall responsibility for budgeting. His understanding was that the Synod was not being asked to approve the provision of funding set out in the document but rather to ask Standing Committee to propose such funding as was appropriate.

Mr Shand Smith responded to points made. One of the petals referred to in the Action Plan was the building of a movement and it was right to build such a movement in local communities. As to prayer and liturgy, the Liturgy Committee was involved and the cards would provide an opportunity to reflect. More material would come from the Liturgy Committee and would be added in due course. The Green Heat Scheme had not been successful and he understood it had been wound up but there were grants available from the Scottish Government through Business Energy Scotland and Homes Energy Scotland of up to £8,000 for retrofitting. Sadly, people did not appear to be applying for such grants and there was also an issue in Scotland that there were insufficient numbers of trained people to undertake the necessary work. He agreed that expectations about available finance should not result in overlooking the question as to whether buildings were in fact fit for purpose.

Mr Shaw reported that there were churches which had already applied, and received, funding, such as Wishaw and Motherwell. His own church was in the process of seeking finance. Business Energy Scotland would visit the building to help in the commencement of a plan. It was possible to separate halls and churches. A church hall was a public use space and could be developed to maximise such use. He agreed that there was a need for a holistic conversation about continuing to hold certain buildings.

Ms Bridget Campbell (Convener, Standing Committee) commented on the budgeting process. Each year at Synod, the Standing Committee provided to Synod an indicative budget for the subsequent three years. In November each year the Standing Committee agreed a firm budget for the following calendar year. Each year, the Committee explained to Synod how money had been spent in the previous year. The proposal was not about making an open-ended commitment. PEG had made some helpful projections based on the information it had been able to gather to-date. It had set a direction of travel and, year by year, the Standing Committee would be able to assess what it could afford to spend. Synod had heard earlier in the day from the Investment Committee about the potential availability of finance. Net zero was not the only issue on which finance could be spent but it encompassed a range of issues which the Church needed to address. She agreed that there was a need for a holistic approach. Synod was being asked to endorse not a blank cheque, but a direction of travel.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed as follows: 79 in favour, 11 against, 9 abstentions.

Bishop Paton then proposed, and Ms Campbell seconded, the following motion:

*“That this Synod request the Standing Committee to approve the provision of such funding as the Committee considers appropriate, in consultation with the Provincial Environment Group, to support implementation of the Net Zero Action Plan (2023-2030) for the Scottish Episcopal Church.”*

The Chair clarified that Synod did not approve budgets as such. It was provided with the budgets but approved the quota figure, in the light of the budget presented.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 74 in favour, 15 against, 12 abstentions.

In closing the session, the Chair thanked the members of PEG and all who had contributed to the debate.

## **SESSION 4: THE RT REV THE BISHOP OF GLASGOW AND GALLOWAY IN THE CHAIR**

### **4.1 Mission Board**

#### **4.1.1 Introduction**

The Very Rev Sarah Murray (Convener, Mission Board) reported that there had been much discussion about the task and role of the Mission Board albeit not as much discussion as there had been about what was meant by "mission". What was clear was that the Church had a mission in each place according to the local context and community and everyone had a part to play in that mission. The Board and its pendant committees, working with the College of Bishops and the Standing Committee, was looking at ways to support the Church in its mission. The Board had outlined some of the ways in which it sought to do that in its Workplan and there would be opportunity to explore that in more detail in the "Meet the Board Conveners" session later that day. It was essential for the Church and the sustainable future that ways be found to continue to be a national church with a vibrant and relevant presence in all communities. In the light of the Net Zero Action Plan from the Provincial Environment Group, and its emphasis on a holistic approach taking up the themes of discipleship, justice and hope, linked to the fifth Mark of Mission, the task of the Board was to encourage wider mission beyond climate sustainability recognising that Christ's saving power was to be found everywhere. That involved prophetic dialogue with the world and was a combination of the witness of individual churches and the institutional church.

The pilot phase of the Local Mission Development Committee had begun to ask questions and to seek to begin the process of looking at statistics, using data from a pilot project of an extended statistical return form undertaken in the Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness. That piece of work was in its early stages.

Other work of the Board included the Church in Society Committee which worked in partnership with other committees of the Church and a number of third sector agencies to promote justice for creation and justice for communities. Given the limited number of members on the Committee and constraints of available time, its work needed to be focused on particular themes or topics at any one time. In the previous 12 months the Committee had engaged with the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office and a submission had been made supporting the appointment of a commissioner under the Well-being and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill and preparations were underway for a submission in relation to the Agriculture Bill. The Committee was also working with the Provincial Environment Group. A further development in the year had been the revision of criteria for, and the rebranding of, the former Child Poverty Grant scheme, to become the Enable Grant, details of which were available on the provincial website.

The Global Partnerships Committee continued to engage with churches around the world through supporting mission projects and capacity building identified by local dioceses overseas. The Committee was endeavouring to strengthen relationships with strategic partners for a more sustained and meaningful partnership. It also encouraged the strengthening of existing companion links and the forging of new ones.

The Board's third pendant committee, the Provincial Youth Committee would give a presentation later in Synod.

Provost Murray reported that the Board was pleased to receive feedback either during Synod or through the network of diocesan representatives on the Board and through the Local Mission Development Committee.

She expressed thanks to those who served on the Board and its Committees and to those who supported their work.

#### **4.1.2 Season for Christian Life**

The Rev Jim Benton Evans (member, Season for Christian Life Steering Group) explained that the Steering Group for the Season for Christian Life comprised him, the Rev Kim Lafferty, the Rev Dr Jenny Holden and the Rev Canon Peter Moger.

By way of introduction three short videos were shown of individuals responding to the question "what does it mean to you to turn to Christ?". That question was posed to candidates at baptism and it was in that context that the Season for Christian Life had been initiated by the College of Bishops in conjunction with the Mission Board, initially under the leadership of Bishop Anne Dyer. It comprised an invitation. It was not an initiative or a project being imposed upon people. It was an invitation to "live your best Christian life". The Season would comprise a series of opportunities for members of the Church to tell one another and the world about their Christian life. Above all, it would be a celebration of how the Christian life was expressed, which meant that it would be very different for different people in different places across the Province. The Season was also about recognising that what church members were already doing was Christian and about affirming that.

It was set in the context of a common commitment to God and a common calling in Christ as created and beloved children.

The Rev Kim Lafferty (member, Season for Christian Life Steering Group) explained that she was a rector in East Perthshire. She was also interim pastor for Forfar and Kirriemuir. Having arrived in the SEC two years previously, it was a great joy to be involved in the season.

The Rev Dr Jenny Holden (member, Season for Christian Life Steering Group) explained that she was also the Adviser for Christian Life for the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney. Before that she had served as a priest in a growing congregation in city-centre Aberdeen. The members of the Steering Group were from diverse backgrounds and contexts, seeking to reflect the diversity of the Province. She explained that the Season had as its purpose the enlivening of Christian faith and life, with many different entry points. Everyone was different and connected with God in different ways. For some, that was expressed in acts of service; for others a commitment to treasuring the environment or telling others about Jesus or exploring different spiritual practices. It included activities which people undertook already such as serving on Synod, or in a church service, or campaigning on a local or global issue. The Season would not be defined by one Christian tradition and was not about telling people what to do but rather would offer resources to help church members look forward with hope and focus on the future in continuing to seek to know God more clearly, love God more dearly and follow God more nearly, day by day.

The report in the Synod papers mentioned a future provincial gathering. That would not be a very large meeting but a smaller scale gathering bringing people together to share stories and equip and enable those working in dioceses to facilitate the Season for Christian Life. The Steering Group was consciously engaging with the existing work of boards and committees of the Church including the Provincial Environment Group, where discipleship was one of the three themes of the vision.

The Group was keen to ensure that it was responding to the needs of individuals and congregations which was why the Synod would be invited to engage in table discussions on various questions suggested by the Group.

Synod then spent time addressing questions in table groups, it having been explained that the facilitators on each table would provide feedback from the discussions for passing to the Steering Group.

#### **4.1.3 Local Mission Development Committee**

The Very Rev Sarah Murray (Convener, Mission Board) spoke to the proposals set out in the Synod papers regarding the formalising of the Local Mission Development Committee as a pendant committee of the Mission Board. She offered her thanks to the Rev Diana Hall, the Convener of the Committee, who was unable to be present at Synod. She also thanked those who had worked with Ms Hall in the initial phase of the Committee's life.



Provost Murray then proposed, and the Rev Dr Jenny Holden (Aberdeen and Orkney), seconded the following motion:

*“That the Digest of Resolutions be amended:*

- *By the insertion after Section 2.4.3 (c) of the words:  
“(d) the Local Mission Development Committee.”*
- *By the insertion of a new Section 2.4.6 as follows:  
“The Local Mission Development Committee shall have responsibility for offering support to those catalysing, developing and nurturing local mission and shall undertake particular projects relating to local mission development as requested by the Mission Board or College of Bishops.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 103 in favour, 1 against, 4 abstentions.

#### **4.2 Address by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Rt Rev Sally Foster-Fulton**

The Primus welcomed the Rt Rev Sally Foster-Fulton, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Many in the SEC had worked with her in the past in connection with her role in Christian Aid. It was a historic day to be able to welcome her as leader of the national Church of Scotland.

The Moderator thanked Synod for its welcome and was honoured to join the meeting. One of her greatest joys over the years had come from intentional ecumenical partnerships. When Churches stood together adding their voices to a growing call for justice, that turned the volume from a whisper to a roar embodying the "body of Christ". When Christians chose to open their hearts and minds and step out in faith with those from other faiths who shared a vision for love, equity and peace, Christians were never diluted but rather enriched and enriching. She recalled the march at the COP26 Conference in Glasgow when a sodden and fully robed Primus had walked in rain-soaked solidarity with others - the SEC had made a statement that day and had continued to be a beacon for the Church in Scotland. She had been gladdened to hear of the Synod's decision about its Net Zero Action Plan the previous day.

The Moderator's hopes for the Church in Scotland were to embrace every opportunity for love, to take hold and to shake off that which muted or slowed the Churches' ability to make a difference. It had been an extraordinarily challenging time in the life of the planet, the life of the country and the Church and communities of faith had not been exempt. Green was the liturgical colour for "ordinary time" and was a reminder that it had been the determination and hopeful imagination of individuals and communities who had risen to the extraordinary challenges of the past.

Current times were challenging. Referring to the South African phrase "ubuntu", best translated as "I am because you are", she suggested that the work which the

body of Christ had to do in sharing love and seeking justice would most authentically be done together.

The Moderator said that she had re-read the ecumenical policies of the SEC and the Church of Scotland. If the Churches truly embraced the vision which they offered, they would truly serve God and the communities of Scotland. The document celebrated the unique gifts and traditions of each Church. She urged working together to meet local needs, to address the challenges of climate change, injustice and violent conflict, to offer befriending to those who were isolated or vulnerable and to provide worship that fed the souls of the Christian communities represented by the Churches in imaginative ways.

She thanked the Synod for the St Andrew Declaration and rejoiced in the St Margaret Declaration with the Roman Catholic Church. She committed her time as Moderator to supporting the ways the Churches could put the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of the communities they served first and foremost in decision-making. If one started with the theological questions, it would take imagination and determination to a different level.

The Moderator said that her heart had been set on fire by the statement in the SEC ecumenical policy document "God calls the Scottish Episcopal Church to share in the mission of God and, in the light of this, to remove any obstacles that hinder our co-operation with our sisters and brothers in Christ". The Church of Scotland would do the same. The theme of the Church of Scotland's General Assembly in the current year had been "remember who you are". The Church of Scotland and the Church in Scotland was going through a difficult-but-necessary evolution and it was not without pain but if the vital work of the Churches was to continue it was necessary to ensure that the Church was fit for purpose and to be clear about what that purpose was. In the "remembering who we are" the Churches were part of the body of Christ with eyes that saw the world as good and beautiful and one that needed all the love that could be mustered. The body of Christ needed hands that were not afraid to get dirty, feet that walked the extra mile and a heart hot with compassion. The body of Christ was so much bigger than any individual or any one denomination.

The Moderator closed her address with a prayer.

The Primus thanked the Moderator for her address and the Chair opened the session to comment and question.

Mr Bobby Dickson (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) thanked the Moderator on behalf of all Synod members, for her outstanding address and for raising in the mind of the Synod the necessity of working together. As he had done at General Synod 2022, he wished to cast his mind back to an instance when things had gone wrong. In the 1950s there had been a genuine attempt to link the SEC, the Church of Scotland and the Church of England but it had been blocked through the regrettable ignorance of the SEC. The SEC ought to be ashamed that 70 years previously it had had missed the opportunity of closer working together. He welcomed the St Andrew Declaration and was glad that the Churches were now working in a genuine ecumenical partnership.

The Chair closed the session by thanking the Moderator most sincerely.

## **SESSION 5: THE VERY REV SARAH MURRAY IN THE CHAIR**

### **5.1 Faith and Order Board - Introduction**

The Primus explained that the work of the Faith and Order Board featured in various items across the agenda for the current Synod. As Convener of the Board he expressed thanks to all members of the Board and of the Board's pendant committees.

### **5.2 Inter-Church Relations Committee**

The Rev Prof Charlotte Methuen (Convener, Inter-Church Relations Committee) reminded the Synod that the previous year it had requested the Inter-Church Relations Committee to draw up guidelines to explain the practical implications of the St Andrew Declaration. In undertaking that task, it had become clear that Canon 15 did not make any provision for agreements such as the St Andrew Declaration which was not an agreement of full Communion but which permitted limited exchange. The SEC had entered into three such agreements, affirmed by the Synod: Reuilly (2001) with the Protestant Churches in France and Alsace (Lutheran and Reformed), the EMU partnership (2010) with the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church in Scotland, and the St Andrew Declaration (2021) with the Church of Scotland. The Board had asked the Committee, in consultation with the Committee on Canons, to suggest a resolution for such anomaly and the proposals brought to the current Synod did that.

Prof Methuen explained that the proposals would create a schedule of Churches with which the SEC had entered into agreements of limited exchange. The proposed amendments to Canon 15 would make it possible for an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament of one of those Churches to preside at a service of Holy Communion in an SEC church, using a rite of their own Church. Any such service would need to be advertised as such: a service of Holy Communion according to the rite of the Methodist Church or the Church of Scotland. She was aware that such services were already happening in some dioceses but in fact the Canons as they currently stood did not allow for that except in local ecumenical partnerships. The alterations also clarified procedures around visiting clergy, especially with regards to notifying the Bishop. As well as changes to Canon 15, the proposal included a substantive amendment to Canon 16, namely to add reference to Canon 15 in which the detailed provisions were set out. The opportunity was also being taken to make some minor changes to terminology in both Canons recognising shifts in practice. Since 2001, when the Reuilly Agreement had been approved, the Canons of the SEC had been out of step and the Committee and the Board hoped that Synod would wish to resolve that discrepancy.

Prof Methuen noted that, in a parallel development, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland had the previous month clarified rules about who was able to celebrate the sacraments in the Church of Scotland, a move which she very much welcomed. The proposed changes to the SEC's Canon were an expression of the SEC's commitment to its partner Churches and to shared mission in Scotland.

The Primus then proposed the following motion:

*“That the amended text of Canon 15 be read for the first time.”*

The Primus explained that in his diocese, the SEC, the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church enjoyed hospitality in each other's Churches. Asking people to travel 200 miles to a church of their own denomination simply did not work.

The Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) seconded the Motion.

The Rev James Patron Bell (Methodist Church) spoke as the Ecumenical Officer for the Methodist Church in Scotland and declared a dual interest as a co-opted member of the Inter-Church Relations Committee. He welcomed the proposed amendments to Canon 15. They made tangible the developments possible by the agreements which the SEC had entered into. It was good to ensure that the Church was able to do what it said it would do. He also extended his thanks for the guidelines which had been produced on the topic since they would, together with the Canon, allow invitations to be made without any risk of non-compliance with the Canons, whilst also offering ecumenical hospitality and welcome.

The Rev Ross Blackman (Church of Scotland) explained he was the minister of Hamilton Old Parish Church of Scotland and the Convener of the Church of Scotland's Committee on Ecumenical Relations. He thanked the Synod for its invitation to attend the meeting. He would have been present in 2022 in person but had unfortunately caught Covid at the General Assembly that year. He also expressed thanks for the Synod dinner. At the Eucharist at the beginning of Synod he had spent time contemplating the Rublev Icon of the Holy Trinity and the divine dance, as referred to by Richard Rohr, between the members of the Trinity. It led him to reflect on the relationships between the Churches and their members. Like the SEC, he held to the Word of God as exceptional as found in Scripture, to the early creeds and he used them regularly. He loved good liturgy and for the previous few years he had been preaching on the Five Marks of Mission in which the preface referred to the mission of the Church being the mission of Christ. He also adhered to the Lund principle that affirmed that Churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compelled them to act differently. There were differences which needed to be acknowledged and applauded. Every Sunday he donned his cassock and Geneva gown but he worked locally with his Episcopal colleague in Hamilton and particularly enjoyed doing so in civic contexts. Three weeks earlier, the General Assembly had taken a further step by agreeing amendments to its Sacraments Act which finally made explicit the possibility of SEC clergy leading the Sacraments in a Church of Scotland building. He hoped the Synod would endorse the changes being proposed.

Dr Euan Grant (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) wished to comment on sections 2(c) and 5 of Canon 15. The changes were concerned with what it meant for the Church to be Episcopal, namely to be loyal to evangelical faith and apostolic order. He wished to plead with the Synod to vote against the proposals. The proposal related to the eucharistic life of charges and not about hospitality in church buildings. He had looked back over the records of Synod discussions over the previous nine years including the discussions about the St Columba Declaration, Our Common Calling, the St Andrew Declaration and the rationale set out in the Synod papers. He suggested that the St Andrew Declaration did not require the Church to adopt a proposal, but merely allowed it to do so. He had also looked back to the letters of St Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch, who had stated that the Bishop "by his silence is able to accomplish more than those who vainly talk". St Ignatius had much to say about episcopacy and the Eucharist. In St Ignatius' letter to the

Philadelphians, he had urged them to "take heed to have but one Eucharist... since there was but one altar and one Bishop". The issue therefore, was unity in the Eucharist and unity in the Bishop and as he surveyed the Synod ecumenically he could see what called the Churches together and what divided them. For St Ignatius, who lived only one generation after the Apostles, the Eucharist and Bishop were inseparable. The Synod did not need to agree with St Ignatius. However, Synod members had a duty to take him seriously and the many others who had seen the historical unity in the episcopal succession in the Church and the eucharistic life entrusted to the Church. If that was discarded, what did it mean to be Episcopalian? He suggested that the proposal in the new Canon to some extent severed the unity of episcopacy and eucharist. There might be good answers to that question but it was a weighty question which he believed the Church had taken culpably lightly.

The Rev Dr Stephen Holmes (Edinburgh) also wished to invite the Synod to vote against the Motion. He thanked the Committee for its guidelines which were very useful and for much of the content of the Canons. His difficulty was with sections 2(c) and 5(a) and (c) of Canon 15 which allowed a non-episcopally ordained minister to preside at the Eucharist not as an act of hospitality but as part of a liturgical life of an SEC congregation. He believed that what the Primus had described was already allowed but that the proposal being out forward was different. He believed that in spirit the proposal contradicted Canon 1 under which any presbyter had to be ordained by a Bishop. He was not convinced by the proposal which envisaged the minister celebrating according to the rite of their own Church. He had experience of having served on the ministry team of St John's, Princes Street, Edinburgh which was in a local ecumenical partnership. There had been a Church of Scotland minister on that team and at the outset notice had been given that services at which that person had presided were according to the Church of Scotland rite. However, members of the congregation felt that a warning in that form (perceived to be anti-Presbyterian) was not appropriate. Giving such a warning also did not appear kind and so the practice of giving notice was discontinued and the minister thereafter used the 1982 Liturgy, wearing a chasuble. Dr Holmes considered that that situation was somewhat dishonest and he believed that the Canon would institutionalise such dishonesty. He believed deeper consideration was needed and referred to the situation in Ireland where some means of enabling episcopal ordination of Methodist clergy had been achieved. He made clear that he did not wish to attribute the institutionalised dishonesty to which he had referred to any particular individual and he understood that the proposal was being brought forward for good reason.

Prof Methuen thanked those who had contributed. In relation to the relationship between Orders and the Eucharist, it was a relationship which everyone took very seriously where the Churches were seeking to find ways forward in ecumenical relations which ultimately would allow the Orders to be reconciled. With the Churches with whom the SEC had a relationship of full Communion, that had been achieved. Anglican polity meant that was possible only where agreement could be reached on episcopacy and that had not so far been reached with the Reformed Churches. It had been possible with some Lutheran Churches (such as those involved in the Porvoo Declaration). In the Reuilly Agreement, the EMU Partnership and the St Andrew Declaration the Churches had not reached a position of agreement on episcopacy. The ecumenical movement faced a question and Anglicans in the previous 40 years had made a decision with those Churches where agreement on full Communion could not be reached, to move forward with limited

sharing. Roman Catholic policy indicated that it was not possible to discuss eucharistic hospitality until there had been agreement on Orders. With the limited exchange agreements, Anglicans had made a theological decision to permit sharing of the Eucharist even if Orders were still under discussion. Prof Methuen accepted that there were questions about that decision within the ecumenical movement but nevertheless that was what had happened. The proposed canonical amendment asked Synod to put into practice the theology that underlay that decision. Synod had heard an eloquent explanation of the Catholic position which did not allow a split between eucharist and Orders. She did not consider that the proposals went beyond what the limited sharing agreements envisaged. The Meissen Agreement was the model for all subsequent ones and she believed that the proposed canonical changes were consistent with that. As to the question of dishonesty, she agreed that the proposal was not about permitting, say a Church of Scotland congregation, to worship in an SEC church. That was already legitimate. The proposal was about having the capability in a situation where a eucharist was expected and an SEC priest was not available, for a Church of Scotland minister to celebrate "our service" in an SEC Church. It was possible that not everyone might want to receive under such circumstances which was why making clear the nature of the service had been suggested as necessary. It was therefore not about institutionalising dishonesty but about recognising that different Churches had different polities and yet had reached sufficient agreement that the eucharist could be shared. The agreements did not allow concelebration but it was to enable a means for sharing eucharistic ministry and sharing mission and was therefore about being honest.

The Rev Canon Vittoria Hancock (Aberdeen and Orkney) thought she needed to start apologising to her Bishop for having breached the Canons. She had the fortune of working in two charges which had very good ecumenical relations. Holy Week and Easter were celebrated together. Earlier this year she had been ill and was off for Holy Week and Easter. In one of her congregations there was a retired Church of Scotland minister who, at the last minute had stepped in and led Holy Week and Easter. She did not have any lay readers or retired SEC clergy locally. That was the reality of rural ministry and there was a pastoral need which would be encountered regularly. An Easter Saturday vigil had been hosted at the local Church of Scotland but unfortunately, the Church of Scotland minister had also been off ill. One of her church members stood in for that minister. She recognised that there were theological and liturgical issues but, as a priest working on the ground in a rural area, she trusted her colleagues and there was no deception involved. The proposed changes were needed.

The Rt Rev Dr Keith Riglin (Bishop of Argyll and The Isles) said that with a heavy heart he supported those who had spoken against the Motion. He was also concerned by the answer given by Prof Methuen since not only did the proposal go beyond the wording of the existing agreements but he believed her answer went beyond the wording of the Motion in that a minister from a partner Church would be invited to take "our service". He did not believe that the eucharist should be used as a means to unity when in fact it was an expression of unity.

Prof Methuen responded that her intention had been to say that the invitation was to take a service on a normal Sunday. The example given by Canon Hancock was exactly the kind of situation where the Canon could usefully apply. In other words, everyone should be clear about the tradition from which the celebrant was coming. It was not saying that a service could not take place because there was no one

available to take it. That was what she meant by "our service". Such a service would not be billed as an SEC Eucharist.

The Rev Gary Clink (Brechin) also opposed the Motion, particularly in relation to Section 2(c). He believed there was a need to consider the effect the change would have on the wider Church beyond Scotland. The rest of the Anglican Communion was looking to see what the Synod decided. One needed to look no further than the subject of equal marriage where a decision had been taken in Scotland in the Scottish context but which caused division with provinces in Africa. If the Synod made a decision to open up the celebration of the eucharist to non-episcopally ordained clergy, it would be cause for further disunity. Good practice was already going on. In the Diocese of Brechin churches had been opened to Ukrainian Orthodox members to have services. It was important to show generosity of spirit. Ukrainian Orthodox Christians could celebrate on SEC altars because they shared a similar theology. Instead of rushing to find ways to be generous, there was a need to reflect on the Church's theology.

Prof Methuen responded that it was important to realise that the proposals were not innovative. The Reuilly Agreement had been in place since 2001 and had built on the Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and certain Reformed Churches. The Canons of the Church of England, the Church of Ireland and the Church in Wales all made similar provision to what was being proposed. The proposal was, therefore, not an innovation, nor was it about hospitality but was about the possibilities available to the SEC in its own liturgical life.

The Motion was put to the vote but when the result was announced the Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) raised a point of order since in the House of Bishops seven votes had been recorded whereas only six were present to vote. He suggested that there was a need for a different voting procedure. The Chair announced that the vote would be audited and proceedings were paused for that purpose. One lay member indicated that she had not had an option to vote on her device.

Mr Neil MacLennan, (Sanctus Media and Teller) reported on the result of the audit and confirmed that one person who was not a Bishop had voted as a Bishop. He reminded Synod members that they had been invited to press the red button on their devices at the beginning of the debate and it appeared that one individual had not heard that instruction and, therefore, was not presented with the correct voting button. The Chair had suggested that the vote be re-run.

Dr Beth Routledge (Glasgow and Galloway) raised a point of order. She had concerns that if there were questions about the integrity of the voting system it would be more appropriate for the Chair to suspend electronic voting and revert to show of hands. Provost Holdsworth said that if the voting system had not correctly recorded the votes, simply to re-run the vote was not acceptable. Whilst previous votes in Synod had been passed by a significant majority, he was concerned that some of the Motions yet to come could be close. The Chair called a short adjournment.

On reconvening, the Chair explained that the reason for the irregularity had been established by the audit and invited Mr MacLennan to give a more technical explanation. Mr MacLennan then explained that in preparing for the complexities of

the Motions on the agenda for the current day, he had set the full text of motions and amendments up on the Synod Hub at the beginning of the morning. At that point where appropriate to allow for voting in houses, houses had been allocated to each of the Motions. That required members to press the "current live debate" button on their screens to ensure that they had the latest code for voting purposes. It was apparent that at least one person had not done that with the result that their device did not have the updated voting code and so they had been able to vote in a different manner. There was no issue with the counting of the votes, it was just that an individual had been able to vote in the incorrect house. The auditing process involved drawing information from two different systems (they were separate for security reasons) and the information had to be manually combined to audit the vote. That had been done and that revealed the issue in question. The audit could be done in any house and provided information to the satisfaction of the Tellers. He hoped that the audit process was a reassurance to Synod.

Provost Holdsworth raised a further point of order. He asked whether the system was unable to identify people by name or by house. If that was the case, it would not be possible to ascertain who had been voting in which house. Mr MacLennan confirmed that the system was able to identify by both name and house. He confirmed that the other Tellers had access to that information. Mr Malcolm Bett (Teller) confirmed that the Tellers did have access to that information. It was confirmed that the identity of the individual who had voted in the House of Bishops had been ascertained.

The Chair asked the Synod whether it was content to return to electronic voting. On a show of hands Synod confirmed that it was.

Motion 14 and was then put to the vote again in houses with the following result:

House of Clergy: 44 in favour, 11 against, 2 abstentions  
House of Laity: 44 in favour, 9 against, 1 abstention  
College of Bishops: 4 in favour, 2 against, no abstentions.

The Chair declared the Motion passed.

Prof Methuen then spoke to the proposal to amend Canon 16. The effect of the changes to Canon 16 were to reflect the changes which had just been accepted at first reading to Canon 15. The proposed changes were desirable, regardless of what members felt about the changes to Canon 15.

The Primus then proposed, and the Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) seconded, the following motion:

*"That the amended text of Canon 16 be read for the first time."*

The Chair opened the Motion to debate but there was no comment.

The Motion was then put to the vote in houses and passed as follows:

House of Clergy: 46 in favour, 6 against, 6 abstentions  
House of Laity: 49 in favour, none against, 3 abstentions  
House of Bishops: 5 in favour, none against, 1 abstention



The Chair expressed thanks to Prof Methuen.

### **5.3 Committee on Canons – Canon 4**

The Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) presented, on behalf of the Faith and Order Board, the revised Canon 4 for its second reading. He hoped that it would gain sufficient votes in all houses to be passed as the new Canon for the calling and election of Bishops because he believed it improved the existing Canon in several ways. Those had been set out in the paper enclosed in the Synod papers.

Bishop Armes reminded the Synod that the process of revision had begun in 2018. The Canon 4 Review Group had invited comments from the whole Province, including Diocesan Synod and General Synod members, as well as those involved in previous elections, whether as Preparatory Committee members or as candidates. In 2021, the Synod had been invited to consider two options – either a more radical reinvention of the election process through an Electoral College or a revision which maintained the principle that, so far as possible, each diocese should elect its own Bishop. The Synod had clearly preferred the second of those options and the Canon presented to Synod in the current meeting was the outworking of that second option.

The new Canon followed the same principle as the existing Canon 4 in that it centred on an Electoral Synod drawn from clergy and laity from every charge in a diocese. However, in significant ways it differed from the existing Canon and the changes addressed the widespread frustrations and criticisms which had been offered by those who had responded to the Review Group's consultation.

Bishop Armes explained that under the proposed Canon more agency would be given to the Electoral Synod to devise its own timetable for the process and the election was presented as a single process which might, or might not, pass through three stages. Under the existing Canon there had always been the possibility that the Bishops might have to make an election if two mandates failed to produce a favoured candidate. The new Canon would require the Bishops to be present at the first meeting of the Electoral Synod so that they could listen to the needs and aspirations of the Diocese. The new Canon also required the Bishops to consult with diocesan representatives on the Preparatory Committee in the event that the Episcopal Synod was required to elect. The new Canon also made it less likely that an election would end up with the Bishops. It offered the option at the second stage of reducing the minimum shortlist from three names to two.

One area of the existing Canon which had been the subject of significant criticism was the requirement to make public the names on the shortlist. Many candidates found that stressful and exposing and unhelpful also for their congregations. That was especially difficult for candidates who were not elected. Confidentiality had always been a vital part of the Canon 4 process and the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee and Electoral Synods had never been made public, nor had voting figures. The new Canon would extend confidentiality to the names on the shortlist.

The proposed revision also addressed a curious anomaly. Under the existing Canon only those clergy who were members of the final Diocesan Synod before the retirement of the Bishop could be electors. That meant that clergy appointed to

posts after that point, perhaps many months before the election itself, were disenfranchised. The proposed new cut-off date for clergy electors was when the mandate was issued.

Bishop Armes cautioned against unrealistic expectations of what a Canon could deliver. The election of Bishops was a matter of prayerful discernment by all concerned and the canonical process could provide a framework for such discernment but was not a substitute for it. Electing a Bishop was not the same as appointing a CEO. At every stage it was necessary to look to God and give primacy to God. The reference to "calling" in the new heading of the Canon was the call of God.

It was up to all those involved to inject humanity into the process. The Canon itself could not do that. Care needed to be taken to treat everyone with kindness and grace especially in the way that candidates in the process were treated. That was why the Canon would be accompanied by a Commentary and also Guidelines setting out best practice for the running of an election.

The Guidelines emphasised how vital it was that all those involved should be trained not only in best practice but in spiritual discernment. The matter of discernment was so important that Section 4(c) of the new Canon specified that training in discernment had to be given. If the new Canon received its second reading at the current meeting a new resolution to the Canon would be brought to General Synod 2024 to set out what that training should involve.

The Review Group had tried over the course of the previous five years to listen to God and to the members of the Church. It had sought to discern the will of God but the ultimate test was now for the Synod itself to discern, prayerfully and carefully, what was right for the Church.

Bishop Armes then proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following motion:

*“That the amended text of Canon 4 be read for the second time.”*

The Chair explained that certain amendments had been set out on the agenda for Synod.

The Rev Christopher Lowdon (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) proposed, and the Rt Rev Ian Paton (Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane), seconded the following amendment:

***Amendment 1:***

*To add at the end of the above motion for second reading:*

*“subject to the following alterations:*

- *That Section 10(d) be amended to read “Recipients of the Summons should also receive a copy of the Mandate, the Guidelines and the Commentary with a copy of this Canon attached.”*

- *That the reference in Section 28(a) to Appendix 3 be replaced by a reference to Appendix 3A*
- *That the reference in Section 30(a) to Appendix 3 be replaced by a reference to Appendix 3B.”*

Mr Graham Robertson (Convener, Committee on Canons) explained that the amendment comprised a minor alteration and provided clarity on three matters. The first required a copy of the Canon to be provided to members of the Electoral Synod. The other two changes related to the formal declaration of the outcome of an episcopal election. Two different declarations were required depending on whether the election was by the Electoral Synod or the Episcopal Synod.

The Chair opened the amendment for debate but there was none. Bishop Armes confirmed that he had no objection to the amendment.

The amendment was then put to the vote in houses with the following result:

House of Clergy: 57 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention  
 House of Laity: 50 in favour, 1 against, 3 abstentions  
 House of Bishops: 5 in favour, none against, 1 abstention

The Chair declared the amendment passed.

The Rev Christopher Lowdon (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) proposed, and the Rt Rev Ian Paton (Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane), seconded the following amendment:

***Amendment 2:***

*To add at the end of the above motion for second reading:*

*“subject to adding at the end of Section 29(b) the following sentence: “The purpose of this meeting shall be to consider the reasons why the Electoral Synod was unable to complete the electoral process and also to discuss the particular needs of the diocese, including mission and ministry and spiritual oversight.””*

Mr Robertson explained the purpose of the second amendment. It proposed the introduction of additional wording into Section 29(b) of the Canon to explain that the purpose of the meeting of members of the Episcopal Synod with the diocesan members of the Preparatory Committee was to consider the reasons why the Electoral Synod had been unable to complete the electoral process and also to discuss the particular needs of the Diocese, including mission and ministry and spiritual oversight.

The Chair opened the amendment for comment but there was none.

Bishop Armes confirmed that he was content with the proposed amendment.

The amendment was then put to the vote in houses with the following result:

House of Clergy: 54 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention  
 House of Laity: 50 in favour, none against, 4 abstentions  
 House of Bishops: 5 in favour, none against, 1 abstention

The Chair declared the amendment passed.

The Chair then opened the original motion, as amended, for debate.

Prof Alan Werritty (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) explained that he was a member of the Canon 4 Review Group. It had become clear to him in the responses to the consultation which the Group had undertaken that the current Canon was not fit for purpose. Many of the concerns which had been raised related not to the text of the Canon but rather to the way the Canon had been implemented. Two findings in particular had stood out to him: a lack of consistency in how individual candidates had been treated and an imperfect understanding on the part of the electorate as to how the process worked. Some candidates had found the process brutal and lacking in humanity. Some electors had viewed the process as a "beauty competition" in which performance at the initial electoral meeting had been given undue emphasis. Others appeared to have made up their mind even before the preliminary meeting. The inflexibility of the timetable prescribed by the Canon was another area of concern as was the role of the Bishops. Significant changes had been made. Unusually, the Canon was to be accompanied by a Commentary and Guidelines. The Commentary was intended as a user guide and checklist for clarifying a text which could appear opaque to the non-specialist reader. The Guidelines would provide a checklist with clear instructions for those charged with specific tasks as part of the process, including, specifically, the care of candidates. The Guidelines and Commentary could be amended in future by a single vote in Synod. The most fundamental change was contained in Section 4(c) in that the calling of a Bishop was seen as a process of discernment. The Rev Canon Ian Barcroft, Provincial Director of Ordinands, had helped the Review Group understand how the calling to the episcopate was not inherently different to that applicable to a deacon or presbyter. If the Canon were passed, the Faith and Order Board would develop training on discernment, tailored to the needs of the specific groups involved in the electoral process. This would include surrounding the process with prayer to ensure an openness to the Holy Spirit. No revised Canon would be perfect but he urged Synod not to let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

Dr Stephen Goodyear (Aberdeen and Orkney) had a question for clarification. The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 had made significant changes to charity law when it was introduced. His observation was that the Code of Canons had not been updated to reflect that. Where there was a major canonical revision, it seemed an appropriate opportunity to check that any new Canon was consistent with the provisions of charity law. He asked whether the Committee on Canons was certain that the new Canon 4 was fully compatible with charity law. As an illustration of where he believed it might not be, he noted that if the election went to stage three it allowed a third party to impose the elected candidate on the charity trustees of a diocese, which was an independent charity. Even if that was in compliance with charity law, he queried whether it sent the right message as to the responsibilities of the charity trustees of a diocese, given that the elected Bishop would become a charity trustee and would be paid by the charity.

Mr Gavin McEwan, the Synod Assessor, was invited to respond to the question, the Synod having confirmed it was content for the Assessor to address Synod. He confirmed that the Canon would be compatible with charity law. It was common for people to be appointed to offices and for those offices sometimes to carry with them charity trusteeship. The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator accepted that that

was consistent with charity law. Charity law in Scotland also allowed charities to determine their own processes for the appointment of trustees. That could sometimes involve third parties. That was within the gift of the charity itself.

The Rt Rev Kevin Pearson (Glasgow and Galloway) said that it grieved him to speak against the proposed new Canon. However, he was not about to say anything which he had not already said to the Review Group when first interviewed. He had believed for a long time that the Canon needed radical reform and that to elect a Bishop an Electoral College was needed rather than an Electoral Synod. He believed that the reason an Electoral College had not been favoured was because of a lack of trust. He believed that that was endemic in society at the present time but was particularly difficult in a church setting. He believed that needed to be addressed. The Canon needed to be more radical. That had been emphasised at his Diocesan Synod earlier in the year. It had been the first Diocesan Synod to meet in person for three years and the pain, anger and distress concerning the previous election suggested to him that a radical new Canon was needed.

The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) said that Synod members who had been present the previous year would remember what he had said of his experience of having been a candidate. He had been deeply critical about how some candidates had been treated by the Church. He wished today to be more positive. It was the case that there had been people who had cared for him and had been deeply kind but they had not been part of the process, rather they were his friends around the Church and in his congregation who had been very supportive. He urged Synod members to be similarly supportive and kind when they had the opportunity. He believed that the new Canon would remove that choice since, by cloaking everything in a veil of confidentiality (which he did not believe could be enforced), the candidates themselves would not be able to talk to anyone and would be cut off from their friends and their congregations would be cut off from knowing what was happening. He thanked those who had tried to produce the Canon. Most of the good things were in the guidelines and he hoped it would be possible to find a way to incorporate what was in the Guidelines into the Church's practice, even if, as he hoped, the Synod would not adopt the Canon. Prof Werritty had spoken of the perfect being the enemy of the good. The question was whether the new Canon was a step in the right direction. From his point of view, he believed that the new Canon would make the situation worse, notwithstanding that everyone who had been involved in developing the new Canon was trying to make it better. The Canon would stop people caring for candidates, unless they were members of the Electoral Synod, in which case a different relationship with the candidates would exist. Whilst it was said that the election of a Bishop was an election to the wider Church, electors would not be able to talk to others in the wider Church about the candidates. He asked Synod to vote against the adoption of the Canon.

Dr Beth Routledge (Glasgow and Galloway) commended the Faith and Order Board for the work which had gone into revising Canon 4 and especially to Mrs Jan Whiteside and the Personnel Committee for their input into the Guidelines, which had been asked for the previous year and which were excellent. However, she felt unable to vote in favour of the new Canon. She agreed that the current Canon was dysfunctional pastorally and functionally. In her conversations with electors and candidates and those who had been elected she was aware that the electoral process had generally speaking worked reasonably well. For those who had been involved in such processes, the changes might seem sufficient to address

the problems which had been encountered. She could see that most dioceses appeared to be of that view. However, her own diocese did not view matters in that fashion. She echoed the words of Bishop Pearson in that the experience in the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway was not one of technical difficulty but rather that the process had gone so badly and been managed so badly that the resulting trauma was still tangible in the Diocese five years later. She did not use the word trauma lightly. In her diocese over 80% of the Synod did not believe that the proposed new Canon would provide the necessary solution. Even in the dioceses where it had been accepted some substantial issues had been raised requiring more work which could not be undertaken at a second reading. The resolution from the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway asked that the Canon be sent back to the Faith and Order Board for further work. She did not think that the revised Canon would address the issues which caused the trauma in her diocese. She also believed it would not protect other dioceses from a process going badly wrong in future. The work undertaken had been well-intentioned, but she urged the Synod to vote against.

The Very Rev Dr Emsley Nimmo (Aberdeen and Orkney) acknowledged that being a member of the Committee on Canons was a thankless task (he had been a member of the Committee in the past) and he thanked the members for their work. He was glad to see that the overriding principle was that the Diocese elected its own Bishop. That process had been followed since 1721. Against the will of the College of Bishops, the Diocese had elected Archibald Campbell who became a prominent Bishop in the life of the SEC. For about 200 years, no change had been made to the Canon except that in the previous 20 years there had been nothing but tinkering and alterations since the Glasgow election in 1974. The old system had given good Bishops. He was concerned about the members of the College of Bishops attending the Preliminary Meeting. There was no precedence for that in the history of the Church catholic. The assent of the College was rightly required after the diocesan election, as an act of ratification. However in keeping with the ancient principle that it was for the Diocese, autonomously, to elect its Bishop, the influence of the College of Bishops he believed ought to be kept at arm's length until the appropriate time for ratification. The presence of the entire College could inherently introduce an element of intimidation to the vacant diocese. It would almost certainly stifle free and open conversation within the Electoral Synod at a time at which frank and serious discussion about the life of the Diocese had to be undertaken and it was important that that was done without external influence. The presence of the College would jeopardise the independence and autonomous nature of the local diocese. He also believed that Section 17 of the proposed new Canon directly contravened the policy of the Church, as practised by the Church catholic since the second century. That section allowed the College unlimited right to reject any names brought to them by the Preparatory Committee before interviews had been undertaken. Names could be rejected without reasons being given to the Preparatory Committee. That granted an unlimited power to the College of Bishops in determining candidates for a vacant see without the voice of the diocese being heard. There was no precedence in the history of the Church for the assent of the provincial College being required before the decision of the diocese. He also believed that the Canon significantly diminished the role of Deans during the period of episcopal vacancy. He hoped that the Synod would not support the adoption of the Canon.

Ms Helen Vincent (Edinburgh) considered it was profoundly troubling for the whole Church that six dioceses had accepted the new Canon, but one had wholeheartedly

rejected it. She disagreed with Bishop Pearson that the preference for a synodical, rather than Electoral College, approach was because of a lack of trust. The discussions which she had been part of in the course of the previous few years had been about valuing the role of charges in the process and also whether the approach of an Electoral College would privilege certain individuals who already had a position of privilege within the diocese. If there was a desire for an Electoral College, perhaps a solution to that could be worked out but she believed that all charges should be represented in the process on an equal basis. She urged acceptance of the new Canon.

Dr Michael Wood (Edinburgh) suggested that what was before Synod was the outcome of a process which had been instigated at the request of the General Synod. The Church had been consulted about it over a period of several years. The Synod had asked for a new Canon because of dissatisfaction with the existing one. The selection of a Bishop was rightly a complex process requiring training, discipleship and love. It also raised big questions about the direction of the Church and those needed to be part of a discussion about the culture of the Church. He believed that some of those questions were addressed in the Guidelines and Commentary, at least to some extent. The Canon did not do that because that was not what a Canon was for. The Canon outlined a bottom-up, deliberative process and it had taken time to come up with the new proposal. He expected that there would be a number of Bishops to elect in the following years. The proposed new Canon gave the Church a fighting chance to do that well. He urged the Synod to walk the path of the new Canon.

The Rev Canon Lynsay Braybrooke (Aberdeen and Orkney) wished to comment on the concerns which had been raised about the presence of Bishops at the Preliminary Meeting of the Electoral Synod. She had been in a diocese where people could disagree but still behave charitably and in love with one another. She also had experience of being in a diocese where groups met together and organised themselves, and intimidation within the Diocesan Synod was a real issue. When a diocese was trying to consider what it needed sometimes those who did not wish the College of Bishops to be present might also themselves fear a lack of power in controlling the debate. There were checks and balances within the proposed new Canon which she believed could be very healthy.

The Rev Canon Dr Sophia Marriage (Edinburgh) noted that everyone had mentioned the dysfunctionality of the existing Canon and the pain and trauma of previous experience. She agreed with Dr Wood that there would be episcopal elections in the foreseeable future. For some people, having their names in public gave them the opportunity to receive support. For others who were going through trauma having one's name in public would put them off from putting their names forward. Speaking as someone who had themselves experienced trauma (not in the context of the Canon 4 election) she indicated that it had been for her to seek the support she needed from those she loved and trusted. There were two options. Either names were public and love and support could come from everyone or the shortlist could remain confidential, which would avoid the possibility of individuals being put off from being involved in the process. Synod had previously agreed to try to make the Canon more humane. She agreed that the best should not get in the way of the good. The Canon was not the end of the process and discussion could continue in future but in the meantime she urged Synod to accept the Canon.

Bishop Armes responded to comments which had been made. Dean Emeritus Nimmo had mentioned Section 17. Bishop Armes drew attention to Section 17(a) which dealt with the question of assent by the College of Bishops before any shortlist had been agreed. That was part of the existing Canon as well and was not a new invention. On the question of the presence of Bishops at the Preliminary Meeting, he noted that there were different views. One criticism had been that if the Bishops were required to make an election, how were they to do that without having knowledge of the diocese and its needs and so the idea of the Bishops being present at the outset had been introduced to make them better informed. The role of the Bishops would be specifically to listen. However, the Synod was now being told that that was intimidating. On the question of Provost Holdsworth's point about the list not being made public, Section 16(i) indicated that the shortlist was to be treated as confidential by those who received it. It was not saying that someone who was on the list could not seek support. The subject of training and discernment had been the subject of considerable discussion at the Faith and Order Board and he had explained to the Board that he wished to approach Standing Committee to ask for funding in principle to establish a good training course in discernment, not just for episcopal election processes but one which would assist the whole Church in discerning the Holy Spirit (for example, in the case of a vestry seeking to make an appointment). He hoped it might also be available for clergy who at some point in the future might contemplate offering themselves for episcopal ministry. The proposed new Canon did not propose an Electoral College. The Synod had decided that it did not want an Electoral College two years previously. If people favoured an Electoral College, they could still advocate for that in future but in the following five years there would be a succession of elections of Bishops. However, that next generation of Bishops would either be elected under the existing Canon 4 which was regarded as dysfunctional and unhelpful, or they would be elected under the proposed new Canon. The question was simple: which was the better of the two Canons, the existing one or the proposed new one.

The following amended Motion was then put to the vote in houses:

*“That the amended text of Canon 4 be read for the second time subject to the following alterations:*

- *That Section 10(d) be amended to read “Recipients of the Summons should also receive a copy of the Mandate, the Guidelines and the Commentary with a copy of this Canon attached.”*
- *That the reference in Section 28(a) to Appendix 3 be replaced by a reference to Appendix 3A*
- *That the reference in Section 30(a) to Appendix 3 be replaced by a reference to Appendix 3B*

*and subject to adding at the end of Section 29(b) the following sentence: “The purpose of this meeting shall be to consider the reasons why the Electoral Synod was unable to complete the electoral process and also to discuss the particular needs of the diocese, including mission and ministry and spiritual oversight.”*



Voting was as follows:

House of Clergy: 49 in favour, 8 against, 1 abstention  
House of Laity: 43 in favour, 12 against, no abstentions  
House of Bishops: 4 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention.

The Chair declared the Motion carried.

Bishop Armes explained that the remaining motions to be considered during the current session were all consequent upon the passing of the new Canon.

He then proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following Motion:

*“That Resolutions 1-3 under the former Canon 4 be deleted.”*

The Chair gave the opportunity for comment but there was none.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con* as follows: 107 in favour, none against, 3 abstentions.

Bishop Armes then proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the following be adopted as a new Resolution 1 under Canon 4:*

*“The General Synod shall adopt Guidelines which are to be followed by Electoral Synods for implementation of the Electoral Process.*

*The Guidelines may be adopted or amended from time to time by resolution of General Synod on the recommendation of the Faith and Order Board.”*

The Chair provided the opportunity for comment but there was none.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con* as follows: 112 in favour, none against, 3 abstentions.

Bishop Armes then proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the following be adopted as a new Resolution 2 under Canon 4:*

*“The General Synod shall adopt a Commentary for all parties involved in the Electoral Process.*

*The Commentary may be adopted or amended from time to time by resolution of General Synod on the recommendation of the Faith and Order Board.”*

The Chair gave the opportunity for comment but there was none.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 110 in favour, 1 against, 3 abstentions.

Bishop Armes then proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following Motion:

*“That Appendices 1, 2, 3A and 3B, as set out in the Synod Papers, be adopted as new Appendices to the Code of Canons, in substitution for the existing Appendices 1, 2 and 3.”*

The Chair gave the opportunity for comment.

The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) said that a number of years previously the Synod had taken the view that it would list all of the authorised services in the Canon on liturgy without specifying the book of Common Prayer separately. He was interested to know why it continued to be mentioned specifically in the appendices to Canon 4. He had no objection to any of the text but was curious.

Bishop Armes said that the form was similar to those used when clergy were granted authorisation by their Bishop. He suggested it was a topic that could be considered further in future.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con* as follows: 111 in favour, none against, 2 abstentions.

Bishop Armes thanked Mrs Jan Whiteside for her assistance in preparing the proposed Guidelines to be adopted under the Canon. He then proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Guidelines set out in the Synod Papers be adopted as the Guidelines referred to in Resolution 1 under Canon 4.”*

The Chair gave the opportunity for comment but there was none.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 115 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention.

Bishop Armes thanked all those who had been involved in the development of the Commentary to be adopted under the Canon. He then proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Commentary set out in the Synod Papers be adopted as the Commentary referred to in Resolution 2 under Canon 4.”*

The Chair gave the opportunity for comment.

Mr Brian Harris (Aberdeen and Orkney) noted the need for a minor typographical error in the spelling of "discreetly" on page 198 Synod papers under the heading "Assent of the College of Bishops". Bishop Armes confirmed he was content to accept that correction.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed as follows: 113 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention.

The Chair thanked everyone who had contributed to the session.

After the lunch break Synod members were given the opportunity to attend separate "Meet the Board Conveners" sessions run separately by the Conveners of the Administration Board, Faith and Order Board, Mission Board, Institute Council and Standing Committee respectively.

## **SESSION 6: THE RT REV THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES IN THE CHAIR**

### **6.1 Institute Council**

#### **6.1.1 Introduction**

The Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin and Acting Convener of the Institute Council) introduced the session. The Council provided oversight, support and guidance for the excellent work undertaken by the core and wider staff of the Scottish Episcopal Institute and for those in the process of formation for ministry. He thanked all those who were involved in the work of the Institute. The Synod would shortly be addressed by the Rev Dr Mike Hull who was the Director of Studies for the Institute but would shortly become its new Principal. Bishop Swift expressed thanks to the Rev Canon Dr Anne Tomlinson, the outgoing Principal, for all of her years of work from the inception of the Institute.

#### **6.1.2 Update from the Rev Dr Michael Hull**

Dr Hull started by thanking Canon Tomlinson for her leadership and care for both students and staff. He was honoured, and slightly timid, to take on the responsibility of becoming Principal and asked for the Synod's prayers. In the current session, he would speak about the efforts which SEI had made and was continuing to make in terms of learning for the wider Church and also about the SEI postgraduate programmes of study.

Referring to the Apostle Paul's statement to the Corinthians that "what he had received, he had passed on", Dr Hull suggested that the role of SEI was to pass on that which had been received. He had reported to General Synod 2022 on the rolling out of 10 sessions of lay learning under the title "Christian Doctrine: an Anglican Perspective". That had led to further developments: in Lent 2021 a six-session series "Acting like a Christian"; in Advent 2021, four sessions on "Reading the Bible Like an Episcopalian"; and in Lent 2022 a series on "Episcopalians and their Ethics". There had been incremental growth in attendance over that period. Synod 2022 had been asked for feedback and that feedback had been partially addressed in Advent 2022 with a series "What does it mean to be an Anglican Christian?" and then in Lent 2023 SEI had offered "Lord Teach us to Pray: a Close Reading of the Lord's Prayer". The Synod had also asked that these be a resource available for the wider Church and all of those series were now available on YouTube via the SEI website.

Dr Hull outlined plans for the future, all of which built on the suggestions made by Synod 2022. SEI intended to increase the range of topics and delve into greater depth. Series were in the course of preparation on the Ten Commandments, the Four Marks of the Church and the Three Creeds of the

Church. Also, series were planned on ongoing questions in society such as that of human identity and how human dignity impacted upon ethical choices. The SEI also intended better technological delivery and was intending to use professional expertise to improve both the quality of the audio and video. Also, a wider range of presenters had been approached. Dr Euan Grant would offer a series on natural theology and St Thomas Aquinas and the Rev Dr Jane Edwards would address bereavement and liturgy. Different modes of presentation were also being considered, such as conversation, rather than lecture, on topics such as original sin. Whereas previously only two series had been offered each liturgical year, SEI hoped to deliver four series in the following year.

In addition to the development in lay learning, SEI had also been developing its postgraduate programmes of study. SEI currently offered two Masters programmes through Common Awards: a Masters in Theology, Ministry and Mission and a Masters in Contemporary Christian Leadership. The Scottish Episcopal Church had a history of which to be proud and the Church cherished in particular its liturgy. He was therefore pleased to announce that a third Masters degree would be available from September 2023 in Worship and Liturgical Studies, with a special emphasis on Episcopalianism in Scotland.

The SEI punched above its weight, like the SEC. The SEI was the only theological education institution in the UK which ran three MA programmes from Durham University and was the only one in the UK, and to his knowledge in the Anglican Communion, which produced a quarterly peer-reviewed journal. It was also the only institution which received such close and personal attention from its Church and he thanked Bridget Campbell the Convener of the Standing Committee, Bishop Swift as Acting Convener of the Institute Council and all members of Synod for their support of the SEI.

### **6.1.3 Initial Ministerial Education Two Programme**

The Rev Liz Crumlish (IME2 Officer) said that since she had taken up her role the previous October she had been increasingly grateful to those who had undertaken the delivery of IME2 training in dioceses in previous years particularly the Rev David Paton-Williams and the Very Rev Sarah Murray. She thanked them for their vision, in which she continued, as well as exploring how to work ecumenically in the training of those in their first three years of ministry. She was grateful to have been entrusted with the role and brought experience from other denominations' processes of formation for ministry as well as her experience of having offered and taught pastoral supervision and reflective practice.

In bringing that vision to fruition, she referred to an image by Bryn Gillette of the Woman at the Well. The woman was unnamed in the Gospels but in the Eastern Church was known as "bearer of light". That was a fitting image for the whole Church. The training of those as priests, distinctive deacons and lay readers called for frequent encounters around the well. In IME1 students were being formed as missional leaders, people of prayer, collaborative workers, reflective practitioners, pastors, disciples of characters, Episcopalians and lifelong reflective learners. IME2 sought to build on each

of those characteristics. It supported people from knowing the role to inhabiting the role. There was an integration of learning and a forging of identity. It also created opportunity to share their learning and experience with one another. Discerning the will of God would always be part of that agenda. The programme included a pattern of regular online gatherings each month, a day conference in November and a residential gathering in May. Topics included the context of current day mission, pastoral care and what contributed to healthy ministry. It included contemporary theology about the environment, work with children and young people and faith in older people. There was a wealth of resource available in the SEC and ecumenically, as well as from IME2 participants who brought their own lived experience. Working across the Province brought a wider sense of collegiality among those in their first three years of ministry as they worked things out together. The story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well was one of mutual learning. Both had been changed by the encounter but the transformation had also led to transformation of the community. Those being formed for ministry were being formed in community.

At the most recent residential gathering, the well had become a campfire around which participants had gathered forging connection and being ignited to return to the mission of God in their localities. At the current time, there were 15 people serving in the first three years of ministry and in 2023/24 there would be at least 18. She hoped that IME2 would be foundational in setting a pattern for future ministry of meeting around the well in which to encounter transformation. Her vision was for those involved to continue to be bearers of light and involved in the transformation of communities.

The Chair gave the opportunity for comment.

The Rev Mary Jepp (Breachin) explained that her journey to Scotland had been academic. Originally, she had been a lay reader and had finally ended with an MA in Pastoral Theology from Cambridge. She was aware from her experience of working in small charges, that there were people who sensed a calling to minister locally. What was on offer through the Institute was hugely academic and time-consuming. Many of those who wanted to respond to their calling had life commitments and were unable to give what was required by SEI courses. She asked that the Church give consideration to how to support those who sensed a calling and recognise that sometimes it was not about academic qualification.

Dr Hull thanked Ms Jepp for her comment. It was good to hear from the Synod floor but it was not a new question. Rome had not been built in a day and much of what had been going on within SEI was to respond to the needs of the Church in so far as those needs were presented to SEI. When he had started at the Institute a few years previously, it offered only a diploma. Over the years courses had been expanded to include a degree and subsequently a number of masters degrees. That academic tangent had been good for the Church. Another development was that of lay learning which had led to the series to which he had referred earlier. An issue which the Institute was still working on was those ministries which might occur within dioceses and charges beyond the specific authorised ministries for which SEI currently provided training and formation. There was a need to explore with Bishops

what other roles needed to be addressed. He had already had some discussions with Bishop Swift as the acting Convener of the Institute Council about that.

The Rev David Paton-Williams (Edinburgh) noted that the "bar had been raised" in many ways such as training under the leadership of Canon Tomlinson, discernment under the Provincial Director of Ordinands, the Rev Canon Ian Barcroft and in lay learning in the initiatives mentioned by Dr Hull. The bar had also been raised in relation to IME2 (formerly IME 4-6). IME2 had tended, particularly in the Church of England, to be the poor relation of IME1. The development in IME2 in the SEC was commendable. A province-wide system had now been created with a curriculum for IME2 in order to ensure that whether an individual was in a rural setting in the Highlands or in the heart of Edinburgh they received the same training. He was delighted that the Rev Liz Crumlish had joined the SEI. The vision was worth celebrating.

The Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) had been reminded of the Bishop's charge to her in the Ordinal to her "to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people". There was no question that what was happening in the SEI was very good. That did not mean that what had already been happening outwith the auspices of the SEI was not also good in developing and fostering vocations. When clergy preached, they were teaching. Clergy were not necessarily academics, but they understood that vocation was about "doing". She had been particularly struck when she had moved from the Church of England to Scotland that when she had a potential ordinand who started ordination training she had received a letter from the SEI thanking her for having encouraged the vocation but which implied that her role in that had now been completed. She asked that the SEI not forget that those not directly involved in its work still had a part to play in the growth and fostering of vocations and the education of laity and other clergy. She thanked all those who fostered the vocations of other Christians around them.

The Rev Canon Elizabeth Baker (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) echoed what Ms Fairclough had just said. She also wished to mention mixed mode training which had not been mentioned during the session. She had had a mixed mode trainee for three years. The training had been practical. She wondered why no mention had been made of it in the presentation to Synod.

The Rev Canon Dr Sophia Marriage (Edinburgh) was hesitant to add further suggestions because she recognised that the SEI was already dealing with much. She declared that she had previously been a historian and her PhD had been in liturgy. She believed the history of liturgy was exceptionally important but she also thought that the future of liturgy was very important. Hearing about the Masters in liturgy which had been mentioned during the presentation, she wanted the future of liturgy to be addressed also. She hoped that creative and forward-looking liturgy would be part of that Masters course.

Dr Hull responded to comments made. He noted that the Church's liturgies had come through the "wee bookie" stage and were now online and the

Church was not static on this topic. Moving forward would be a feature of the Masters.

The Rev Canon Vittoria Hancock (Aberdeen and Orkney) applauded the work of the SEI. She had a slight reservation in that she believed that the training provided was very academic. She had people in her charges who would be good lay readers but were put off by the requirement of a three-year course involving 20 hours of work per week. Such people were already perfect, just as they were, for ministering in her context. She was concerned that in focusing on the academic aspects, there was a risk of losing the skills of those who were not academic.

Dr Hull explained that the reason that mixed mode training had not been mentioned earlier was because his remit for the current Synod had been to focus on lay learning and the new degree programmes. It had not been left out because it was unimportant. The question about the balance of academic content in training was an issue which was constantly before the SEI. The qualifications which SEI put forward were not meant principally to be academic so, for example, SEI addressed "theology for ministry", "theology, mission and ministry". The Church had asked for a diploma level of study prior to licensing as a lay reader or deaconing. The difficulty was to inculcate in students both the knowledge which they needed to go forward, the personal sense of theological reflection and the experience of ministry. To do all of that in three years and part-time would always be a difficult balance. It would never be possible to get it absolutely right but SEI would continue to the best of its ability to balance all aspects. He was happy to take advice from those who were already in ministry about what needed to be emphasised in training.

The Chair thanked Dr Hull, Ms Crumlish and Bishop Swift for their presentations.

## **6.2 Administration Board**

### **6.2.1 Introduction**

Mr Jim Gibson (Convener, Administration Board) referred to the reports in the Annual Report and Accounts for the General Synod for the year ended 31 December 2022 on the work of the Administration Board and its pendant committees. As he had done in previous years, he likened the SEC to a vehicle needing a competent driver, fuel which would not clog the engine (ideally an electric vehicle) and bodywork which was fit for purpose. All were interrelated, the driver being the clergy, the fuel the Church's investment income and the bodywork being the buildings of the Church. Synod had already taken note of the presentation from the Investment Committee and the focus of the current presentation would be from the Buildings Committee but that was not to undervalue the work undertaken by the Board's other two committees, Personnel and Retirement Housing.

The Buildings Committee would bring forward motions designed to encourage good practice in risk assessment and to indicate steps which could be taken to ensure that church buildings moved towards meeting the challenges of net zero carbon emissions.

Mr Gibson reminded Synod that the stipend policy agreed at General Synod 2021 had had the unexpected consequence that stipends for 2023 had risen by 11.1%, driven by the high level of inflation following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Provincial reserves had been made available to provide a measure of transitional relief to assist congregations in the current year and a reduced level of assistance would also be available in 2024. The policy of increasing stipend above the rate of inflation had been agreed, with the goal of restoring stipends to their 2006 level, adjusted for inflation. At the Board's request, the Clergy Remuneration Review Group had considered how best to achieve that goal in the light of what might be high levels of inflation in the following years. The Group had decided not to recommend any changes but had restated the importance of restoring the real level of stipend. The policy of increases above the rate of inflation would therefore continue and Mr Gibson urged charges to take steps to ensure that they were able to fund stipends once the transitional stipend assistance grants had ceased.

Mr Gibson had been pleased to note that the interim Unit Trust Pool distribution payable in August 2023 had been agreed at 39p per unit, an increase of 16% on the equivalent payment the previous year, and a target of 82pence per unit was in mind for the full year distribution.

Mr Gibson suggested that the SEC was not exempt from increasing levels of bureaucracy and regulation stemming from Government. The committees took account of changes in regulations, best practice and public mood. In the previous two years, the Synod had engaged firmly with issues concerning clergy well-being, climate change and cost of living increases. All such factors resulted in an increase in workload placed on office staff and committee members and he thanked them for their dedication.

He also expressed thanks to Mark Harris and Peter Sharp, the Conveners of the Investment and Buildings Committees, and to Peter Marsh who had taken on the mantle left by the Rev Lorna Mortis as Convener of the Retirement Housing Committee. He also expressed thanks to the Rev Richard Kilgour and the Rev Les Ireland who had completed their terms of service on the Board.

### **6.2.2 Buildings Committee**

Prof Peter Sharp (Convener, Buildings Committee) referred to the report contained in the Synod papers setting out the proposals being brought to Synod in relation to matters of health and safety, environment and administration.

He reminded the Synod that at Synod 2022, he had made reference to the tragic accident which had taken place at St Peter's, Peterhead. The Committee had worked with an external health and safety consultant to produce guidance for charges and all charges had now been sent a risk assessment booklet and a link to provincial webpages where a training video could be accessed on how to carry out risk assessments and an online health and safety toolkit was available. He appreciated that there might be questions on the implementation of health and safety procedures which were not answered by reference to the toolkit and so consideration was being given to providing a professional health and safety support network. The proposals



to change Resolution 1 under Canon 42 and Section 7.2.1 of the Digest of Resolutions were being introduced to monitor the use of risk assessments. The Deans would be subject to a duty to inspect the risk register and risk assessment records when they inspected other charge registers and arrangements for risk assessment and management would be included as a duty of enquiry for Diocesan Synods and congregations.

Mr Gibson then proposed, and the Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) seconded, the following Motion:

*“That Resolution 1 under Canon 42 be amended to read:*

*“It shall be the duty of the Dean of the Diocese to inspect the registers, inventories and records (including the risk register and risk assessment records) of the congregation, including the Communicants' Roll and the Roll of members as defined by Canon 41, at least once in every four years and to report the result of the inspection to the Bishop in Synod unless the Bishop shall have stated publicly in Diocesan Synod that this duty, or a specified portion thereof, will be undertaken by the Bishop. Without prejudice to the foregoing requirement, the Dean shall inspect the registers, records, reports and inventories together with the Communicants' Roll and Roll of Members, as soon as possible after the intimation of the resignation, or the death of a cleric in charge, so as to have them in order for the person succeeding to that charge.”*

The Chair invited comment but there was none.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed *nem con* as follows: 106 in favour, none against, 3 abstentions.

Mr Gibson then proposed, and Bishop Swift seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Section 7.2.1 of the Digest of Resolutions be amended by the inclusion of a new paragraph (d) to read:*

*“(d) arrangements for risk assessment and management;”*

*and by the re-lettering of the existing paragraph (d) as paragraph (e).”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed unanimously, 109 in favour.

Prof Sharp explained that the challenges posed by many church buildings featured highly in the Church's efforts to move towards net zero. In 2022, the Committee had issued advice on the heating of buildings. It intended to revise the list of minor works so that changes to heating systems would, in future, require Canon 35 consent. To complement the heating advice, the Committee had drafted guidance on the insulation of buildings and once feedback had been received from the Provincial Environment Group, it would be placed on the provincial website. Also, to ensure that consent to any changes in buildings granted by a Diocesan Buildings Committee and Bishop was aligned with net zero guidance, the Committee wished to put forward a

small change to Canon 35 to ensure that any approvals given under the Canon adhered to any such guidance endorsed by the Buildings Committee.

Mr Gibson then proposed, and Bishop Swift seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the amended text of Canon 35 be read for the first time.”*

Dr Stephen Goodyear (Aberdeen and Orkney) noted that the proposed change would give the ability to the Buildings Committee, without any review, to be constantly updating its guidance without oversight by Synod. He believed that the change was *ultra vires* since it gave a group of people the ability to constantly change the Canons without review. He also had a concern that if the net zero plan was something which could not be delivered or was inappropriate in some parts of the dioceses because of other things which were happening, then it was inappropriate to be telling charges that they had to adhere to guidelines. It was not possible to tell people to make two plus two equal five in their context. He asked that Synod consider that and that the comments be taken forward for discussion at Diocesan Synods.

The Chair noted that Dr Goodyear had suggested that the Motion was *ultra vires*. After taking advice from the Assessor, the Chair confirmed that the Motion was not *ultra vires*. He suggested that the proposed reference in the Canon was to guidance. Dr Goodyear responded that "guidance" did not normally have to be "adhered to".

Prof Sharp responded that he did not see a need for a change.

The Motion was put to the vote in houses and passed as follows:

House of Clergy: 46 in favour, 2 against, 4 abstentions  
House of Laity: 39 in favour, 6 against, 3 abstentions  
House of Bishops: 6 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

Prof Sharp then addressed the question of energy performance certificates (“EPCs”). In the Committee's guidance on Minimum Standards for Clergy Housing, the Committee advised that rectories ought to have an EPC rating of no lower than C. In order to ensure that all church buildings had an EPC, the Committee wished to introduce a change to Section 7.2.2 of the Digest of Resolutions to ensure that the quinquennial inspection included examination of the EPC.

Mr Gibson then proposed, and Bishop Swift, seconded the following Motion:

*“That Section 7.2.2 of the Digest of Resolutions be amended to read:*

*“Each Vestry, which failing the diocese on behalf of the Vestry, shall appoint an architect, chartered surveyor or other suitably qualified person to supervise the buildings under the Vestry’s charge and notify the Diocese of any change in such appointment from time to time and the Vestry shall obtain a written report, including an energy performance certificate, in respect of these buildings, at least every five years. The report shall also confirm that the building’s energy performance certificate is up-to date.”*”

Dr Beth Routledge (Glasgow and Galloway) intended to vote in favour of the Motion. It represented good practice irrespective of the net zero strategy. She wished to take the opportunity to ask the Committee to consider whether there was a need to reconsider the Minimum Standards on Clergy Housing both in the light of the 2030 target and also the cost of living crisis. Prof Sharp responded that the Minimum Standards had been revised the previous year and the Committee would keep them under review.

The Rev Gary Clink (Brechin) asked that funding be found to help charges meet EPC standards. He applauded the intent but there was a need for funding. Prof Sharp responded that he thought Mr Clink's Bishop would be happy to discuss that.

The Motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 97 in favour, 7 against, six abstentions.

Prof Sharp turned to the question of the Building Committee's role in hearing appeals against decisions of Diocesan Buildings Committees. Following a recent appeal, the Committee had considered an alteration to its guidance on appeal processes and would issue that in due course. The resolutions under Canon 35 currently required any appeal to be lodged within four weeks and the Committee considered that that was too short. It was therefore suggesting that Resolution 7 under Canon 35 should be changed to extend the period from four to six weeks.

Mr Gibson proposed, and Bishop Swift, seconded the following Motion:

*“That Resolution 7 under Canon 35 be amended to read:*

*“Within six weeks of a decision having been made by the Bishop and Diocesan Buildings Committee, an appeal, lodged in writing with the Secretary General of the General Synod, may be made to the Provincial Buildings Committee either by the Vestry against one or more conditions attached to a consent or against a refusal of consent, or by not less than twenty per cent of communicant members of the congregation against a granting of consent. Such an appeal shall be decided within twelve weeks by the Provincial Buildings Committee whose decision shall be final.””*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 106 in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention.

## **6.3 Faith and Order Board: Liturgy Committee**

### **6.3.1 Introduction**

The Rev Canon Nicholas Taylor (Convener, Liturgy Committee) referred to the report of the Committee contained in the Annual Report and Accounts for the General Synod for the year ended 31 December 2022. The new draft Rite for the ordination of deacons which was mentioned in that report and also the Committee's Workplan had been referred by the Faith and Order Board to the College of Bishops.

Canon Taylor drew attention to the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation document "Liturgical Formation of all the Baptised" which had been commended to member churches by the Anglican Consultative Council at its recent meeting. The working party which had produced that document had been convened by his predecessor as Convener, Dr John Davies.

A video in which Dr Davies presented that document was then shown to Synod. Dr Davies explained that a meeting had taken place in Hong Kong in 2019 after concerns had been expressed to the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation about the lack of liturgical formation on the part of those training for ordination. The process had resulted in suggestions for the formation in liturgy of all Anglican Christians, not just clergy. A meeting of the working group in 2021 had also considered the liturgical formation of Bishops. After an online meeting of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation in 2021 he had had the privilege of chairing a working group tasked with creating a final report. That had been sent to the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order in September 2021 and had subsequently been presented to the Lambeth Conference in 2022 and the Anglican Consultative Council in 2023. The final document was entitled "The Liturgical Formation of all the Baptised". Formation was understood as the process of growing spiritually, becoming more like Christ, and liturgical formation was an essential part of Christian formation in the Anglican Communion, shaped by Scripture, worship, communion and God's mission. The liturgy was a privileged place for encounter with Christ. Formation was a spiral process which led to growth. He encouraged Synod members to read the paper which he believed was a profitable and useful resource for the Anglican Communion as a whole.

### **6.3.2 Liturgies for Second Reading**

The Primus proposed, and the Rt Rev Ian Paton (Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) seconded, the following Motion:

*"That the proposal that the Pastoral Offices for Priests be added to the Schedule to Canon 22 be read for the second time."*

The Primus explained that that Motion, and the following two motions which would be proposed to Synod, were all subject to amendments as set out on the Synod agenda. As mover of the Motions, he was content with the amendments, which had arisen from discussions within the Faith and Order Board, but the Synod would still need to vote on them.

Canon Taylor then proposed, and the Rev Canon Dr James Currall (Moray, Ross and Caithness) seconded, the following amendment:

#### ***Amendment 1:***

*To add at the end of the above motion for second reading:*

*“subject to the inclusion of an introductory sentence in the order for Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament outside Public Worship as follows:*

*‘We are the body of Christ, who has promised to be with us when we gather in his name. As we seek forgiveness of our sins, hear the Word of God in Scripture, pray for those in need, and receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament, we are united in the communion of saints and in the eucharistic life of the local church (the local congregation may be named).’”*

Comment was invited but there was none.

The amendment was then put to the vote in houses and passed as follows:

House of Clergy: 52 in favour, none against, no abstentions

House of Laity: 47 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention

House of Bishops: 6 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

The Motion as amended was then put to the vote:

*“That the proposal that the Pastoral Offices for Priests be added to the Schedule to Canon 22 be read for the second time subject to the inclusion of an introductory sentence in the order for Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament outside Public Worship as follows:*

*‘We are the body of Christ, who has promised to be with us when we gather in his name. As we seek forgiveness of our sins, hear the Word of God in Scripture, pray for those in need, and receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament, we are united in the communion of saints and in the eucharistic life of the local church (the local congregation may be named).’”*

Voting on the amended Motion was as follows:

House of Clergy: 53 in favour, none against, no abstentions

House of Laity: 47 in favour, one against, one abstention

House of Bishops: 6 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

The Chair declared the motion carried.

The Primus then proposed, and Bishop Paton seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the proposal that the Pastoral Offices for Deacons be added to the Schedule to Canon 22 be read for the second time.”*

Canon Taylor proposed, and Canon Currall seconded, the following amendment:

***Amendment 1:***

*To add at the end of the above motion for second reading:*

*“subject to the inclusion of an introductory sentence in the order for Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament outside Public Worship as follows:*

*‘We are the body of Christ, who has promised to be with us when we gather in his name. As we seek forgiveness of our sins, hear the Word of God in Scripture, pray for those in need, and receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament, we are united in the communion of saints and in the eucharistic life of the local church (the local congregation may be named).’”*

The amendment was put to the vote and passed in houses as follows:

House of Clergy: 54 in favour, none against, no abstentions

House of Laity: 47 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention

House of Bishops: 6 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

The amended Motion was then put to the vote in houses as follows:

*“That the proposal that the Pastoral Offices for Deacons be added to the Schedule to Canon 22 be read for the second time subject to the inclusion of an introductory sentence in the order for Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament outside Public Worship as follows:*

*‘We are the body of Christ, who has promised to be with us when we gather in his name. As we seek forgiveness of our sins, hear the Word of God in Scripture, pray for those in need, and receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament, we are united in the communion of saints and in the eucharistic life of the local church (the local congregation may be named).’”*

Voting was as follows:

House of Clergy: 53 in favour, none against, no abstentions

House of Laity: 46 in favour, none against, 1 abstention

House of Bishops: 6 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

The Chair declared the Motion carried.

The Primus then proposed, and Bishop Paton seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the proposal that the Pastoral Offices for Readers and Authorised Lay Ministers be added to the Schedule to Canon 22 be read for the second time.”*

Canon Taylor then proposed, and Canon Currall seconded, the following amendment:

**Amendment 1:**

*To add at the end of the above motion for second reading:*

*“subject to the inclusion of an introductory sentence in the order for Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament outside Public Worship as follows:*

*‘We are the body of Christ, who has promised to be with us when we gather in his name. As we seek forgiveness of our sins, hear the Word of God in Scripture, pray for those in need, and receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament, we are united in the communion of saints and in the eucharistic life of the local church (the local congregation may be named).’”*

The amendment was put to the vote in houses and passed as follows:

House of Clergy: 53 in favour, 1 against, no abstentions

House of Laity: 46 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention

House of Bishops: 6 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

Canon Taylor then proposed, and Canon Currall seconded, the following further amendment:

***Amendment 2:***

*To add at the end of the above motion for second reading:*

*“subject to the inclusion of an additional sentence, after the second sentence of the prefatory section entitled “Laying-On of Hands of the Sick” in the liturgy for Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament outside Public Worship, as follows:*

*‘If a priest is available, it may be appropriate to request that s/he attend, perhaps accompanied by the lay person who normally visits the person receiving this ministry.’”*

The Rev Gary Clink (Brechin) reported that at his Diocesan Synod a question had arisen about the use of language. It had been decided that the use of "they" instead of "he/she" was more appropriate.

Canon Taylor commented that the Faith and Order Board had discussed that matter in principle and had agreed to use the word "they". He would revise the wording to reflect that intent. Synod accepted that the amendment should be further amended to reflect that.

With that amendment, the amendment was put to the vote in houses and passed as follows:

House of Clergy: 52 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention

House of Laity: 48 in favour, none against, 1 abstention

House of Bishops: 6 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

The Motion, as amended, as follows, was then put to the vote in houses:

*“That the proposal that the Pastoral Offices for Readers and Authorised Lay Ministers be added to the Schedule to Canon 22 be read for the second time subject to the inclusion of an introductory sentence in the order for Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament outside Public Worship as follows:*

*‘We are the body of Christ, who has promised to be with us when we gather in his name. As we seek forgiveness of our sins, hear the Word of God in Scripture, pray for those in need, and receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament, we are united in the communion of saints and in the eucharistic life of the local church (the local congregation may be named).’”*

*and subject to the inclusion of an additional sentence, after the second sentence of the prefatory section entitled “Laying-On of Hands of the Sick” in the liturgy for Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament outside Public Worship, as follows:*

*‘It may be appropriate to request that a priest, if available, attend, perhaps accompanied by the lay person who normally visits the person receiving this ministry.’”*

Voting was as follows:

House of Clergy: 50 in favour, 2 against, no abstentions

House of Laity: 49 in favour, none against, 1 abstention

House of Bishops: 6 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

The Chair declared the Motion carried.

Mrs Victoria Elliott (Edinburgh) wished to pick up on themes of language and pastoral offices for the sick. She asked the Synod to imagine her being in France at a mass in circumstances where she did not speak French. She illustrated how inadequate Google translate would be to help her with the liturgy. She would encounter difficulty not only in translation but also in distraction. She was not the only person who would have such difficulties worshipping, even when the service was in English. For some, this arose from a disability of some kind. Not all disabilities were immediately obvious, such as visual or hearing impairments. For her, it had taken a diagnosis of ADHD, autistic traits and dyspraxia to be able to appreciate what she already knew at a fundamental level. Everyone was "a bit odd" and this reflected the glorious diversity of God. Neuro-divergent people were often highly creative and had unique thinking styles. How to approach God in worship was affected by such challenges. Knowing when to stand or sit could provoke anxiety if the rules had not been explained. Innocuous phrases such as "we have disfigured your image" might create additional hurdles. Her immediate personal response to such a phrase was that Jesus was being punched and needed to go to accident and emergency. The absurdity of that necessitated that she had to concentrate and ask whether that was actually what was meant. She worked as a senior content designer for a public body producing accessible content on websites and in printed material. The use of everyday language and plain English benefited everyone, whether they had a disability



or not. Perhaps that was an approach which could be drawn upon in the Church's liturgy. That was important both for people inside and outside the Church. She thanked the Liturgy Committee for all the work they had done and, looking to the future, she wanted to ask everyone to consider how the Church could develop its liturgy to communicate the message of God's love for all.

## **SESSION 7: THE VERY REV ALISON SIMPSON IN THE CHAIR**

### **7.1 Faith and Order Board: Liturgy Committee (continued)**

#### **7.1.2 Liturgies for First Reading**

The Primus proposed, and Bishop Paton seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the proposal that the Liturgies for Lent, Holy Week and Easter for use with Scottish Liturgy 1982 (revised 2022) and A Service of the Word 2015 be added to the Schedule to Canon 22 be read for the first time.”*

Canon Taylor informed Synod that the Joint Liturgical Group for Great Britain (an inter-denominational body on which most denominations were represented) would be holding conferences in Scotland in 2024 on some of the issues mentioned at the end of the previous session and would be open to any who wished to attend.

Canon Taylor explained that the collection of Rites for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter had been authorised for experimental use in 2017 and the Committee had appreciated the comments made by members of the Church since then. The texts authorised for experimental use had been expanded to include Ascension and Pentecost as integral to the Season of Easter. Also, the revised Psalter from the Anglican Church of Canada, incorporating inclusive language, was being used where applicable.

Canon Taylor explained that, as with all liturgical provision, the task of the Committee was to draft texts which would give contemporary expression to the Christian faith, drawing upon and at the same time contributing to the liturgical tradition of the Church catholic. The text being proposed to Synod had not been drafted in isolation from the work of Anglican and ecumenical neighbours but with an independence that sought to be true to the distinctive liturgical heritage of the SEC. Each liturgy was preceded by a theological introduction with some practical guidance and a commentary on the collection, produced in collaboration with the Doctrine Committee and published at the time of authorisation for experimental use, remained available on the provincial website.

The Very Rev Elizabeth Thomson (Breachin) commented that the shortened versions of the dramatised readings for the Passion in the Gospels of both Matthew and Mark terminated just before the verses about the women standing at the foot of the cross. The transition from that point to the evening came after that verse. The women were not just part of the aftermath, they were part of the core story and it was regrettable that the readings stopped where they did. She would continue to include that verse when she used the

liturgy. She also asked how the liturgies had been changed as a result of feedback during the experimental period.

The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) commented on the Passion narrative in the Gospel of John in the context of current sensitivities about anti-Semitism. He asked what consideration had been given to the way in which Christians celebrated Good Friday. When he met with Jewish friends at that time of year either formally or informally, he was aware of huge concerns about how Christians spoke about the Jews. He sought a reassurance that the Synod was not about to take a step which it could do better. He wondered whether there had been a conversation with Jewish people about that subject.

Canon Taylor agreed that the question of anti-Semitism was a very sensitive one and concerned both the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Matthew. As they were texts of Scripture, they were an issue which the Church had to work with. The text of the Good Friday liturgy had been worked through carefully with the question of anti-Semitism in mind. Traditional texts associated with anti-Semitism had been removed. As far as the dramatic readings were concerned, the text followed those stipulated in the revised Common Lectionary. He accepted that the cut-off points of the readings were unfortunate, and it was possible that the Faith and Order Board might wish to bring forward an amendment at second reading.

The vote was then put to the vote in houses and passed as follows:

House of Clergy: 50 in favour, 1 against, 3 abstentions  
House of Laity: 46 in favour, 2 against, 2 abstentions  
House of Bishops: 6 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

The Primus thanked the members of the Liturgy Committee for their work including its Convener, Canon Taylor.

## **7.2 College of Bishops**

The Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) explained that following the table group sessions which had taken place the previous day the College had received 44 questions and he thanked the Synod for them. The College would in due course answer the questions but for the purposes of the current session, six themes had been identified. Each Bishop would respond to one theme. They comprised the culture in the Church; the culture and make up of the College of Bishops; being leaders of mission; being leaders of ministry; ecumenical relationships and justice and social action.

The Primus said there had been a number of questions on the issues of power and authority, the mission of the Church and matters of gender, race and class. The question of how people were treated had been mentioned including questions of unconscious bias. It was difficult to answer some of the questions because he recognised there were steps which he now needed to take. He recognised that as a white man in leadership he did not have all the necessary tools to deal with the questions which had been asked. He needed someone to teach him and help him understand when he was about to say something which was hurtful (which he had

not recognised would be hurtful). He could not answer the questions on those topics at the present time but needed to ask for permission to have someone else work with him. He would respond after having listened to professional help.

The Rt Rev Bishop Ian Paton (Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) said that there had been many questions about the culture of the College of Bishops including the gender balance and other balances in the College. He agreed that the image of six male people was not an image of the inclusivity of the Church. The Bishops recognised that and needed to listen to those in the Church who were different from them. The gender balance of the College of Bishops was, of course, in the hands of the electors. Beyond that, however, how could the Church encourage people who were not middle-class, middle-aged-to-elderly white males to come forward as candidates? How were women to feel confident and safe in the Church to take the risk of being candidates in elections in a Church in which women did not always feel safe? One question had asked how the Church could help the College of Bishops address the question of misogyny. It would be easy to think that because the Church ordained women to all orders of ministry that inequality had been solved. Similarly, because the Church had accepted equal marriage and included inclusive language in its liturgies, there was an assumption the issue of inequality had been solved, but that was not the case. Most prejudice was hidden, and the Bishops recognised that they too were subject to prejudice and it was possible to make decisions based on invisible and unheard prejudice, which the College needed to reflect upon. There was a need to listen much more both within the College and within the Church at large. He recounted a story of a female curate at Old St Paul's who had discovered that all copes had been designed to be worn by men. As a result, the cope frequently slipped off her shoulders. She had written a sermon based on her experience of having to wear men's clothes as a woman priest. It stood as a parable. Women in the priesthood and in the episcopate were changing the Church's ministry and more women in the episcopate would change it further. He prayed that the Church would have a whole ministry and episcopate and a more whole church as a result but it was for the electors in elections to be mindful of that.

The Rt Rev Dr Keith Riglin (Bishop of Argyll and The Isles) spoke to the subject of ecumenism. There had been three questions: the sharing of the Gospel in partnership with other churches; courses to enable charges to engage in the teaching of and nurturing of disciples; co-operation with others on shared goals to reach net zero. In other words, the questions were about evangelism, education and the environment. Bishop Riglin responded with two principles namely the Lund Principle that Churches should only do separately what they could not do together and also the principle that the wheel ought not to be reinvented. On evangelism, Bishops could and would encourage efforts to share the Gospel in partnership with others. It might be through street pastors schemes or in joint work, as was the case in his diocese, with the Church of Scotland and Church Army to establish a pioneering initiative. Matters of "hard ecumenism" would arise and would be addressed when they were encountered. On education, the Bishops appreciated the charge given to them to be the pastors and teachers of the Church. The Bishops commended those resources which the Church already had. The Synod had already heard about resources available from the SEI and there were various online courses available as well. He encouraged people to contact their Diocesan Bishop or the College and they would endeavour to help. On the environment, the Lund Principle might suggest that the common use of buildings should be addressed,

especially during the winter months. For example, on alternate months two churches close to one another could agree to provide hospitality for the other so that only one building was heated, rather than two. If a vestry was struggling to work out what to do in relation to net zero, there might be advantage in meeting with the local Kirk Session to share resources. In the three areas of evangelism, education and environment there was much common ground. The College would give active encouragement to all charges in the Province.

The Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) addressed the theme of ministry including questions such as how, having heard all that was said about the Five Marks of Ministry, were the Bishops going to resource it; how were the Bishops going to maintain hope and realism, and give permission to people to give up long established activities; how were they to open channels of co-operation with ecumenical neighbours; and what were the key features of the Bishops' three-five year strategy to reverse numerical decline in the SEC. It was inevitable that when the College invited questions the response would be to ask the College what it was going to do in response. However, it was important to remember that Bishops were "Bishops in Synod", they were not working on their own. In response to the question of resources, the Synod hall was full of resources and they were evident from what had been said earlier in Synod in relation to the Season for Christian Life and what was going on in the SEI. Both of those were initiatives which had come originally from the College of Bishops. The College had done much in helping to establish the new Institute under the leadership of Bishop Pearson, Bishop Dyer and Bishop Swift. Similarly, the Season for Christian Life had come from the College of Bishops but it was only an idea which could have any traction if everyone was involved. The Bishops were members of many of the key committees in the Province and were working with others in that. As Bishop of Edinburgh, he found many good things were going on, some of which he could give active permission for and affirm but in fact they were happening because they were led by wonderful lay people and highly trained and capable clergy. Those were patterns of church life in which Bishops were involved, but not on their own. Recently the Diocese had gathered for a day event at the Cathedral entitled "the Big Story" at which charges from the Diocese had been present to show what they were doing in their communities to demonstrate the light of Christ. The day had given the lie to some of the more negative narratives which one encountered. Bishop Armes could not give a plan for reversing numerical decline but it could be reversed by the work of the Holy Spirit if the Church co-operated but he was not convinced that that was God's primary thrust. Creating healthy communities was more important than numbers. Every church he had visited since lockdown had had new people attending. Sometimes their coming had been in response to work undertaken by charges online or in their communities and sometimes it had simply been because God was at work in their lives and they had chosen to come to church. Increasingly, as Bishop, he was undertaking confirmations of both young and old. Numerical growth was happening. Rather than creating a negative narrative, the Church could choose to look at the positive developments. He encouraged the doors to be opened so that when the Spirit moved, the Church could move too.

The Rt Rev Kevin Pearson (Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway) addressed the theme of mission. It was important to remember that the Church, in the power of the Spirit, joined in with God's mission. Decline was not inevitable. In every charge in which he had served he had always said that at the heart of one's faith was a desire to be with God. His ambition in every diocese was to be able to respond to the question

"why do you go to church" by saying "I have an experience of the living God". Unpacking that statement meant being nourished by God in worship, where one found an experience of God which one wanted to share and which motivated one's life. There had been many examples during the current meeting of how that experience could be shared. The Synod had also heard that there was a need to look forward and that former models were no longer relevant. He had suggested to his own diocese that in the future there would be a need for bigger regions with one worship centre in each. All the clergy who were currently seeking to maintain ageing buildings would be based in that single worship centre and able to minister in the region. Such a model would be sustainable and was aligned with net zero principles and patterns of ministry. An essential for all that was a need for trust in one another, in God and in the Bishop. Bishops could not impose mission plans but they could work together with others to enable people to have an experience of the living God.

Bishop Pearson had also been asked to speak to the theme of children and young people. He believed the secret was to take children seriously in response to their spiritual needs. He had done that with young people by asking them specifically "what would keep you in church". In closing, he asked the Synod to ponder the question "how would you preach the Gospel on Love Island?".

The Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) addressed the theme of poverty, cost of living and unjust structures. How could power in the Church be used to create a prophetic voice? One of the comments had suggested that Bishops were often silent. However, it had often been said that the SEC punched above its weight. The Bishops did use their voices. The Primus often made public statements on behalf of the College on many issues including refugees, poverty, fuel prices, etc. The College would continue to do that. Bishop Swift said that the College would lead, encourage and support and he recognised that, occasionally, it was necessary to take the Bishop out of the picture to enable things to happen. In addressing such needs, it could be difficult to tune out the anxieties which arose about other matters and Bishops experienced that as well as congregations. Having read the questions, he expressed a commitment to listen more. One question had been "how can the College of Bishops liberate us from talk, talk, talk to action, action, action and liberate us from institutional constraints to relate to the realities of our charges for God?". He endorsed that question wholeheartedly. In closing, he encouraged the members of Synod to continue to provide feedback to the College of Bishops and expressed thanks to the Synod for their questions.

The Chair thanked the Synod for having provided the questions and the College for its responses.

## **SESSION 8: THE RT REV THE BISHOP OF EDINBURGH IN THE CHAIR**

### **8.1 Committee for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (known as the Safeguarding Committee)**

#### **8.1.1 Introduction**

Mr Richard Baker (Convener, Safeguarding Committee) introduced the session, the main substantive item for which, he explained, would be the first reading of a proposed revision to Canon 65. Before addressing that, he wished to record thanks to Donald Urquhart who had retired after many years

of service and wise counsel as the Provincial Officer for safeguarding. He also expressed thanks to Daphne Audsley for acting as interim Provincial Officer while the Committee had recruited for the new role of Head of Safeguarding. He welcomed John Wyllie who had taken up that role and the Committee was delighted to have secured an individual with Mr Wyllie's experience and expertise - he had held a number of senior roles within Police Scotland. Mr Wyllie was already putting in place plans for safeguarding training across the Province and was helping the Church to prepare for the new Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme when that was introduced by Government. Mr Wyllie's appointment was an important step forward in implementing the recommendations of the short-life Working Group which had been led by David Strang on improving the Church's safeguarding structures. Along with the new safeguarding policy which Synod had approved in 2020, the Committee believed that the reform of Canon 65 would contribute to ensuring that the Church had effective and up-to-date policies in place. He expressed gratitude to the Committee on Canons for taking that work forward and was pleased that Lexy Plumtree would set out the reforms for Synod.

### **8.1.2 First Reading of Canon 65**

Ms Lexy Plumtree presented the first reading of proposed changes to Canon 65 (Of Safeguarding in the Church). She explained that she was a member of the Committee on Canons and had previously served as Convener of the Safeguarding Committee and had been a member of the Canonical Review Group. She referred to the explanatory paper contained in the Synod papers on which there was a minor typographical error on page 217; Section (g) in fact ought to have referred to Section 4 of the Canon.

She explained that the new Canon was intended to reflect the new safeguarding policy which had been adopted in 2020 and to update the Church's legal framework for safeguarding. The Committee on Canons had tried to modernise and simplify the language and to render it as accessible as possible. Each section of the Canon was divided into subsections and that was an approach which the Committee on Canons intended to adopt for other Canons in future. Each section also had its own heading. Most of the new Canon reflected, but modernised, the existing Canon. Sections 1 and 2 were new, as was Section 8 which dealt with risk assessment for the first time. The schedule at the end of the Canon was the same as the schedule to the existing Canon. The resolution at the end of the proposed new Canon was a replacement for the existing Resolution 3 under the current Canon. The current Resolutions 1 and 2 had been moved into the body of the Canon itself. There were many supporting documents and the Safeguarding Team would be working on updated practice notes and other material for the future.

Ms Plumtree commented on various specific sections in the new Canon. Whilst Section 8 on risk assessments was new, the Safeguarding Team in fact undertook risk assessment already. The intention was to evaluate the level of safeguarding risk.

Bridget Campbell (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following Motion:

*"That the amended text of Canon 65 be read for the first time."*

Dr Stephen Goodyear (Aberdeen and Orkney) thanked the Committee for its work which he commended. It was helpful to have clarified the understanding of the responsibilities of the different bodies within the Church in relation to safeguarding. He wished to propose a small, but significant, amendment. Many members of Synod would be trustees of a charity, perhaps in their role as a vestry member. Trustees had legal duties which potentially exposed them to personal liabilities. The issue of safeguarding was therefore very important for all trustees to take seriously. He asked Synod members to imagine a charge where they were one of the charity trustees and where the charge had a full-time clergy person and full-time lay worker. His concern related to Sections 6(a) and 8(f) of the proposed new Canon. If there was a safeguarding issue which arose in relation to a lay person, the local trustees would be informed. However, if an issue arose in relation to the clergy person the Canon did not allow the trustees to be told because the matter would be dealt with elsewhere. As a trustee, he had been disturbed about that when he first read the Canon because it would enable him to take action in relation to a lay person, but not a clergy person. He believed that that was an asymmetry which was not right. He believed everyone should be treated equally. He also suggested that if a risk assessment raised issues which were not necessarily disciplinary issues it would be for the trustees to ensure in their local context that they were aware of such matters and able to protect both the person who had been subject to a risk assessment and those who could be affected by them if the individual posed a threat. The purpose of his amendment, therefore, was to place both clergy and lay people on the same footing. He had had the opportunity for discussion the previous day and thanked Daphne Audsley in particular for that. He recognised that there was a complication in that Canon 54 dealt with matters of clergy discipline. A revision to Canon 54 had, however, been delayed for obvious reasons and might yet take a number of years. He believed the current Canon 54 was unfit as a safeguarding tool because, if there were concerns about an individual, Canon 54 only worked if someone took the matter forward and the position of the Church to date had been that it would only act if a victim brought forward safeguarding concerns. In other areas of society when people suffered abuse they were often unable to come forward, for a variety of reasons. That did not absolve trustees from their responsibility of making sure that others should be protected.

Dr Goodyear then proposed, and Dr Martin Auld (Aberdeen and Orkney) seconded, the following amendment to the Motion so that it would read:

*"That the amended text of Canon 65 be read for the first time subject to:  
(i) replacing the words "other than" with "including" in Section 6(a) and  
(ii) replacing the words "other than" with "including" in Section 8(f)".*

Ms Plumtree indicated that the proposed amendment was not acceptable to the Committee on Canons. She explained that the situation was complex and that there was an interface between employment law, charity law and the

"unusual" position of clergy who were not employees. The proposed new Canon was exactly the same in this matter as the existing Canon. The existing one allowed the Safeguarding Officer to propose that an individual should be suspended and was repeated in the proposed new Canon. The existing Canon had never been intended to cover the situation of suspension of clergy. Canon 54 was the disciplinary Canon, Canon 65 was not. Canon 54 would be revised. The Canonical Review Group had already undertaken significant work on it and the Committee on Canons had too. It was not possible to bring forward the new Canon 54 at the moment but that would be the place in which to deal with such matters. The interface between charity law, Canon law and employment law was very complicated. Charity trustees could remove a trustee who was in persistent breach but that related to removal rather than suspension. Removal would be under the Canons as the internal rules applicable for the Church. A vestry would not necessarily be notified in the case of a recommended suspension. Safeguarding cases involved a high degree of confidentiality both in relation to victims and alleged perpetrators.

The Rev Canon Lynsay Braybrooke (Aberdeen and Orkney) was glad to hear the explanation which had been given. She considered she needed to draw to the attention of the Synod a pattern which those outside her Diocese might not be aware of, namely that Canon law was being undermined by reference to charity law. She believed that that approach was undermining of the Bishop and reduced all matters to charity trustee level.

The Rev Dr Stephen Holmes (Edinburgh) considered that it was important that clergy ought to be held to high standards in safeguarding but he opposed the amendment because they confused the nature of the structure of the Church. The Church was a collection of charities and there was a hierarchy of charities. The Church was not just a collection of independent charges. There was an appropriate level for dealing with such matters within the Church and in some cases that might be the Diocese or the Province. That was the case both within the Canons but also, he believed, in relation to charity law and he wondered whether the Assessor might wish to comment.

The Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) indicated that he had also sat on the Canonical Review Group which had considered the disciplinary Canon. It was important that General Synod understood that, as Provost Holdsworth saw it, what Dr Goodyear was proposing would not achieve what he hoped it would achieve. Vestries did not issue licences for clergy. It was the Bishop who issued clergy licences and that was why the matter had to be dealt with under Canon 54. It was clear under that Canon that if the Provincial Officer lodged an accusation then the individual had to be suspended. He also considered that the amendment should be resisted because it would be confusing to have two different provisions in two different Canons dealing with the same subject area. That would make it less likely that the Church would be able to act if necessary because there would be legal argument over which Canon applied. He considered that the amendment was well-intentioned but would not work.

Dr Martin Auld (Aberdeen and Orkney) indicated that he had spent many years managing large teams of people both remotely and face-to-face. In



such management, he had discovered that it was very important that everyone was treated honourably, fairly and in the same way. He believed the issue was about natural justice and if there were a system which appeared to treat different people in different ways there was a danger of unhelpful separation.

Dr Goodyear noted that an accusation had been made about him. He was happy to discuss that with anyone. The Code of Canons were not the law; they were the rules of the internal "club" constituting the Church. The situation was different in England where the Canons were part of the law. The hierarchy was, therefore, the law of the land and the Code of Canons were the rules of the club (but the SEC was more than a club, it was God's church). He noted that Archbishop Sentamu had recently been suspended for suggesting that Canon Law was more important than the law of the land. It was important to ensure that the hierarchy was correct. The responsibilities of charity trustees trumped the Code of Canons. He accepted that there was a process for serious cases but a risk assessment did not automatically trigger action under Canon 54. However, such an assessment would highlight areas of concern. Trustees of charities, including churches, had to be able to act on such concerns. Such concerns were not dealt with under Canon 54 and he believed that those who suggested otherwise were not being straight with the Synod. It was therefore essential that if there was such a risk assessment, vestries were aware of it. The question was not about vestries suspending people – that was dealt with elsewhere – but it was about vestries protecting other people. By having the information, vestries would be able to take steps to ensure that everybody was protected. He accepted that the Canon would be discussed at Diocesan Synods and come for a second reading but he considered that there was an opportunity at the current Synod to send a message that the Synod took safeguarding seriously and wanted vestries to have the information where it was important and affected vestries' ability to safeguard other people. He urged the Synod to accept the amendment.

Dr Euan Grant (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) raised a point of order and asked whether there was anyone within the structures of the Synod who was independent who could offer comment.

Mr Gavin McEwan (Assessor) said that the particular clauses in Canon 65 being referred to applied to employees and volunteers, not clergy. Clergy were dealt with under Canon 54. The intention of the Committee on Canons was to keep the two Canons separate since otherwise they would conflict with each other and make the process unworkable.

Dr Goodyear raised a point of order and indicated that Section 8(f) applied to risk assessments which were not covered by Canon 54. He accepted that the Assessor's point was relevant in relation to Section 6 but there was no provision in Canon 54 for risk assessment. He believed the advice given was incomplete.

The Chair indicated that the Synod would have to decide on the amendment.

The proposed amendment was then put to the vote with the following results: 21 in favour, 74 against, 7 abstentions.

The Chair declared that the amendment had not been passed.

Debate then continued on the original Motion.

The Rev Denise Herbert (Brechin) explained that she was the Safeguarding Officer for the Diocese of Brechin. She noted that Section 10 of the proposed Canon enabled Standing Committee to appoint an Appeals Committee and asked how the Standing Committee would make such appointments. The Province was a small one and people tended to know one another. She wondered how the membership of the Appeals Committee would be drawn. She was concerned that there should be fair treatment.

Dr Anthony Birch (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) congratulated those who had drafted the Canon. He wondered whether the process of simplifying canonical language had gone too far and whether there was a need for greater clarity. The distinction between what was dealt with in Canon 65 and Canon 54 respectively, he suggested, needed a parenthesis to make clear that where the Canon indicated it did not apply to Bishops, Priests and Deacons, it should explain that such matters were dealt with under Canon 54. Similarly, he believed there should be clear pointers to direct those in the life of the Church to where they could find the information which they needed to comply with safeguarding procedures.

The Rev James Patron Bell (Methodist Church) while welcoming the proposed new Canon, asked whether consideration could be given to safeguarding in the context of local ecumenical partnerships and clarity over which Churches' policies were to be applied in any particular context.

Ms Plumtree responded to comments made. The Appeals Committee had met twice over a period of 25 years. In both cases, the Chair of the Appeals Committee was a Sheriff of considerable experience. The members of the Appeals Committee were appointed by the Standing Committee. Natural justice would dictate that no individual on the group would have any connection with the person making the appeal. Such appeals related to a decision by the Provincial Officer on the suitability of an individual to hold an appointment because of a blemished disclosure. No one on the Safeguarding Committee or the provincial Safeguarding Team would be a member of the Appeals Committee. As to including a cross-reference in the Canon to Canon 54, she would take that matter away for further consideration. However, too much cross-reference could be confusing. Further consideration could also be given to the possibility of making explicit reference in Section 1(a) to policy documents but that was not the normal way in which the Canons were drafted. She understood the importance of the issue raised in relation to local ecumenical partnerships. It was probably not possible to cover such matters in the Canons which related only to the SEC. The matter was covered in existing guidance but could be looked at again.

The Motion was then put to the vote in houses and passed as follows:

House of Clergy: 51 in favour, none against, no abstentions

House of Laity: 47 in favour, 1 against, no abstentions

House of Bishops: 5 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

The Chair expressed thanks to Ms Plumtree, the Safeguarding Committee and Safeguarding Team.

## **8.2 Standing Committee**

### **8.2.1 Ethical Investment Advisory Group**

The Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) suggested that ethical investment was an important issue because Jesus had indicated that where one's treasure was, one's heart would be also. He reminded Synod that in 2022 it had approved the ethical investment policy for the Unit Trust Pool proposed by the Ethical Investment Advisory Group. That policy was in operation and was being complied with. The Synod had also asked the Standing Committee to create a body to continue to provide advice on ethical matters and to make connections between the Church in Society Committee and the Investment Committee. Bishop Swift paid tribute to Alan McLean KC who had chaired the first Ethical Investment Advisory Group. Bishop Swift had been appointed to chair the new Group which had now been constituted. The members were drawn partly from the Investment Committee (Gordon Arthur and Andrew Hunter) and from the Church in Society Committee (the Rev Simon Scott and Jan Benvie) as well as Dr Eve Poole and Dr Donald Bruce. The Group had only met once to date but each year it would consider matters referred to it by the Standing Committee and explore any other ethical matter which the Advisory Group itself might raise or which was referred to it by others in the Church. The Group would also undertake some future "horizon scanning" to identify what new issues might emerge.

The Chair invited comment but there was none, and he expressed thanks to Bishop Swift.

### **8.2.2 Budgets and Quota**

Ms Bridget Campbell (Convener, Standing Committee) addressed Synod on the Standing Committee's plans for spending in the period 2023-2025. She explained that the process for developing budgets mostly involved considering what had been spent in the previous year and rolling that over or adjusting it for the following year. However, by setting out forward plans for each board and committee, the Standing Committee was moving in a direction where it might in future be able to match resources to priorities in a more deliberate and considered way.

In the previous year, budget out-turns had been more positive than had been forecast but the Committee expected that in the following year it would start to incur deficits. To meet those deficits, the Committee would start by using up unused funds available at the end of a year because of underspends. It was also undertaking a specific review to ensure that there were no designated or restricted funds lying unused which could be repurposed.

However, the projections for future spending had reached a point where the Committee expected to consider releasing some investment reserves, which stood at around £50 million. She referred to the presentation which had been given by Mark Harris earlier in the meeting in which he had demonstrated how it would be possible to release funds from the Unit Trust Pool. The Committee would be considering whether to do that in the following months.

In November 2023, the Committee would agree a firm budget for 2024 and update its budgetary expectations for 2025 and 2026. Earlier in the meeting, the Synod had voted in favour of the direction of travel set out in the Net Zero Action Plan. The financial estimates in that plan were, of necessity, based on incomplete information. The Committee would work with dioceses, the Provincial Environment Group and other relevant provincial committees to agree a budget for 2024 which would look to provide funding to help the Church take the next steps towards net zero. It would also consider what additional funds needed to be released in the current year to assist in that journey. The Committee intended also to ensure that sufficient funding would be available to implement the Net Zero Action Plan. What needed to be worked out year by year was exactly what was to happen in charges and dioceses and those were matters for local decision. Each diocese needed to work out what would be the best way to implement reductions in carbon emissions, taking account of wider local factors beyond net zero.

It would be the job of the Net Zero Delivery Director working with the Provincial Environment Group to support the work in dioceses. It would not be appropriate for Standing Committee to make what were essentially local decisions. However, what the Standing Committee could, and needed to, do was to establish criteria to assess how future funding might be allocated. The pattern which had been developed in previous years was to gather information from dioceses, use that information to allocate overall levels of funding and then to ask each diocese to make decisions about local allocation. Whatever approach might be adopted, the Committee would seek to ensure that appropriate value for money was achieved and that funds were used effectively.

The Committee recognised the challenge of finding sufficient financial resources at both provincial and diocesan level to implement the Net Zero Action Plan and acknowledged that it would not be sensible to raise the necessary finance simply by increasing provincial quota requested from dioceses. It therefore anticipated using the Province's substantial investment reserves as the primary source of provincial funding support and had no plans, at the present time, to increase quota to fund implementation. The use of investments in that way would have an impact on future investment income available to the Province to fund other activities and the Committee would be mindful of that in its future budgeting.

Ms Campbell then turned to the question of the amount of provincial quota to be requested from dioceses in 2024. The Committee proposed that the 2024 quota figure should be £715,000, an increase of 4.4% from 2023. She reminded the Synod that after a freeze in quota for 2019 and 2020 and a substantial reduction in 2021, the Committee was gradually working its way back to earlier levels in a relatively slow and phased manner. In 2022, the

Synod had agreed Standing Committee's proposal to extend the phasing over a longer period up to 2025. The allocation of quota between dioceses was based on how much income was assessable for quota in each diocese and the actual amount of quota requested from each diocese therefore varied according to the relative changes in the income of each diocese. She illustrated the allocation in a PowerPoint presentation. The formula for allocation had been discussed in detail, and agreed, with all Diocesan Treasurers.

Ms Campbell then 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 2024, agree to a quota figure of £715,000 for that year.”*

The Chair provided the opportunity for comment but there was none.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed as follows: 98 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention.

### **8.2.3 Size of General Synod: Review of Formula under Canon 52, Resolution 8**

Ms Campbell referred to the paper included in the Synod papers and explained that the number of members which each diocese was entitled to appoint to the General Synod depended on the overall number of communicant members in the diocese. That was determined by a formula set out in Resolution 8 under Canon 52. Every diocese was entitled to a minimum of 12 members (six clerical and six lay) and any diocese which had a communicant membership in excess of 2,000 was entitled to two additional members for every 600 members above 2,000. The membership numbers were fixed for a 10 year period and the formula was then reapplied using updated communicant statistics. The formula was next due to be applied in 2024 in time for General Synod 2024. The 2023 communicant statistics would not be available until 2024 but the paper demonstrated the application of the formula using the statistics received from dioceses for 2022. The result of that would be a reduction in membership of the Synod from 124 to 102.

Earlier in 2023 the Standing Committee had consulted dioceses. Not all dioceses had responded and whilst the Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness had indicated no objection to its representation reducing to the minimum level, the Dioceses of Edinburgh and Glasgow and Galloway had been of the view that it would be premature to reduce the size of Synod. They had expressed concern because the distortion of church attendance caused by the Covid-19 pandemic meant that it was too early to form a clear picture of church attendance and that it would therefore be preferable to delay any change for at least two years. That would also give the opportunity for a broader review to be undertaken on the collection of statistics. The Standing Committee agreed that it would be premature to apply the formula for 2024 and proposed that the application of the formula be deferred until the 2025

statistics were available and which would also allow time for a broader review to be undertaken.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the next decennial review of the formula for diocesan representation and the number of members on the General Synod to be undertaken in accordance with Resolution 4 under Canon 52 be deferred until the communicant membership statistics for the Church for 2025 are available.”*

Mr Hugh Morison (Moray, Ross and Caithness) suggested that when the Standing Committee looked at the question of statistics it should also consider the overall size of Synod. If the formula were applied in its existing form, the size of Synod would reduce. He thought that such reduction might be beneficial but he considered that thought should be given to the optimum size of Synod.

Ms Campbell thanked Mr Morison for his comment. She agreed with his comment and that was why the Standing Committee had suggested that a broader review was needed.

The Motion was then put to the vote and passed *nem con* as follows: 100 in favour, none against, 1 abstention.

The Chair closed the session by thanking General Synod Office staff who managed the finances and Ms Campbell who led the Standing Committee with inspiration.

## **SESSION 9: THE MOST REV THE PRIMUS IN THE CHAIR**

In opening the session, the Primus reminded the Synod of Rule 7 of the Rules of Order and the need for Synod members to speak to the meeting respectfully.

### **9.1 Contribution from Ecumenical Delegate**

Mary Woodward brought greetings from the Religious Society of Friends. She always found it a joy to be present at General Synod. The Religious Society of Friends was meeting that day to talk about the future of Quakers in Scotland. She had been pleased to note the increasing use of silence, both at General Synod and at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and she commended it to the Synod. She offered a reading about silence from a Swiss Quaker.

### **9.2 Elections**

#### **9.2.1 Standing Committee Membership**

It was reported to the meeting that nominations of the Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth and the Rev Canon Peter Moger had been received in relation to the two clergy vacancies on the Standing Committee. Nominations

had been received from Dr Anne Martin and Dr Beth Routledge in relation to the one lay vacancy on the Committee.

The following Motion was proposed:

*"That the Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth be appointed as a member of the Standing Committee."*

The Motion was put to the vote in the House of Clergy and passed as follows: 36 in favour, 7 against, 5 abstentions.

The following Motion was proposed:

*"That the Rev Canon Peter Moger be appointed as a member of the Standing Committee."*

The Motion was put to the vote in the House of Clergy and passed as follows: 43 in favour, 2 against, 4 abstentions.

The Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) suggested that in the spirit of Rule 7 of the Rules of Order and the encouragement to speak kindly to one another, if people did not wish to vote in favour of a candidate, it would be preferable to abstain rather than vote against them.

An election was then conducted in the House of Laity with the following result:

Dr Anne Martin: 25  
Dr Beth Routledge: 13

The Chair declared Dr Martin duly elected. The Primus thanked both for standing.

## **9.2.2 Institute Council Membership**

Ms Bridget Campbell (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed and the Rt Rev Dr John Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) seconded, the following Motion:

*"That the Rev Susan Henderson be appointed as a member of the Institute Council."*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con* as follows: 93 in favour, none against, 6 abstentions.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Bishop Armes seconded, the following Motion:

*"That the Rev Dr John Carswell be appointed as a member of the Institute Council."*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 94 in favour, 1 against, 4 abstentions.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Bishop Armes seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Very Rev Margaret Campbell be appointed as a member of the Institute Council.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 94 in favour, 1 against, 5 abstentions.

### **9.2.3 Personnel Committee Convenership**

Ms Campbell proposed, and Bishop Armes seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the term of Jeanette Whiteside as the Convener of the Personnel Committee be extended until General Synod 2024.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con*: 97 in favour, none against, 3 abstentions.

### **9.2.4 Committee on Canons Convenership**

Ms Campbell proposed, and Bishop Armes seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the term of Graham Robertson as the Convener of the Committee on Canons be extended until General Synod 2024.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con* as follows: 95 in favour, none against, 5 abstentions.

### **9.2.5 Preliminary Proceedings Committee**

Ms Campbell proposed, and Bishop Armes seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the appointment by Standing Committee in 2022 of Callum Kennedy as a member of the Preliminary Proceedings Committee until General Synod 2027 be ratified.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con* as follows: 91 in favour, none against, 5 abstentions.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Bishop Armes seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the appointment by Standing Committee in 2022 of Niall McLean as the secretary of the Preliminary Proceedings Committee until General Synod 2027 be ratified.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con* as follows: 94 in favour, none against, 3 abstentions.



### 9.2.6 Clergy Discipline Tribunal Membership

Ms Campbell proposed, and Bishop Armes seconded, the following Motion:

*“That Gill Scott be appointed as a member of the Clergy Discipline Tribunal.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con* as follows: 91 in favour, none against, 6 abstentions.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Bishop Armes seconded, the following Motion:

*“That the Rev Canon Sarah Shaw be appointed as a member of the Clergy Discipline Tribunal.”*

The Motion was put to the vote and passed *nem con* as follows: 91 in favour, none against, 7 abstentions.

The Primus thanked all those who had been willing to put their names forward.

### 9.3 Provincial Youth Network

The Rev Tembu Rongong (Moray, Ross and Caithness) said it continued to be his absolute pleasure to convene the Provincial Youth Committee (PYC), bringing together youth representatives and officers from across the Province. It was exciting, rewarding and necessary work. The pandemic continued to have an effect on the Church's young people, as did the crazy world of the "new normal". Young people needed to find time away from those pressures and to be with people of their own age in a supportive environment and be who they were without judgement. The Provincial Youth Week "Yeek" was such a time and the theme for 2023 was "the Quest". A quest took the whole person on a journey and the PYC would accompany young people on such a journey. The numbers of bookings had been good but there remained places available, and he encouraged Synod members to encourage people to apply. A further opportunity would arise in October 2023 when a youth pilgrimage to Iona, which had originally been planned for 2021, would take place. Places had been reserved for two pilgrims from each diocese with extra spaces being available to all dioceses. Applications would go live the following week and the pilgrims would need to raise finance. He encouraged Synod members to look kindly on requests for support in their local charges.

Claire Benton-Evans (Provincial Youth Co-ordinator) wished to celebrate the workers and volunteers in SEC congregations who were dedicated to ministry with children and young people. She encouraged Synod members to think of those in their own churches who ran toddlers' groups, creche, Sunday School, after-school clubs, family services, holiday or youth clubs. Such people went the extra mile as did the adult helpers at the Provincial Youth Week. All such individuals were involved in the vital work of discipling churches' young people. She invited Synod to show its appreciation.

Ms Benton-Evans also wanted to celebrate the global reach of the SEC's young people. Since General Synod 2022, young adults had represented the SEC in

Germany, France and Ghana. A steward had been sent to the Lambeth Conference, a delegate to the World Council of Churches, an intern to the Ecumenical Forum for European Christian Women and a youth representative to the Anglican Consultative Council. SEC youth had been punching above its weight in the international arena. That was also evident in the Anglican Communion's Youth Network which aimed to connect young people across the Communion. The SEC was the most active Anglican province in the Europe region. Ley-Anne Forsyth and Rachel Walker had just been elected to sit on the Network's Global Council representing the Europe region as well as the SEC.

Youth representatives then addressed the Synod.

Jadon Rongong reported that as of March 2023, the number of asylum applicants in the UK had increased by 33% over the previous 12 months. In November 2022, there had been over 200,000 refugees in the UK with a further 127,000 still awaiting approval. Such people had fled their own countries as a result of fear of being persecuted or because of war or conflict but they did not receive a warm welcome upon arrival in Britain. Most did not have the right to work in the UK and relied on support from the Government. They were provided with lodging and were given £40.85 per week to pay for food, sanitation, travel, clothing and all other expenses. Refugees often found difficulty in finding accommodation in the UK. A hotel in Elgin had closed in order to provide accommodation for 50 men who were provided with meals and the equivalent of £1.30 per day. There were some groups helping to support refugees and asylum seekers. Two people had visited his own church in Elgin to talk about the supported lodging scheme in Moray. The scheme was looking for young people in Moray to provide lodgings for unaccompanied young people. Such young people needed safe and supportive environments. The scheme had successfully integrated a number of young people into schools, including his own. He believed that it was groups such as the supported lodging scheme which needed the support of the Church. Church members could sign up to work with the scheme or to donate funds. He urged Church members to support such work.

Elizabeth Mills spoke about the challenges faced by young people, especially students during the cost of living crisis. Providing support could play a crucial part for young people and could build a positive connection between young people and the Church. Students had little opportunity to take part time work and faced the prospect of student loan repayments in future. Most students had no choice but to enter the cheapest available accommodation. Almost 50% of students had missed classes in order to undertake paid work and over 25% had missed deadlines for the same reason. 25% also had indicated they would be unlikely to finish their degree because of the cost of living crisis. Support could be provided by churches informally such as the provision of financial advice, food planning, cooking classes or field trips.

Olivia Smith also spoke about the impact of the cost of living crisis on young people and students. The crisis had had a profound impact on young people, particularly university students. Students were constantly encouraged to think about their futures but rises in the cost of food and heating made people wonder if they had a future at all. The issue was even more pressing in the summer months when SAAS funding was no longer available. Many students tried to find paid work but there could be difficulties in finding work if they could not demonstrate prior work experience. Many were also affected by disabilities and were unable to work or

were subject to discriminatory practices. People could be unsympathetic to their situation. Young people sought a life of friendship and joy without having to worry that today's indulgences would mean tomorrow's starvation. What relief could the Church offer? Young people were looking for a place to exist in comfort without being asked to spend money. Churches could provide such spaces, particularly those close to university campuses. Churches could reach out to university societies and find out what support was needed. It would also be an opportunity for young people to find solidarity. For LGBTQ plus students she was aware that name tags which contained pronouns were a signal of support. Another area of support was the stocking of free sanitary and menstrual products. There was an opportunity to provide a unique vessel for God's love in higher education settings. The approach of some Christian groups did not resonate with the student body. The Church could provide a space to meet people's needs in a less confrontational form of evangelism. Jesus had not just taught his followers but he had sat down with them and fed them.

The Primus thanked those who had contributed.

#### **9.4 Thanks from the Primus**

The Primus expressed thanks to Synod members, ecumenical and interfaith guests whether present in person or online, to those who had acted as Chairs or Facilitators and to the Rev Canon Dean Fostekew who had co-ordinated the Facilitators. He also thanked the Assessor, those who had arranged the Eucharist and had led Morning and Evening Prayer and those stepping down from the Standing Committee, the Rev Canon Dave Richards and the Very Rev Alison Simpson.

The Primus also thanked the Rev Canon Dr Anne Tomlinson, Sanctus Media, the staff at St Paul's and St George's and General Synod Office staff.

#### **9.5 Closing Worship and Acts of Synod**

The Synod closed with an act of worship at the end of which the Primus confirmed the Acts of Synod and gave the blessing.