



House of Lords
House of Commons
Ecclesiastical Committee

General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure

241st Report

Ordered by the House of Lords to be printed on 12 October 2020
Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 12 October 2020

HL Paper 144
HC 878

Published on 12 October 2020
by authority of the House of Lords and
the House of Commons

Ecclesiastical Committee

The Ecclesiastical Committee is a statutory Committee appointed under the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919.

It comprises thirty members, fifteen of whom are Members of the House of Commons, appointed by the Speaker, and fifteen of whom are members of the House of Lords, appointed by the Lord Speaker. The quorum is twelve.

Appointments to the Committee are generally made early in a Parliament. Unless the Speaker or the Lord Speaker decide otherwise, members appointed by them remain on the Committee for the life of the Parliament.

While its powers are those laid down by the Act, the procedures it has adopted are those of a Joint Select Committee.

Current membership

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[Lord Cormack](#)
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[Mr Ben Bradshaw MP](#)
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[Dr Lisa Cameron MP](#)
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[Sir Roger Gale MP](#)
[Mr David Lammy MP](#)
[Rachael Maskell MP](#)
[Gary Sambrook MP](#)
[Andrew Selous MP](#)
[Jim Shannon MP](#)
[Sir Desmond Swayne MP](#)
[Stephen Timms MP](#)
[Martin Vickers MP](#)

Remit

The Ecclesiastical Committee examines draft Measures presented to it by the Legislative Committee of the General Synod of the Church of England. It reports to Parliament on whether or not it considers the measures to be expedient.

It generally asks members of the General Synod to assist it in its deliberations. In some circumstances a conference of the Ecclesiastical Committee and the Legislative Committee may be convened.

The Church of England Measure on which the Committee has reported is presented to both Houses in its final form at the same time as the Committee makes its report.

Before the Measure becomes law, both Houses must approve motions that the Measure should be presented to the Sovereign for Royal Assent in the form that it was laid before Parliament.

Once both Houses have passed the necessary approval motions, the Measure is presented for Royal Assent and becomes law.

Publications

The reports and proceedings of the Committee are published by Order of both Houses. All publications of the Committee are on the Internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/ecclesiastical-committee>

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241st Report of the Ecclesiastical Committee

1. The Ecclesiastical Committee has met and considered the Measure set out below. The Measure was submitted to the Ecclesiastical Committee by the Legislative Committee of the General Synod, along with a Comments and Explanations document. The text of the Measure, and its accompanying Comments and Explanations document, are published online on the Committee's web pages.¹

General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure

2. In the accompanying Comments and Explanations document, the Legislative Committee explains that the General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure has been necessitated by coronavirus restrictions which mean that it is not practically possible for the General Synod to meet in the usual way, with 500 people gathering in the same place.

3. The Constitution and Standing Orders of the General Synod do not, currently, enable the Synod to transact business remotely. The Measure therefore makes provision for the General Synod to do so, in accordance with temporary special standing orders made jointly by the Archbishops, the Prolocutors of the Lower Houses of the Convocations of the Clergy, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity. The Measure requires that special standing orders made under it are subject to approval (with or without amendment) by the General Synod at its next meeting. Special standing orders automatically expire after 12 months unless the period is extended by resolution of the Synod.

4. The Committee discussed the Measure with representatives of the General Synod (by way of a hybrid meeting of the Committee). The transcript of the Committee's proceedings is published online on the Committee's web pages.²

View of the Committee

5. The Committee is of the opinion that the General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure is expedient.

1 Ecclesiastical Committee: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/174/ecclesiastical-committee-joint-committee/>.

2 Ecclesiastical Committee publications page: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/174/ecclesiastical-committee-joint-committee/publications/>

Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday 6 October 2020

Minutes of the (hybrid) meeting of the Ecclesiastical Committee held on Tuesday 6 October 2020 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Baroness Butler-Sloss (Chair)	Sir Peter Bottomley MP
The Earl of Cork and Orrery	Fiona Bruce MP
Baroness Eaton	Dr Lisa Cameron MP
Lord Elton	Miriam Cates MP
Lord Faulkner of Worcester	Sir Roger Gale MP
Baroness Harris of Richmond	Rachael Maskell MP
Lord Jones	Gary Sambrook MP
Lord Judd	Andrew Selous MP
Lord Lexden	Sir Desmond Swayne MP
Lord Lisvane	Stephen Timms MP
Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall	Martin Vickers MP

Declaration of Interests

Members of the Committee declared no interests.

General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure

The Committee considered the Measure, with the assistance of the following representatives of the General Synod:

Mr Geoffrey Tattersall QC, Chair of the Steering Committee for the Measure

The Reverend Alexander McGregor, Chief Legal Adviser to the General Synod

The Reverend Canon Simon Butler, Prolocutor of the Convocation of Canterbury and Chair of the House of Clergy of the General Synod

Mr Christopher Packer, Legislative Counsel to the General Synod

Decision

It was moved that the General Synod (Remote Meetings) (Temporary Standing Orders) Measure be deemed expedient.

The motion was agreed to.

The Committee adjourned.