

**General Synod Agenda and Programme
to be held on Tuesday 9 September 2025
at St Mary's Cathedral and on Zoom**

19:00 Opening Eucharist at St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh (this will be live-streamed)
Constitution of General Synod

Session One: The Most Rev the Primus in the Chair

19:30 **Primus: Welcome to delegates**

Training session on how to vote (Neil MacLennan, Sanctus Media)

Preliminary Business

Appointment of Tellers

Motion 1: That James Lloyd, Miriam Weibye and Neil MacLennan be appointed as tellers for the meeting.

Appointment of Prolocutors

Motion 2: That the Very Rev Margaret Campbell be appointed as Clerical Prolocutor for the meeting.

Motion 3: That the Very Rev Roxanne Campbell be appointed as Clerical Vice-Prolocutor for the meeting.

Motion 4: That Dr Nicola Mills be appointed as Lay Prolocutor for the meeting.

Motion 5: That Ms Jenny Whelan be appointed as Lay Vice-Prolocutor for the meeting.

Permission to speak

Motion 6: That Dr Samuel White, Convener of the Committee on Canons, Neil MacLennan of Sanctus Media and provincial staff members be given permission to speak to Synod.

Minutes of General Synod June 2025 (Page 5)

Minutes of General Synod held on 5-7 June 2025 enclosed for noting only.
Approval for the minutes will be sought at General Synod 2026.

19:45 **Faith and Order Board:** Committee on Canons

Introduction by Dr Samuel White, Convener of the Committee on Canons (Page 40)

Canon for Second Reading

Canon 4 Of the Calling and Election of Bishops to Vacant Sees (Page 42)

Opinions from Dioceses (Page 58)

Diocesan Synod Proposed Amendments:

The following proposed amendments to the text of Canon 4 have been received from Diocesan Synods and per Rules of Order 9c have been accepted by the mover of the motion.

The Diocese of Brechin:

That section 5(b) of the Canon should read *"The date of issuing the Mandate may be extended by the College of Bishops for a period not normally exceeding six months."*

The Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway:

That the original wording of Section 26, Subsection (b) be reinstated:

"An option for 'None' shall be included on the ballot paper and may be listed as a preference."

That the original wording of Section 26, Subsection (h) be reinstated:

"If at any point where a second preference vote on a ballot paper is being counted and that vote is in favour of a Candidate who has been eliminated, the third preference vote shall be counted instead and so on and so forth until a preference is reached in respect of a Candidate who has not been eliminated. That preference vote shall be counted as though it were the second preference."

The Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness:

That the following amendments in respect of the text referring to majorities in voting be made:

That an addition to Section 1 Definitions should read:

"majority" means, where the context so provides in this Canon, either an absolute majority in the case of more than two Candidates, or a simple majority by way of first past the post in the case of two Candidates only;

And that Section 25 (f) should read:

In the event of a Candidate receiving an ~~absolute~~ majority of the votes of each house of members of Electoral Synod recorded as present and admitted, in terms of Section 22 of this Canon, and voting, that Candidate shall be declared by the Convener to have been elected.

And that Section 25 (g) should read:

In the event of no Candidate receiving an ~~absolute~~ majority in both houses, the Convener shall call upon the meeting, following any further discussion which the Convener may decide to allow, to vote for a second time upon the List.

And that Section 26 (i) should read:

When only two Candidates remain, a final round of voting will take place ~~using a first past the post system.~~

And that Section 27 (a) should read:

If voting has taken place under Section 25 and, where appropriate, under Section 26, and neither Candidate has obtained an ~~absolute~~ majority in both houses ~~in the first past the post vote~~, the Convener may call upon the Electoral Synod to adjourn.

And that Section 27 (f) should read that:

In the event of a Candidate receiving an ~~absolute~~ majority of the votes of each house of members of Electoral Synod, recorded as present and admitted, in terms of Section 22 of this Canon and voting, that Candidate shall be declared by the Convener to have been elected.

And that Section 27 (g) should read that:

If at the end of this process no Candidate has an ~~absolute~~ majority in both houses the Convener shall declare the Electoral Process unsuccessful.

Motion 7: That the amended text of Canon 4 be read for the second time.

Promulgation of Alterations to Code of Canons

Section 18 of Canon 52 states that where any alteration has been proposed and confirmed in accordance with Section 17 of this Canon it shall come into effect forty days from the end of the meeting at which it was enacted unless the General Synod at that meeting directs otherwise.

In order that the episcopal vacancy in the Diocese of Edinburgh be covered by the amended Canon 4, it is required that the alteration be promulgated before the Primus issues the Mandate for the Election of a Bishop.

Motion 8: That this Synod directs that the amended Canon 4 should have effect as of Tuesday the 16th day of September 2025.

Date of Next Meeting

Synod members to note the provisional date of 11-13 June 2026.

20:15 Closing act of worship and confirmation of Acts of Synod

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH HELD AT ST PAUL'S AND ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH ON 5-7 JUNE 2025

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 at St Paul's & St George's Church, Edinburgh at 10.30am on Thursday 5 June 2025.

The Most Rev Mark Strange, Primus, delivered his charge to the Synod during the Eucharist, reporting that he had had the privilege of spending time in India the previous summer. He had visited and spent time at the former Scottish Episcopal Church's mission church of St Andrew's, Chandrapur. He had arrived with a degree of apprehension. The shadow of Colonialism, the taking of our style of church to other lands, questions about the nature of mission in overseas places.

However, he had discovered a large group of people who had been waiting to rekindle a very important relationship. One elderly man approached him with tears in his eyes to thank him. The Primus was bemused as he had only preached, but the man told him that his mother had been one of the first patients at the hospital the SEC established and the nurses from Scotland had saved her life and safely delivered him. He was 89 and had waited a long time to say thank you to his Primus. The Primus was stunned and emotional, to him he was still part of our church whatever we believed our relationship was.

It should be remembered that relationships created by prayer, ministry and love could survive the problems around us if we but let them.

Much of the Synod agenda this year would be looking at the relationships and the healing of broken relationships around us. Synod members would hear from the Very Rev Sally Foster-Fulton as they considered the breakdown of relationships in Sudan, the unimaginable suffering caused and the real struggle to rebuild.

Everyone was aware of the continuing conflict in Ukraine and the effects of that conflict on the wellbeing of the countries that border Russia. A visit to Rega in Latvia, showed how important their relationship with the rest of Europe was and how the Porvoo Links were vital for them.

The previous month the Primus said he had been able to spend some time talking to Archbishop Hosam of Jerusalem, a man who walked a very difficult path, who sought at all times to sustain the many relationships he had across Israel-Palestine while at the same time seeking to comfort his people and to condemn the violence against them. He asked us to continue praying and when possible to support the institutions of the Diocese.

Synod this year would look at our ecumenical relationships. The proposed St Ninians Declaration with the Catholic Church gave us an opportunity to look at what we shared, as well as what still divided us, never allowing those divisions to stop us talking and sharing when we could.

There would be debates and motions on matters which divided opinion across our society, debates we needed to hear and to speak to, but as the Church we needed to model a style of debate that allowed us to speak with the love of Christ foremost in our hearts.

The SEC had an opportunity to use its resources to free the Church from continual anxiety about survival. The Provincial Strategy could help build even stronger relationships between dioceses and Province as ways were found of extending and growing our ministry across Scotland.

Relationships with each other needed to be worked on; the purpose of Synod was to get business done, but it was also the opportunity to spend time together, discovering new friendships and rekindling old ones.

More could be achieved if we could be helped to stop being fearful of the future and become more confident in the present, to become people who listen and learn from each other.

The disciples who watched Jesus withdraw from them at the Ascension didn't sit down to discuss the pain they felt at his going; they returned to Jerusalem rejoicing. Trusting and praying each day that the gift they had been promised would and should make a difference to those they lived amongst. Things had been horrible in Jerusalem but now they had a mission to live out. They used the gift of the Spirit there to grow the Church, whatever the personal outcome for them, trusting in the promise of a heavenly home with Jesus. We, said the Primus, were called to do the same, to live our faith now, to use the gifts we had received, now.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Primus then invited the Very Rev Sally Foster Fulton to address Synod regarding Christian Aid's Sudan Crisis Appeal which was the beneficiary of the Synod Offering. The amount collected, including Gift Aid, was £1,442.20.

SESSION 1: THE MOST REV THE PRIMUS IN THE CHAIR

1.1 Preliminary Business

1.1.1 Welcome

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

Rev Ross Blackman: Church of Scotland
Rev Fiona Bennett: United Reformed Church
Major David Cavanagh: Salvation Army
Rev Steven Cooper: The Methodist Church in Scotland
Most Rev Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St Andrews & Edinburgh: Roman Catholic Church
Derek McLean: Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Rev Andrew McMillan: United Free Church of Scotland
The Venerable Dr Hayley Matthews, Archdeacon of Wrexham, Church in Wales

A test vote was then undertaken using the voting devices provided.

1.1.2 Preliminary Announcements

The Rt Rev John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh, then addressed Synod members as follows:

“One of my favourite children’s programmes of yesteryear was The Clangers – a family of friendly creatures living on a planet far from earth. I don’t suppose that St Paul had cuddly aliens in mind when he told us that we can speak with the most eloquent, beautiful and persuasive words, but without love those words sound like ‘a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal’ – discordant, tone deaf.

A Synod is full of words, of course, and you may or may not know that this Synod, more than most, has been assailed by words before we even gathered this morning. Perhaps this is inevitable, this being the first General Synod since a significant Canon 54 process relating to Aberdeen and Orkney reached its conclusion. And when people are hurting and angry, or when they’re filled with crusading zeal, perhaps they don’t consider fully the implications of their words or the impact they may have on those who receive them.

The trouble is, relentless accusations aimed at Synod staff, the Provincial Standing Committee and individual members of the College of Bishops, can be experienced by those recipients as every bit as harassing and bullying as the behaviours they seek to expose, whilst **not** being accountable to the same canonical processes as those properly and legally concluded back in October.

One of the important things we learn as we grow up is that it is possible to be right and wrong at the same time. The requirement to be faithful, for example, may not always align with the requirement to be loving, or a determination to stick firmly to our moral scruples may not always allow space for us to build genuine peace and friendship. Psalm 85 says as much, as it looks for a time when ‘Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other.’ After all, as St Paul recognizes, in this life we know only in part, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, we do not yet know anything fully.

An outside observer, then, shouldn’t be shocked to find us disagreeing; there’s no scandal in disagreement, no undesirable risk to our reputation as a church that we have robust debate and respectful challenge. Far more dangerous would be the perception that our disagreements are being used as an excuse

to act against one another without love or kindness and as an opportunity cause hurt and anxiety. To be a church that speaks without love would be the worst possible reputation to have, the worst possible legacy to leave, for only three things abide, faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.

In other words, and I say this to myself as well as to everyone here, whether in Synod for the next few days or in the wider life of the church, please, don't be a clanger."

Synod Voting Procedures

Ms Bridget Campbell (Convener of Standing Committee) then proposed, and Mrs Jan Whiteside (Standing Committee member) seconded, the amendment by Standing Committee to Rule 12(d) of the Rules of Order:

"That this Synod agree to the amendment to Rule 12 (d) of the Rules of Order to allow voting at Synod to be undertaken electronically rather than on a show of hands with the following wording:

When the question is put to the vote, tellers shall be named from the Chair and shall give in their report of each division taken. The vote shall normally be taken by electronic means and the result will be declared by the Chair. In the absence of electronic means, Synod will decide on how it will conduct the vote."

The motion was put to the vote and passed: 107 in favour, 6 against, no abstentions.

1.1.3 Appointment of Tellers

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Mrs Whiteside seconded, the following motion:

"That James Lloyd, Miriam Weibye and Mark Kisby be appointed as tellers for the meeting."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 113 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

1.1.4 Appointment of Prolocutors

The Very Rev Sarah Murray (Convener of Mission Board) proposed, and the Rev Diana Hall seconded, the following motion:

"That the Very Rev John Conway be appointed as Clerical Prolocutor for the meeting."

The motion was put to the vote in the House of Clergy and passed as follows: 57 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

Provost Murray then proposed, and Ms Hall seconded, the following motion:

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

The motion was put to the vote in the House of Clergy and passed as follows: 55 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

Ms Campbell proposed, and Mrs Whiteside seconded, the following motion:

“That Dr Nicola Mills be appointed as Lay Prolocutor for the meeting.”

The motion was put to the vote in the House of Laity and passed as follows: 48 in favour, none against.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Mrs Whiteside seconded, the following motion:

“That Ms Jenny Whelan be appointed as Lay Vice-Prolocutor for the meeting.”

The motion was put to the vote in the House of Laity and passed as follows: 45 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

1.1.5 Permission to Speak

Bishop Armes (Bishop of Edinburgh) proposed, and Ms Campbell seconded, the following motion:

"That the Rev Nick Bowry, members of the Provincial Youth Committee along with the leaders of YEEK, invited representatives from other churches and faiths and provincial staff members be given permission to speak to Synod."

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 111 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

1.1.6 Minutes of General Synod 2024

The Rev Peter Mead (Brechin) noted that on page 61 of the minutes, the amended Rule 10 Motion included clause 4 which had been deleted by the first amendment.

Subject to the amendment above being made, Ms Campbell then proposed, and the Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) seconded, the following motion:

“That this Synod approve the minutes of the meeting of the General Synod held on 13-15 June 2024.”

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 100 in favour, 1 against, no abstentions.

1.1.7 Roll Call

The roll call of Synod members was taken by the completion of a registration sheet as Synod members had arrived at the meeting of Synod. A total of 121 members attended.

SESSION 2: THE VERY REV MARGARET CAMPBELL IN THE CHAIR

2.1 Administration Board: Investment Committee

Mr Mark Harris (Convener of the Investment Committee) gave a presentation and reported the following:

- The UTP was by nature long-term and provided consistency and stability when managed properly and this would be a recurring theme.
- Currently the UTP unit price was £30.18, pretty close to the all-time high. Whilst there was noise in the media about market fluctuations, this did not relate to the UTP.
- The trend was continuing long term growth with some ups and downs along the way.
- The five-year total return: April 2020 price £21.08 against £30.18 in 2025, a difference of £9.10 or 43%. Over that period the total distribution had been £3.78 per unit giving a total return of £12.88 or 61%.
- The UTP had holdings in three funds:
 - Monthly income (35%)
A fund with the aim of generating a stable level of income. This had increased by 5.5% over one year and 6.5% pa over five years.
 - Global Income Growth (30%)
An equity fund designed to generate income and superior growth. It had been a tough year with an increase of 1.4%, but 11.8% pa over five years.
 - Long Term Global Growth (35%)
Also an equity fund but focusing on the companies that were likely to become winners in the future, companies that have a potential growth factor of five or more over the next five to ten years. The fund had grown by 7.7% over one year and 10.1% pa over five years.
- Recent market volatility was related to political uncertainty. Uncertainty led to investors selling and being reluctant to buy with the result that share prices fall. It was worth noting that the markets had rebounded and made up for the losses since 'Liberation Day'. Mr Harris noted that despite the volatility as a result of COVID, the war in Ukraine and Gaza, and Liberation Day in the USA, markets over that period had risen by 97.76%. Since 1945 the S&P 500 Index had fallen by more than 20% on 12 occasions, but 8 out of 12 times the markets had recovered all the losses within one year. The UTP was structured to mitigate volatility, and the message was to keep calm and carry on.

The Investment Committee had carried out the quinquennial review of the UTP. The performance of the fund managers Baillie Gifford had been assessed on three criteria:

- Investment philosophy and style, ESG policy and procedures, and performance (both absolute and relative). The Committee's findings were that Baillie Gifford had:
 - A strong financial performance demonstrated over a long period.
 - An ESG team of around 40 people with ESG processes fully embedded as a central component of Baillie Gifford's investment strategy.
 - A very high ranking across various metrics.
 - A strong relationship with the Investment Committee

The Investment Committee had concluded that Baillie Gifford had more than met the criteria in all areas of the assessment and had been open and co-operative throughout the process. The Investment Committee had therefore deemed reappointment of Baillie Gifford appropriate.

The Rev Bonnie Evans-Hills (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) noted this was wonderful news and should be celebrated. However, not all charges were able to participate in the investment programme as they could not afford investments. What would the Church look like if it pulled out of those areas of deprivation and only remained in wealthy areas? Areas of deprivation were growing and her charge was in such an area and could not afford investments. The charge was barely functioning financially but was growing and the people were good, faithful, dedicated and hard working but were never going to be able to afford what was being asked of them. Where was the investment from the SEC into these deprived areas?

The Chair suggested this question could be discussed during the provincial strategy session.

Mr Reuben Thomasson (Glasgow and Galloway) raised concern about ethical investment. He noted from the Annual Report of his charge that the three companies their money was most invested in were Microsoft, Amazon and Apple. The Vestry had issues with the labour practices within Amazon, the supply chain controversies inside Apple, specifically relating to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo where materials were sourced from mines using child labour. Microsoft over the last few years had been co-operating with the Saudi Arabian Government to build data centres which may or may not be being used by the Saudi Government to spy on their own citizens. Was there any way for us to protect ourselves from profiting from these sorts of practices?

Mr Harris noted he could only give a generalised answer which was that the Church had a General Synod approved Ethical Investment Policy to work to which was shared with Baillie Gifford and the investments were 100% compliant with that policy. Suggested that Mr Thomasson could raise his concerns with the Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) to see whether the Group thought the concerns appropriate to be taken forward. This could then lead to consultation via the Investment Committee as to what the consequences of that might be. It then might be passed to the Standing Committee and ultimately back to the Investment Committee for approval or not. That might then result in a change to the ethical investment instructions by which the Committee was required to operate.

The Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) wished to provide additional context as a member of the Investment Committee and the EIAG. She thought it was underestimated how seriously Baillie Gifford took the management of the Church's investments. During the quinquennial review she had asked them if there was anything about the SEC which made it difficult for them to be in a business relationship with the SEC. Baillie Gifford were well informed.

The Chair thanked Mr Harris and the Investment Committee for their work.

2.2 Motion from the Diocese of Brechin

Bishop Swift (Chair of the EIAG) explained that the motion on the agenda from the Brechin Diocese had been passed the Saturday morning after the meeting between President Zelensky and President Trump had taken place. Diocesan Synod members had been trying to make sense of what was going on and subsequently felt that there were so many world issues now that 20 minutes on the agenda was not enough time to do justice to the range of these issues. The motion was therefore withdrawn but he urged Synod members to keep their prophetic voice.

2.3 The College of Bishops with the Standing Committee

The Primus introduced the joint presentation, 'Towards a Provincial Strategy'.

Ms Campbell explained that a Provincial Strategy with a single set of priorities would enable the Church to: target our resources, both human and financial, to address challenges and support opportunities by:

- Focusing the work of the Standing Committee, College of Bishops and our Boards and Committees
- Aligning the work of the General Synod Office
- Evaluating progress.

She said that the Secretary General would be leading GSO staff through a process of change which would equip them to support the boards and committees working at provincial level in a more joined up and effective way.

There were considerable financial resources available to spend across the Province. Standing Committee had the power to allocate significant resources, both the surpluses generated through investments and also releasing some reserves. The Committee, however, needed a basis for applying these reserves. At its meeting in April the Committee had agreed to designate £10 million to invest in the provincial strategy in the next 5-7 years focusing on clear priorities. Those seeking resources would be asked to demonstrate the benefits of the funding secured and how any positive changes could be sustained and progress evaluated.

Bishop Armes acknowledged that some might be resistant to having a strategy, because of a fear of a top-down managerialism that imposed a central control, leaving no room for the movement of the Holy Spirit. He suggested that fearless thinking would open up possibilities. Wise stewardship was needed to use well the

human, financial and physical resources to enable the Church to thrive. We should be creative and listen to the Holy Spirit, with a sense of accountability to God and the wider Church. The volunteers on committees and people in the GSO were our companions in this. Together, thoughtfulness of vestries, pastoral leadership of clergy and intriguing signs of new life in churches across the Province might witness to the activity of God. We, collectively, are full of vision, and a strategy would help to bring this vision into focus for our times and our context so that who we are and what we do are both true to God's call to our Church. It would be a fitting expression of our gratitude for God's abundant grace.

Mrs Whiteside said that there had been two days of externally facilitated sessions in January with the College of Bishops and Standing Committee. The College and Committee were asked to consider their vision for the future of the Church and what they would do if there were no financial restrictions. There was broad consensus around the following:

- Finance: using our financial resources strategically
- Ministry: increasing the numbers of stipendiary clergy and lay leaders
- Training: offering more and better training and development for clergy and laity
- Leadership: developing our senior leaders
- Young people: investing in, and develop, our youth work
- Governance: simplifying governance structures and review our Canons so that they are fit for purpose
- Operations - aligning the work of the GSO to deliver the strategy.

Bishop Swift then explained that a survey had been issued to all vestries seeking input to the strategy, and he urged Synod to encourage their charges to complete the survey as the information would answer some of the questions being dealt with today.

Synod members were then invited to discuss and contribute to formulating the strategy in table groups answering the following questions:

- What words or phrases would you use to describe the SEC?
- Taking an optimistic view, what is your vision for the SEC in the next seven to ten years?
- What would need to happen to realise your vision?

After the table groups had time to consider the three questions, the Primus selected a few tables to provide feedback. In response to the first question, one table described the SEC as liberal and traditional, forward-thinking, diverse, lacking boldness, often invisible, sometimes overly polite. In response to question two, another table group had a vision of a growing Church with increased community-engagement, stronger ecumenical ties, and more young people and families. And in answer to question three on how to realise their vision, a table group responded that there was a need to deploy clergy strategically, to provide more ministerial development opportunities post-ordination; and to have faith, courage and a willingness to take risks and fail.

The Secretary General thanked everyone for taking part in the discussion groups and said that she was looking forward to receiving the full feedback. This would be collated and analysed, along with the responses from the survey. Work on a first draft of the strategy would be presented to the Standing Committee meeting in September, then refined before deciding how this would be operationalised. Updates would be included in *inspires online*.

The Primus then announced to Synod that he had just received a message from Jerusalem: at 10.20am Israeli forces had fired inside the compound of the Al Ahli Anglican hospital in Gaza, killing five people, three of them journalists, plus hospital staff and patients. Archbishop Hosam had asked the Anglican Communion to hold them in prayer. There followed a few minutes silence to hold the people of Gaza and those who were there to help them in prayer.

SESSION 3: THE RT REV BISHOP OF GLASGOW AND GALLOWAY IN THE CHAIR

3.1 Mission Board: Provincial Youth Committee

The Rt Rev Nick Bundock (Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway) introduced himself as this was his first Synod and said that it was a privilege to be able to chair the session from the Provincial Youth Committee.

The Chair introduced the Provincial Youth Coordinator, Mrs Claire Benton-Evans, who said that she had come to Synod with a message of hope. She recognised that some churches might have only a few, if any, young people, and she wanted Synod to know that young people were still very much a part of the life of the SEC. Their growing faith, their desire to connect with other young Christians, and their commitment to serving others reminded her daily why we all have cause to hope for the Church.

A slide presentation of the provincial youth week, YEEK, was shown and then Mrs Benton-Evans reported the following:

- Numbers at YEEK were growing every year, and some young people had attended several years in a row. Some returned as leaders and there were some former delegates-turned-leaders who had been involved in YEEK for 25 years. She paid tribute to the youth leaders, most of whom were volunteers.
- The Committee wanted YEEK ministry to grow every year and would like to increase participation from all dioceses. At present five out of seven dioceses send delegates.
- Weekend youth events were also growing. Recent youth pilgrimages to Iona were so popular that they had received requests to make this a regular feature of the youth programme.
- Two youth pilgrimages to the Angus Glens had taken place, including a hill walking retreat. This was an invitation to meet God in the mountains, with hilltop prayers at sunset. One participant described the experience as 'bringing church into the light'. The PYC would like to do more of this and grow more young pilgrims.

- The Provincial Youth Committee would also like to have a youth and children's officer from every diocese to ensure equal representation across the Province and encourage the involvement of children and families at local level. Perhaps this could be discussed at Diocesan Synods to help grow youth ministry from the bottom up.

Addressing Synod via a pre-recorded video, the Provincial Youth Committee Chair, Phoebe Pryce, said that PYC members wanted to use their time at Synod to discuss issues important to young people. They wished the Church to work together, to transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation. Ms Pryce talked about gender inequality and violence against women, misogyny in everyday lives and in the media. She called for action by the SEC to help young women feel safe and respected.

Leanne Haig-Forsyth, Youth Officer Moray, Ross and Caithness, challenged Synod: Do we as 'Piskies' have a loud enough voice to take action to counter this rise in misogyny? Do you use your platform to combat gender violence? The Provincial Youth Committee called Synod members to challenge inappropriate behaviours, speak up against gender violence, support Thursdays in Black every week, listen to women with courtesy and respect, monitor social media and support women in leadership positions.

Mia Shanks, the 18-25 representative for the Diocese of Brechin, addressed Synod and spoke about climate change. She recognised the SEC's efforts with net zero, ethical investments and eco-congregations but said that it was not enough. The Fifth Mark of Mission was to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the Earth. It was a key pillar of our faith which must be applied across Church life. The climate crisis affected all of God's creation and there was a need to address climate issues as a matter of urgency. Four years before she had asked Synod to stop talking and start doing. Now she reiterated the need for the Church to address all aspects of climate justice.

Jadon Rongong, youth representative for Moray, Ross and Caithness, spoke about financial justice. He reflected on the concept of sin mentioned in the Gospels and the link to money. The Gospel of Luke spoke of excess and material things. One of the foundations of the Church was aiding those in poverty, feeding the hungry and not storing up wealth. He asked for reflection on where we were as a Church and whether we were following Christ's example, noting that many churches were making an effort to feed the hungry as part of their mission.

Sage Vause, youth representative for Edinburgh, spoke about being a queer, young Christian in the Church. They had always felt welcome in Episcopalian spaces, but this was not always the case in other denominations. They did worry about other people's opinions but believed that Jesus was accepting of different views on gender. People in the Church should not judge others, as Jesus did not judge. They went on to say that it was important to include young people in church decisions and to actively listen to what young people were saying. Synod members were invited to consider how to make young people welcome in their church.

The Rev Canon Tembu Rongong, Convener, Provincial Youth Committee, wished to hear from Synod members and introduced three questions to be discussed in table groups:

Gender justice: What can your church do to support gender justice and combat gender-based violence?

Climate justice: What is your church doing to combat climate change?

Youth inclusion: In your church what are you doing to reach out to and engage young people?

Rev Rongong said that the feedback was of genuine interest to the PYC and thanked Synod members for taking the time to address the questions.

Rev Rongong then gave a summary of what the PYC was planning:

- YEEK would take place from 27 July to 2 August 2025. Synod members were asked to encourage young people to attend as there were still places available.
- In October they would be hosted by St John's in Aberdeen for their autumn provincial weekend.
- They looked forward to a pilgrimage on Iona in October 2026.

The Chair thanked all the Provincial Youth Committee members for a stimulating presentation. A speaker card had been received from the Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) who wished to say 'well done'. She said that when she was young she did not have courage to speak up so urged the youth to keep going and to keep speaking up.

SESSION 4: THE RT REV THE BISHOP OF ABERDEEN AND ORKNEY IN THE CHAIR

4.1 Faith and Order Board: The 1700th Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea The Council of Nicaea and Anglican Praxis

The Chair introduced the Rev Canon Prof Charlotte Methuen, who then gave a presentation on the history and background to the Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.).

Following the presentation, members broke into their table groups to look closely at the Nicene Creed. They were then invited to share what they noticed in the text.

Responses included the importance of Christology and the dual nature of Christ, and the emphasis on one God and one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

Prof Methuen explained that the Creed was intended to argue against some of the heresies prevalent at the time, for example, polytheism, Arianism, and the view that the physical world was evil.

Prof Methuen finished the session with a comparison of the drafting of the Creed at the First Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. and, following this some 60 years later, the changes made at the First Council of Constantinople in 381 C.E.

The Chair then thanked Professor Methuen for her presentation.

SESSION FIVE: THE RT REV THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES IN THE CHAIR

5.1 Faith and Order Board: Committee on Canons

Canons for First Reading

Canon 4 Of the Calling and Election of Bishops to Vacant Sees

The Chair introduced Dr Samuel White, Convener of the Committee on Canons, who explained that the changes which were proposed to this Canon were in two sections, section 12 and 26.

He went on to explain the background to the error in Canon Four which required a re-reading of the Canon. He apologised for the necessity of bringing this back to General Synod so soon after Canon Four had been adopted by Synod.

Dr White began with section 26 and outlined the difference between the current version and the revised section presented. Section 26 outlined what happened when a number of votes have taken place inconclusively as part of an electoral process and there were more than two candidates remaining. With the current version, which was an earlier draft where the vote was taken in Houses, it was possible that two candidates could be chosen by one House and another House could choose two different candidates. The change proposed a single vote which removed this impasse.

Section 12 dealt with the time limit on the process. At present the time limit ran for twelve months from the date of the vacancy arising. It was proposed that the date which started the process should be the date of the issuing of the Mandate. Dr White outlined a couple of reasons why this current time limit was problematic, one being in the event of the death of a bishop in office. This change allowed for a smoother and less truncated process in such a situation.

The Primus then proposed, and the Rt Rev Andrew Swift (Bishop of Brechin) seconded, the following motion:

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

A point of order was raised by the Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) who pointed out that the text which was printed in the papers sent to members was different to the text that was contained in the online PDF; this made it difficult to discuss or vote on.

Provost Holdsworth queried whether it would be possible to move to the next business and asked that the text be printed off over lunchtime for Synod members to consider on their return.

The Chair responded that, with Synod's consent, this item would continue after lunch when a printed copy of the correct text would be made available to them. He explained that there was no difference between the two texts (that printed in the Synod papers and in the online PDF) and that the online text was in fact correct, the only difference being that the red tracked changes highlighting the difference between the current and suggested amended version was not used.

Members agreed to suspend this item and conclude after lunch.

SESSION FIVE RESUMED: THE RT REV THE BISHOP OF BRECHIN IN THE CHAIR

5.1 Faith and Order Board: Committee on Canons

Canons for First Reading

Canon 4 Of the Calling and Election of Bishops to Vacant Sees

Dr Samuel White, (Convener, Committee on Canons) was not present for the second half of this session due to other commitments. In his absence, the Primus outlined the process for this vote and the difference from the usual format. This vote constituted the First Reading for the amended text of Canon Four which would be followed by online Diocesan Synod meetings for each diocese where this First Reading would be discussed. This would then be followed by a discussion at the Faith and Order Board, followed by a Second Reading on 9 September at an online General Synod meeting. He reminded the members that all diocesan and provincial Synods must commence with the Eucharist.

He summarised the reasons for bringing this motion to General Synod and stressed the importance of dealing with the error as soon as possible. He spoke of the difficulties in the election process for Argyll and The Isles which had been triggered by the sudden death of Bishop Keith Riglin. The process had been shortened by two months as Canon Four currently required that the electoral process for a new bishop be completed within 12 months of a vacancy arising. The change proposed would mean that the 12-month time limit would start from the date upon which the Mandate was issued.

Bishop Swift began by reminding members that the current revised Canon Four had worked very well in both elections in Argyll and The Isles and in Glasgow and Galloway Dioceses. The issue with section 26 related to a technicality in the voting procedure in Houses which could derail the election process.

Dr Martin Auld (Aberdeen and Orkney) informed Synod that he had served four or five years on the Canon Four Review Group. He told members the original period of 12 months from the issuing of the Mandate was to allow the process to progress swiftly and clearly. His concern now was that the timeframe for the issuing of the Mandate

had no clarity. He would like to see direction included for the Mandate to be issued within two to three months of a vacancy being announced.

Bishop Strange suggested that dioceses could have this conversation in preparation for the Second Reading and felt this was a reasonable point to be considered.

The motion was then put to the vote in houses and the outcome of the vote was as follows:

House of Clergy: 56 in favour, none against, no abstentions
House of Laity: 51 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention
House of Bishops: 7 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

The motion was passed.

5.2 Standing Committee: Accounts, Budget and Quota Overview

Accounts

Ms Bridget Campbell, Convener of Standing Committee, referred Synod to the Annual Accounts within the Synod papers. She wished to thank all members of Standing Committee for their service. She particularly wished to thank the contributions of two members who were standing down as members of Standing Committee: Bishop John Armes for his wisdom and kindness, and Provost Murray, for her willingness to roll up her sleeves and help deliver projects. The College of Bishops had chosen Bishop David Railton to replace Bishop Armes. The new Convener of Mission Board would be elected on Saturday. There would also be an election to replace Ms Campbell as Convener of the Standing Committee. She expressed her gratitude for the experience to serve the Church and urged Synod members to vote for Cathy Johnston.

Ms Campbell brought to Synod's attention some of the recent personnel changes in the SEC. She reminded members that Malcolm Bett, the Provincial Treasurer, had retired in December 2024 and she wished to record Standing Committee's thanks for his many years of dedicated service. She also said that it had been a great joy for her to attend the Consecrations of two new bishops since the last Synod: Bishop David Railton in Argyll and The Isles and Bishop Nick Bundock in Glasgow and Galloway, both of which had been happy occasions.

In 2024, Standing Committee had set itself the following objectives:

- Clarifying the strategic direction of the SEC.
- Encouraging the Mission Board and College of Bishops to promote Church growth.
- Supporting the SEC to work towards net zero.
- Reviewing staffing structures in the General Synod Office.
- Helping the Church to respond to financial pressures.

Since the previous Synod we had welcomed the new Secretary General, Dr Dee Bird; Dr Patricia Krus, the Chief Operating Officer; and James Lloyd, the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer. Standing Committee had agreed to grow the team in the GSO to include a Chief Operating Officer because it recognised that a new approach to leadership and management of the office was needed. The new senior team had been reviewing policies, investing in training and developing staff. She had been heartened at how the new senior leadership team had got stuck in and worked its way to implement change. She also praised the GSO staff for welcoming the new team and adapting to new ways of working. A challenge for the GSO in 2024 was the cyber security breach to which it had been subjected last summer and she commended the staff for their response to this incident which had disrupted the normal work of the office.

Turning to finances, Ms Campbell reported: as forecast at General Synod in 2024 and planned by the Standing Committee, the General Fund went into deficit in 2024 which meant that the Committee drew from reserves to fund activities at provincial level; it also expected to do this in 2025. In setting the General Fund budget for 2026, Standing Committee planned for a further deficit so that the vital work could continue. This could be afforded because the investments which supported the General Fund had once again performed strongly. There was continued considerable scope to sell investments in order to top up income without damaging long term viability.

It was fortunate that there were significant resources to be spent across the Province and Standing Committee had the power to allocate resources; however, input from across the Church was needed to help determine the correct basis for doing that. As mentioned previously, Standing Committee had agreed to allocate £10 million to invest in the provincial strategy over the next five years.

Quota would be discussed and agreed on Saturday, but Ms Campbell explained that there was a lot of potential for change in how available resources were distributed across the SEC in future. In the meantime, there was a system in place and we were coming to the end of a programme put in place to keep quota down following Covid. The total quota planned for 2026 was to be increased by 4.75% to £785,000 in line with projections. This would be put to vote on Saturday.

Mr Stephen Goodyear (Aberdeen and Orkney) asked the Convener to give context to the amount budgeted for legal fees for the year. Would this need revision for this year or next year? Ms Campbell noted that this was difficult to predict in advance. There were some further Canon 54 complaints which would require funding for legal services to address them.

Mr Goodyear proposed that Synod should not accept the Annual Report and Accounts as he felt that paragraphs 25-27 on Aberdeen and Orkney could be misleading. The Annual Report and Accounts stated that the Canon 54 process had been followed, but he believed that it had not. According to Canon 65 the SEC was required to produce an impartial determination of “the truth or otherwise of allegations of abuse against clergy”. Canon 65 and the safeguarding policy bind the Procurator in his capacity as the Procurator of the Church and the SEC claimed that

the Canon 54 process was the only mechanism by which it could deal with allegations of abuse against clergy. He argued that on these bases the Canon 54 process in which the Procurator performed a key role must naturally produce the required determination of the truth of the allegations against clergy for it to be valid. He asserted that the process terminated last year did not produce that impartial determination despite the Procurator indicating that there was a sufficiency of evidence to provide a realistic prospect of convicting the clergy person in question had the matter been allowed to go forward to the Clergy Discipline Tribunal. Dr Goodyear asserted that, during the reporting year, the SEC had been asked by several people whether the required impartial determination about the truth of the allegations had been made. Dr Goodyear argued that it had never confirmed that the required decision was made; if it had been, then Canon 65 and the safeguarding policy indicated that it should be shared. He went on to say that the Report also claimed that Standing Committee had no power to intervene in the complaints process. He did not believe this as, he said, Anderson Strathearn, instructed by the SEC, had confirmed in writing that Standing Committee had intervened in the process. Could the Chair or Standing Committee confirm that the allegations were true or not? He said that the SEC had failed to answer this question for eight months and had blocked a general motion on safeguarding preventing this and wider safeguarding issues being discussed.

The Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) asked if the matter raised by Dr Goodyear was in keeping with the nature of the debate as it did not relate to the motion at hand. The Accounts were subjected to external audit and she was confident that the external auditors had taken a true and fair view, and therefore the Accounts should be accepted.

Ms Campbell responded that the Canon 54 process concluded after the Procurator, a KC who was independent of the SEC, decided not to lead evidence to trial. His reasons were published and were available on the SEC website, and his decision was accepted by the Clergy Discipline Tribunal. She had no wish to discuss legal matters which had reached a conclusion.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Mrs Whiteside, 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 2024.”

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 106 in favour, 3 against, 9 abstentions.

The Chair thanked the Convener for her work on Standing Committee and her support for new bishops.

5.3 Mission Board: Reflections on the Achievements of the Mission Board

Provost Murray (Convener, the Mission Board) gave a report on the work of the Mission Board over the previous five years.

She thanked all who had worked for the Board over the last five years. The main achievements of the Board in the last year included youth work, the Global Partnerships Scholarship Fund, community work, the responses to the nuclear weapons and assisted dying debates, as well as grants to alleviate child poverty and one-off mission grants.

At a recent meeting, the Board considered the questions: What does successful mission work look like? Who does it? Where does it happen? How do you know that it is successful? At the core of the Church's mission are our relationships with God, one another and the community, with success understood as when the Church is seen as a source for good in the community.

Reflecting on mission in the context of developing a strategy for the Province, the Board considered what it would do if there were no constraints: it would build a missional, not just a survivalist, culture; it would prioritise good communication; recruit for pioneer mission and have the capacity to fund grants. Both money and people would be needed.

Looking to the future, the use of buildings, partnership with other charities, local mission including children's and youth work were important. She urged the Church to invest as much in its mission and people as it does in its buildings.

Bishop Railton thanked Sarah Murray for her work chairing the Mission Board.

5.4 Standing Committee: Charity Governance and Trusteeship

Mr Gavin McEwan (Synod Assessor) gave a presentation on the responsibilities of trustees. In his introduction he outlined the training he provides to vestry members in the Diocese of Edinburgh and gave a brief history of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

His presentation focused on the role of charity trustees and specifically, vestry members as trustees; the legal duties of trustees; the relationship between charity law and Canon law; risk and liability; and the limits of OSCR's role.

Mr McEwan mentioned the upcoming regulatory changes from OSCR, including the expanded rules for automatic disqualification of trustees and the charity trustee register which would come into effect from 30 June 2025.

Mr McEwan said that it was worth reviewing the guidance from OSCR and considering how your own charge may be affected as these rules are to take effect this summer.

The Rev Andrew Elliott (Aberdeen and Orkney) noted that one of the concerns of his vestry was the issue of liability. One of the charges also had an interesting feature in its constitution which stated that any clergy associated with that particular charge automatically became a member of the vestry and by that a trustee; however, there were many retired priests who were licensed in his charge. The question was how

enforceable was the liability, as in some cases people had become trustees without realising that they were trustees.

Mr McEwan responded that he should not give advice on specific cases, but the general principle was that anyone appointed as a trustee under a constitution was a trustee; but if appointed in an *ex officio* capacity they could resign and therefore extract themselves from charity trustee duties.

The Chair thanked Mr McEwan for his presentation.

5.5 Standing Committee: Legacy of Slavery

The Primus gave a presentation on the Legacy of Slavery Working Group. Last year there had been an ecumenical pilgrimage to Jamaica which raised issues around the legacy of slavery. Given the historical context, it was important to consider how to repair relationships and how to refresh our life together. The SEC was looking at developing a project that would focus both on the historical impact of slavery and on building future relationships. The aim was to investigate the SEC's involvement in the slave trade, to understand the role slavery had had in the SEC and to work towards repairing relationships.

He explained that buildings were built from money which came directly or indirectly from the slave trade. We need to know the sources of funding for the church buildings in the SEC.

A working group had now been established and had met, and a Chair proposed. The SEC would partner with other organisations including the USPG and aimed to appoint an external researcher to investigate the historic links the SEC had to slavery. The aim was to produce recommendations and guidance to help restore relations with churches affected, largely in the West Indies. The SEC would work with the Church of Scotland, EMU partners and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland to research historical links and to apologise and restore relations. The Church needed to learn from the past to address racism and discrimination.

Finally, the Primus asked for prayer for the Working Group.

SESSION SIX: THE RIGHT REV THE BISHOP OF BRECHIN IN THE CHAIR

6.1 Standing Committee: Provincial Environment Group

The Rt Rev Ian Paton (Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane), Convener of the Provincial Environment Group (PEG), began by thanking the members of PEG, in particular the Vice Convener, Cathy Johnston. He also thanked the Net Zero Team for their work. Synod had spoken of using financial resources: the establishment of the Net Zero Team was an example of the Church using its resources to act.

The Chair then invited Mr Paul Williams, Net Zero Delivery Director, to address Synod. Mr Williams thanked Synod members for the useful conversations he had held with them in the last couple of days and began his presentation, starting with

details of his background. His parents had been missionaries in Madagascar and this experience had been a formative part of his early life.

During his presentation, he spoke of the importance of the values of discipleship, justice and hope in relation to combating climate change. He then pointed to the work that the SEC had been doing in relation to net zero. There were many examples around the Province of the Church's commitment to addressing climate change. The Net Zero Team was organising road shows to enable sharing of ideas. The Church also had a strategic partnership with the Benefact Trust and there were opportunities for charges to apply for grants.

Mr Williams then invited comments or questions.

Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) said that the Net Zero Team had not made an effort to engage with her and felt that the information she had been provided was not adequate.

Others said they were grateful for the support received from the Team and there was specific mention of the very useful resource provided through the Net Zero Portal.

Dr Stephen Goodyear (Aberdeen and Orkney) queried the Net Zero Team's emphasis on green tariffs and asked that the Team provide a written report of their work in future, outlining the funding obtained from external sources.

The Chair concluded the session by thanking Mr Williams for his excellent presentation.

6.2 Faith and Order Board: Liturgy Committee

The Rev Canon Dr Nicholas Taylor (Convener, Liturgy Committee) brought the following motions to General Synod and noted that the Liturgy Committee had now caught up with much of the work which had been delayed by the Covid pandemic.

Removal of out of date liturgies from the Schedule to Canon 22

Second Reading - Opinions from Dioceses

St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane:

- The cost of purchasing new books was raised. This might be difficult for some charges. However, it was also stated that this would not be mandatory immediately and books could be replaced as and when needed.
- The ability to harmonise parts of the 1970 and 1982 liturgies had allowed creativity. Would that still be allowable?

Dr Taylor confirmed that there was no intention to require churches to remove these liturgies from their shelves.

Dr Taylor proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following motion:

“That the proposal that the following liturgies be deleted from the Schedule to Canon 22 with effect from the Sunday next before Advent in 2025 be read for the second time:

- Scottish Liturgy (Scottish Episcopal Church) (1982) listed as item 6 in the Schedule;
- Scottish Liturgy 1982 Eucharistic Prayers II-V (Scottish Episcopal Church) (1996) listed as item 11 in the Schedule.”

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

House of Clergy: 51 in favour, none against, 3 abstentions
House of Laity: 47 in favour, none against, 2 abstentions
House of Bishops: 6 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

The motion was passed.

First Reading

Canon 22 Removal of Baptism and Burial liturgies from the Schedule

Dr Taylor proposed, and Bishop Paton seconded, the following motion:

“That the proposal that the following liturgies be deleted from the Schedule to Canon 22 with effect from the Sunday next before Advent in 2026 be read for the first time:

- Baptism of Infants (1968) listed as item 3 in the Schedule.
- Burial of the Dead (1969) listed as item 4 in the Schedule.”

The Primus announced that it had been brought to his attention that copies of the Baptism of Infants 1969 and the Burial of the Dead 1969 had recently been found.

It was decided to withdraw the motion and the Faith and Order Board and the Liturgy Committee would look at these texts.

Addition of a new Liturgy to the Schedule to Canon 22

First reading of Blessing of a Marriage (2025)

Dr Taylor then proposed, and Bishop Paton seconded, the following motion:

“That the proposal that Blessing of a Marriage (2025) be added to the Schedule to Canon 22 be read for the first time.”

Dr Taylor reminded members that this had been in Experimental Use following Covid. He invited questions.

Dr Beth Routledge (ACC Representative) expressed disappointment with this liturgy; she felt that it curtailed the options available to clergy as well as removing the poetry

and beauty of the current version. She recognised the work that the Liturgy Committee had put into this text but preferred the original.

Rev Godwin Chimara (Aberdeen and Orkney) spoke in support of the revised liturgy. He felt it reflected the diversity of the SEC, that for those coming from abroad faced legal difficulties in having their marriage recognised. This new liturgy addressed this problem by recognising the existence of the marriage legally.

Provost Holdsworth (Glasgow and Galloway) disagreed and referred to his own experience with using the current Blessing with Nigerian couples and supported retaining the current version of the liturgy. He agreed with Rev Beth Routledge regarding the curtailing of options.

The Rev Rachael Wright (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) raised the issue of secular marriage and cautioned using language which might indicate a second marriage. She wanted to be clear about the use of non-gendered language and when this would be extended to the marriage liturgy.

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

House of Clergy: 40 in favour, 8 against, 7 abstentions

House of Laity: 35 in favour, 8 against, 9 abstentions

House of Bishops: 7 in favour, none against, no abstentions.

Addition to the Calendar of Eric Liddell

The Rev Nick Bowry presented this motion to General Synod and provided a brief outline of the life and work of Eric Liddell and the esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries.

The Rev Amy Jo Philip (Edinburgh) added her voice in support of this motion.

The Rev Fiona Bennet, (United Reformed Church) spoke in support of the inclusion of Eric Liddell's name to the Calendar and added that stories of his work in supporting those in dire situations were inspiring.

Mr Petko Marinov (Glasgow and Galloway) commended the inclusion of Eric Liddell but noted this was another man being proposed. He drew Synod's attention to the fact that, for the first six months of this year, 67 names were those of men and only eight were women. He asked that the Liturgy Committee look for more women to be proposed for inclusion to the Calendar.

Dr Taylor acknowledged the lack of women's names and hoped that more people would come forward with the names of women for inclusion in the Scottish Calendar.

The Primus then proposed, and Bishop Railton seconded, the following motion:

“That, upon the recommendation of the Faith and Order Board, the Scottish Calendar (1991) be amended by the inclusion of Eric Liddell.”

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 95 in favour, 4 against, 6 abstentions.

The Primus then thanked Dr Taylor for all his work on the Liturgy Committee.

SESSION SEVEN: THE RIGHT REV THE BISHOP OF EDINBURGH IN THE CHAIR

Before the session began, Mr Gavin McEwan (Assessor) updated members about the automatic disqualification rules from trusteeship. The Scottish Parliament had just released the date and the rules would commence from 31 August 2025; waivers could be applied from 30 June.

7.1 Faith and Order Board: Inter-Church Relations Committee (ICRC)

Saint Ninian Declaration

Prof Methuen (Convenor of the ICRC) began by providing updates from the ICRC. It had been agreed some time ago with the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and the Church of Scotland that an ecumenical audit would be carried out. She informed members that churches would receive a request for feedback on their ecumenical involvement and that she was interested in gathering stories whether positive or negative. People were encouraged to engage with the process and she apologised to the other denominations involved for the SEC's lateness in carrying out our part of this work.

She thanked Bishop John Armes for his work with the ICRC praising his gifts of wisdom and insight as well as his personal commitment to ecumenism.

She gave her apologies for the Saturday session of General Synod explaining that she would be taking part in the signing of an agreement of full communion between the Lutheran Church of Bavaria and the Episcopal Church of the USA (the Augsburg Agreement).

Prof Methuen then introduced the Saint Ninian Declaration as the "Declaration of Friendship", between the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Conference of Bishops of the Catholic Church in Scotland, which was a slightly different declaration from that of the St Andrew Declaration. It affirmed a deepening relationship between Episcopalians and Roman Catholics in Scotland.

Bishop Ian Paton spoke as the SEC delegate for the 2024 IARCCUM (the International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission) meeting in Rome and Canterbury where delegates considered the question of what could be done together. A comment made during that meeting had stuck with him: "After four centuries of conflict and separation, the Catholic and the Anglican Communion have now been on a walk towards reconciliation for almost six decades and yet in our churches we have barely begun to do all that is possible to do together". He noted that both the RC and SEC already have agreements with the Church of Scotland; it was important now to have one between ourselves. He emphasised that this was a declaration of friendship and that, as in any friendship, people could sometimes

disagree. This was not about 100% agreement. He commended the Declaration to Synod.

The Rev Ross Blackman (Ecumenical Relations, Church of Scotland) spoke from the floor. He extended his greetings from the Church of Scotland to GS25. He recalled the General Assembly's conversations on the Nicene Creed, that we each accept one God, one baptism and one faith. He was delighted to see this declaration of friendship being presented. He also endorsed Prof Methuen's challenge to the SEC to engage with the Ecumenical Audit and continue this important part of the Churches' work.

The Rev Canon John McLuckie (Edinburgh) spoke in support of this motion. He stated he felt a very close spiritual affinity with his local RC church and encouraged more shared work together at church level. It was possible to go further.

The Rev Keith Thomasson (Glasgow and Galloway) also commended this motion recalling his involvement with the choir in the Metropolitan Church in Liverpool and how welcome he had felt. He outlined the ecumenical work which was taking place in his church in Troon and supported the motion.

Mr Tim Hatton (Edinburgh) spoke of his experience in Hawick in the Scottish Borders where St Cuthbert's Church had shared its building with the local RC church. During Advent they had shared an Advent Study group as well as a Carol Service.

The Rev Ferdinand von Prondsynski (Aberdeen and Orkney) spoke in favour of the declaration and asked if there was more that could be done at local church level. Was there a programme of action which could be taken?

The Rev Bonnie Evans-Hills (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane Clergy) spoke of her inter-religious dialogue work across the country and locally with her church in Leven. She commended the motion warmly.

The Rev Andrew Elliott (Aberdeen and Orkney) spoke of his close working relationship with his RC colleague in Shetland based on mutual curiosity and friendship. He commended the motion.

The Rev Amy Jo Philip (Edinburgh) reflected that ecumenism was in her blood having grown up with the Congregational Church and the URC.

The Rev Ryan Bennett (Edinburgh) spoke appreciatively of the visit of Archbishop Leo to Christ Church in Morningside.

The Rev Lesley-ann Craddock (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) related her work with the local RC church in St Andrews but noted that as a woman, there were barriers to worship despite a close working relationship.

The Very Rev Dr Emsley Nimmo (Aberdeen and Orkney) had served on ARCIC and recommended the text from the 1971 Eucharistic Doctrine which he thought worth republishing as a teaching document. He considered there were opportunities where churches were closing and the chance to share resources.

Mrs Elizabeth Roads (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) noted that there were no RC churches remaining locally but shared worship with RC members. They were now sharing their church with Church of Scotland members who were losing their church and could not welcome this motion more strongly.

Prof Methuen responded to the speakers from the floor thanking them for the wealth of experiences they had shared. She agreed that the 1971 paper was a very helpful exploration of eucharistic ministry and noted this could be made available on the website.

What Pope Leo XIV had said encouraged us to think hopefully about the way forward together and this was a timely agreement. She mentioned work in mainland Europe where there was shared communion between RC and Reformed churches. This was an encouraging picture.

The Primus spoke to his personal experience of sharing church buildings. He said that today we made a public statement to the people of Scotland which refuted the narrative of division between our Churches.

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

“That the Saint Ninian Declaration as set out in the Synod Papers be approved and adopted.”

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 112 in favour, none against, 2 abstentions.

The Most Rev Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, Roman Catholic Church was asked to address General Synod.

He thanked General Synod for this vote which was very dear to his heart. He told of being commissioned by Pope Francis in 2013 to be the Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh and to return to Scotland after decades of living abroad and was appointed President for Ecumenical Relations. Many things had changed out of all recognition in Scotland. Much was better. He noted that the ecumenical work since Vatican II had moved on considerably. The work which produced the declaration signed by the RC Church and the Church of Scotland was warmly welcomed by the Vatican. This was unique within the RC Church.

He explained that he had been asked by Bishop Keith Riglin why the SEC had not been approached and expressed real gratitude that this had now come to pass.

Bishop Armes thanked Bishop Paton, Prof Methuen and the ICRC for their work on the Declaration.

SESSION EIGHT: THE RT REV BISHOP OF ST ANDREWS, DUNKELD AND DUNBLANE IN THE CHAIR

- 8.1** Bishop Paton said Synod would now receive a presentation on Assisted Dying, a timely topic as the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill was making its way through Scottish Parliament.

The Rev Dr Hamilton Inbadas (Moray, Ross and Caithness) introduced himself by saying that he had over twenty years' experience in palliative and end-of-life care as a chaplain and researcher in a variety of contexts. While emphasising that he was not an expert in assisted dying as such, he spoke from the perspective of pastoral practice, medical ethics, academic research, and theology.

In relation to the debate on assisted dying, he noted that both supporters and opponents often hold the same principles — such as compassion and comfort — but apply them differently. For some, comfort means supporting life to its natural end; for others it may include helping to end life to relieve suffering.

He discussed the Hippocratic Oath, clarifying that its original prohibition on giving a deadly drug was directed at political killings in ancient Greece, not end-of-life care, and is now used more as an ethical reasoning tool than a binding pledge. He distinguished active, passive, and indirect euthanasia, and explained the shift from “physician-assisted suicide” to the broader, more neutral term “assisted dying”.

Outlining international legal contexts, he noted countries where assisted dying is permitted and Scotland's current legislative process, which is now at stage two of consideration. Turning to palliative care, he presented global comparisons showing the UK's leading provision, but contrasted this with personal experiences of both poor deaths in Scotland and peaceful deaths in countries with fewer resources. He criticised the lack of progress on Scotland's 2015 Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care and the 2024 proposal for a legal right to palliative care.

Dr Inbadas examined the current Assisted Dying Bill in detail, raising concerns over the use of the phrase “limits of palliative care” when provision is still inadequate, the absence of a time-frame definition for “terminal illness”, and the inclusion of emotional and anticipatory suffering alongside physical pain as grounds.

He acknowledged the work that had been carried out in the SEC, both by the Church in Society Committee and the Scottish Episcopal Institute.

In conclusion, Dr Inbadas expressed his personal view that assisted dying was likely to become law in Scotland. He urged the Church to prepare by equipping clergy and laity, revisiting pastoral offices, and developing resources to handle sensitive conversations with compassion and theological depth.

SESSION NINE: THE MOST REV THE PRIMUS IN THE CHAIR

- 9.1** The Primus briefly introduced the private members' motion, Motion 17 and said that he had received a number of speaker's cards and some amendments in relation to the motion.

Synod was asked by the Chair to agree via a show of hands whether or not to treat the Rev Amanda Fairclough's amendment as a Counter Motion to the printed Motion 17. Synod was advised that should this proposal be rejected, Ms Fairclough's motion would be treated as an Amendment to the printed motion.

Motion 17c was proposed by the Rev Amanda Fairclough and seconded by the Very Rev Alison Simpson (Moray, Ross and Caithness):

“This Synod affirms that all people are made and loved by God. Synod also recognises the deep hurt caused by recent developments in gender/sexual politics. That we might grow together in mutual understanding, Synod asks the College of Bishops to hold discussions in their dioceses and bring back a comprehensive summary of views expressed to next year's General Synod.”

Provost Holdworth queried why this was being treated as a counter motion instead of a Rule 10 Motion? The Assessor confirmed that the amendment had been tabled as an amendment, but, as it was such a substantive amendment, it was felt that this took on more of the character of a counter motion. If Synod agreed, it could be treated as a counter motion. The Rules of Order were finely focused on what was a counter motion or not, but this did not fall exactly into counter motion territory.

The Primus suggested inviting Synod to say it was willing, by a simple majority, to treat this as a counter motion as a means of moving forward.

Beth Routledge (ACC representative) asked, if Synod agreed on a show of hands, did that mean the original Motion 17 would not be debated at all?

The Assessor confirmed that the original motion had not yet been presented. An additional amendment to that motion would be proposed, followed by the introduction of a counter motion. Voting would proceed in stages: first on any amendments to the original motion, then on any amendments to the counter motion. After that, Synod would vote between the original motion and the counter motion to indicate a preference. The motion receiving the most votes would become the substantive motion. If Synod did not accept this as a counter motion it simply became an amendment of the motion.

Upon request, the Assessor reiterated the process. Motion 17, as included in the papers, would first have a minor amendment proposed by the Rev Amy Jo Philip. A further amendment to this motion would also be introduced and discussed shortly. In addition, Ms Fairclough's substantive motion was to be treated by Synod as a counter motion.

Synod would be asked to vote on the proposed amendments, resulting in two distinct motions: the original motion and the counter motion. A final vote would then be held between these two. The motion receiving the greater number of votes would become the substantive motion on which Synod would ultimately vote.

Mr McEwan confirmed that it would be possible to submit amendments to the counter motion when accepted.

Synod voted by show of hands to reject Motion 17c as a countermotion. Motion 17c would therefore become a motion for amendment for the motion about to be debated.

The Primus then invited the Rev Amy Jo Philip to introduce Motion 17. Ms Philip began by thanking Standing Committee for including this motion and said that it was important for this debate to be led by a trans person. ‘The SEC welcomes you’ was a familiar phrase and Synod had heard already this morning how the SEC was a welcoming and inclusive place. However, trans+ and inter-sex people were fearful of where they were welcomed and more so since the recent Supreme Court ruling. There had been a rise in abuse against them. She felt personally welcome in the SEC but queried whether her trans siblings were and did they know it? This motion was about making that welcome clear. It was not about the Supreme Court ruling or the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s subsequent guidance or the Equality Act 2010. The motion did not commit the SEC to any particular political policy platform vis a vis trans+ people. It was not all about trans women. The motion was also about trans men, non-binary people gender non-conforming people, and inter-sex people too. It did not say that those who opposed their rights were not welcome. Synod had already heard that day that the Church had found ways to walk together on sensitive issues such as re-marriage of divorced people and same-sex marriage. The most important thing to say was that you are a beloved child of God and trans+ people needed to hear that. Ms Philip wanted to emphasise that respect, love and compassion in this debate was needed. There was an opportunity for the Church to be prophetic.

The Rev Canon Dr Jennifer Holden, who was seconding the motion, spoke of her own experience and journey of faith. She asked Synod to listen, consider and respect one another. The Church rejoiced in saying that it was a welcoming church but the question was asked why the motion needed to specify specific groups. All were welcome, but being known by and being called by name was important. A member of the Youth Committee had said how they rejoiced in the welcome they received in the SEC and this was about extending this welcome to all, that all may know it. She said that naming some by name did not diminish others. God’s love was immeasurable. It was important to state that part 3 of the motion ‘accorded the same dignity, respect and rights’ is talking about natural rights, not legal rights, the rights accorded to all people. This motion was grounded in our call to love one another and to love God.

Motion 17:

“This Synod affirms that transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people:

1. are made in the image of God,
2. are loved by God,
3. should be accorded the same dignity, respect and rights as cisgender people and

4. can and should participate fully in the life, worship, mission and ministry of the Scottish Episcopal Church.”

Motion 17A - Amendment 1 was proposed by the Rev Amy Jo Phillip, and seconded by the Rev Canon Dr Jennifer Holden:

“That the first sentence should read: “This Synod affirms that transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, and inter-sex people:”

The amendment to the motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 100 in favour, 4 against, 7 abstentions.

The Chair opened up the debate.

The Rev Roger Dyer (Aberdeen and Orkney) said that as a straight white man from England, he wished to be the best unique version of himself and become as much like Jesus as he could be. His hope was that individually and collectively we would grow in our holiness. He encouraged Synod to vote for the motion so we could grow in our holiness.

Mrs Margaret Hodder (Aberdeen and Orkney), spoke for the motion. She had experienced difference all her life and knew what it was like to be unwelcome in a church. She had experienced a life affirming visit to a church in Brighton where she met trans people for the first time and had been made to feel welcome. That church had been for everyone, not only trans people, and everyone worshipped together. She would like to see every church in Scotland affirm the rights of trans people, inter-sex people, people with disabilities - everyone.

Mr Rongong wished to reiterate that he wanted to welcome all to our church, which was especially important for the young people who had spoken on Thursday.

Mrs Deborah Munday (Moray, Ross and Caithness) noted that, as a former police officer, she had read suicide letters from trans people who had killed themselves because they felt so hated and did not feel accepted. She urged the Church to be known to be welcome to everyone and to be safe for everyone.

Bishop Paton (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) noted the issue was complex and multi-faceted involving personal needs and practical provisions. Different freedoms, needs and hopes were made to compete with each other. Calm heads and kind hearts were needed on all sides. He urged Synod to support the motion expressing support for SEC members who felt under pressure.

The Rev Gennie Evans (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) expressed concern about the direction of travel in society regarding femininity but was more concerned that the motion might not be passed. We learn about the diversity of God by the diversity of people. She urged Synod to support the motion.

Dr Anne Martin (Edinburgh and Standing Committee member) noted as well as ensuring all people were welcome, she wished the SEC would become involved in

support and discussion to find a way through the situation arising from the application and interpretation of the recent Supreme Court ruling. She was horrified at the polarisation into two extremes, for and against, the ruling and by the lack of common sense and consideration of those affected. Many people would need help and support and there was a need for dialogue.

The Venerable Dr Hayley Matthews (Archdeacon of Wrexham, Church in Wales) thanked Synod for its welcome. She quoted Isaiah 54. Recently the bishops of the Church in Wales had issued a statement that every human being was a precious child of God, deserving of dignity and respect. The bishops recognised that the struggle for trans people was often costly and difficult and therefore together they committed to pray all who were touched by the issue. They pray for greater compassion, understanding and generosity so that all children of God could find in the Church and in society a welcome and a place to be themselves. She hoped that Synod would join with the Church in Wales in providing that welcome to all of our siblings.

The Rev Bonnie Evans-Hills (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) spoke of her own experience of being a single parent and being embraced by a local church community in England who welcomed everyone from the community including transgender people. She wanted to emphasise the welcome she had received, as a vulnerable person, from the people who were now being attacked.

Canon Simon Mackenzie (Argyll and The Isles) agreed with all that had been said but felt that paragraph three had the effect of leaving us more binary than before. It should have stated 'should be accorded the dignity, respect and rights due to all people'.

The Rev Ollie Clegg (Edinburgh) asked that more time be given on this topic to take it back to dioceses and vestries to discuss. He felt it was being rushed through.

The Rev Elizabeth Roads (St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane) sympathised and supported the emotion behind this motion; however, she felt that as a motion it was exclusive and not inclusive, because it singled out one group of people as being more worthy of God's love rather than all people. She could not support this motion.

Dr Jaap Jacobs (Breachin) agreed with the motion but considered that the phrasing was not sufficient for purpose. The third clause should be 'accorded dignity and respect' and the word 'rights' suggested that the Church was disagreeing with the ruling of the Supreme Court. It did not address the anxiety caused by the Supreme Court ruling. As a Church we should not accept anxiety and provide as much comfort as possible to people who felt anxious about the ruling.

Dr Jacobs then proposed, and the Rev Peter Mead seconded, the following amendment to the motion:

Motion 17B – Amendment 2

“That this Synod affirm that transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming and inter-sex people:

1. are made in the image of God
2. are loved by God
3. should be accorded dignity and respect, and
4. should be able to participate fully in the life, worship, mission and ministry of the Scottish Episcopal Church.”

Provost Holdsworth spoke against the amendment and noted that the Supreme Court ruling had been very clear that trans people retained rights as trans people. If the word ‘rights’ were removed then it could give the impression that trans people did not have rights.

Bishop Paton also opposed the amendment. He did not mind being called cis-gender or admitting that he was white, male and middle class. All those things put him in a privileged position in society. He was happy to be in a different group and to respect those in a smaller group and urged Synod to reject the amendment because we should own up to being who we are.

Ms Philip stated that the word ‘cisgender’ should be included. She had been attempting to name the sense of marginalisation by all trans people and to highlight how they were treated differently from their cisgender siblings.

Dr Jacobs acknowledged Ms Philp’s point of view, but he preferred a perspective that did not single out specific groups however marginalised they may be. In his view, our aim was humanity, all children of God, and the wording of the motion should reflect that. In conjunction with the words ‘dignity’ and ‘respect’ that should be accorded, the rights have already been accorded by the court ruling and that was the reason for removing the word.

Amendment 17b was put to the vote as follows: 29 in favour, 73 against, 11 abstentions. The amendment failed.

Motion 17C – amendment 3

The Rev Amanda Fairclough (Argyll and The Isles) introduced Amendment 3. She was hopeful of an honest debate, but it must be deep, wide-ranging and open. It required time and a space that felt safe for everyone so that people could express their feelings without fear of being judged. She urged Synod, out of kindness, to allow everyone the time and space to conduct an honest debate well, in an appropriate setting.

Ms Fairclough then proposed, and the Very Rev Alison Simpson seconded, the following amendment to motion 17:

“That the existing motion be replaced in its entirety with the following:

“This Synod affirms that all people are made and loved by God.

“Synod also recognises the deep hurt caused by recent developments in sexual/gender politics.

“That we might grow together in mutual understanding, Synod asks the College of Bishops to hold discussions in their Dioceses and bring back a comprehensive summary of views expressed to next year’s General Synod.””

The Rev Andy Elliot (Aberdeen and Orkney) urged Synod to reject this amendment because ultimately the original motion was bland. The debate about how people are welcomed, how we protect people in single sex spaces, for example, these were things that did need to be debated by dioceses, but surely Synod could get behind a motion that was ultimately about how we love people.

Dr Routledge (ACC representative) urged Synod to vote against this amendment. She was from a charge that was proud to be open, inclusive and welcoming. To be welcoming we sometimes have to name those who are welcome. “All are welcome in this place” is not enough, we must single out specific groups. She did not have to question whether she was welcome as a cis-gender person. Trans+ siblings could not say the same. Synod did not need to give permission for people to continue to have conversations. She was concerned that, if accepted, this amendment would lead to a conversation process that would leave trans+ people battered and bruised and, possibly, excluded from conversations.

Dr Martin (Edinburgh and Standing Committee member) urged Synod to reject the amendment as a delay of a year was too long, but recognised further discussion should happen.

Dr Jacobs (Breachin) said this amendment asked the College of Bishops to do something, but it should be a diocesan decision with individual bishop’s input. This could be discussed further at the extraordinary Diocesan Synods.

The Rev Fiona Bennett (United Reformed Church) shared the URC’s experience. She had moderated the session which debated their resolution 21 which affirmed transgender identify. The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church affirmed the human dignity of transgender, non-gender and gender non-conforming people and asserted their right within and beyond the URC to live without threat, violence or hatred. It had been important for the URC to make that statement enabling them to declare to the world that their church was a safe place for transgender+ people.

Mr Hugh Morrison (Moray, Ross and Caithness) noted that there was general approval for the original motion but also a desire for further discussion in dioceses.

Ms Philip agreed that further discussion was needed, but also the explicit welcome for trans+ people was necessary to be part of that debate and to feel safe. It would be too late to leave discussion until the following year.

Motion 17c - amendment 3 was put to the vote as follows: 21 in favour, 87 against, 3 abstentions. The motion failed.

The Primus thanked Synod for the good debate and said that it was now time to put the motion to the vote. Whatever the outcome of the vote, he asked Synod members to take a moment of quiet reflection before moving on to the next business.

Motion 17 (as amended)

“This Synod affirms that transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, and intersex people:

1. are made in the image of God,
2. are loved by God,
3. should be accorded the same dignity, respect and rights as cisgender people and
4. can and should participate fully in the life, worship, mission and ministry of the Scottish Episcopal Church.”

Motion 17 (as amended) was put to the vote and passed as follows: 92 in favour, 12 against, 5 abstentions.

9.2 Standing Committee: Budgets and Quota

Ms Campbell (Convener, Standing Committee) proposed, and Mrs Whiteside seconded, the following motion:

“That this Synod, having examined the proposed budgets for the General Synod for the year 2026, agree to a quota figure of £785,000 for that year.”

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 102 in favour, 4 against, 2 abstentions.

9.3 Elections

Standing Committee Convenership

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

“That Ms Cathy Johnston be appointed as Convener of the Standing Committee.”

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 104 in favour, none against, 1 abstention.

Mission Board Convenership

The Primus proposed, and the Rev Diana Hall seconded, the following motion:

“That the Rev Keith Thomasson be appointed as Convener of the Mission Board.”

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 105 in favour, none against, 1 abstention.

Institute Council Convenership

The Primus proposed, and Ms Campbell seconded, the following motion:

“That the Rt Rev the Bishop of Brechin be appointed the Convener of the Institute Council.”

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 101 in favour, 2 against, 4 abstentions.

Institute Council Membership

Bishop Swift proposed, and Ms Campbell seconded, the following motion:

“That the appointments by the Institute Council in 2024 of the Rev Canon Prof David Jasper and the Rev Dr Rebekah Sims as members of the Institute Council be ratified.”

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 106 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions.

Buildings Committee Convenership

Mrs Whiteside proposed, and Ms Campbell seconded, the following motion:

“That Mr David Gibbon be appointed as Convener of the Buildings Committee.”

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 100 in favour, none against, 2 abstentions.

Standing Committee: Co-opted appointments

Ms Campbell proposed an amendment to Motion 24. Boards and committees were generally made up of representatives from dioceses but sometimes they required more expertise within its membership. This motion would allow up to three non-voting members by co-option. The appointments would be for two years with a possibility of a second term of two years.

Synod's consent was sought to accept minor textual changes to the printed motion. The amendment 24A was passed on a show of hands.

Dr Martin Auld (Aberdeen and Orkney) proposed a rewording of motion 24 to alter the number of co-opted members to 15% of the elected membership of the Board or Committee. The proposal was not moved as there was no seconder.

The Rev Steven Cooper brought greetings from the Methodist Church in Scotland and commended this motion appreciating the way in which the Inter-Church Relations Committee included representation from other churches.

Ms Campbell then proposed, and Mrs Whiteside seconded, motion 24 as amended:

“That the following be added to the Digest of Resolutions under 2.1.4 (c) (iii): With majority agreement of its members a Board or Committee may appoint up to three non-voting co-opted members chosen for their expertise. The appointment of a non-voting co-opted member will be for two years with the possibility for a second term of two years.”

The motion (as amended) was put to the vote and passed as follows: 104 in favour, 2 against, no abstentions.

Standing Committee: Preliminary Proceedings Committee

The next motion had been included in the envelopes given to Synod members on their arrival. Ms Campbell proposed, and the Primus seconded, the following motion:

“That Ms Fiona Muirs be appointed as a practising lawyer to the Preliminary Proceedings Committee for the remainder of a five-year term to 2029.”

The motion was put to the vote and passed as follows: 100 in favour, none against, 3 abstentions.

9.4 Thanks from the Primus

The Primus expressed thanks to the ecumenical guests and their buddies, those who acted as table facilitators, to the Rev Canon Dean Fostekew who had co-ordinated the table groups, to those who had acted as Chairs and to Mr Gavin McEwan, the Assessor. He thanked those who had led or arranged the Eucharist and morning and evening prayer, including the Rev Rosie Addis and Miriam Weibye.

The Primus thanked those Conveners who were stepping down from their roles: Bonnie Evans-Hills (Interfaith Relations Committee), Nicholas Taylor (Liturgy Committee), Saray Murray (Mission Board), Peter Sharp (Buildings Committee) and Bridget Campbell (Standing Committee).

He thanked Mark Kisby of AV Dept and Neil MacLennan of Sanctus Media for providing the IT systems; as well as Thea Macdonald and her team and the IT support staff of St Paul's and St George's.

The Primus thanked Bishop John Armes who was due to retire at the end of August 2025. He also thanked Jean Fenwick from Brechin as this was her last Synod having served for many years. The Secretary General, Donna Glass and the General Synod Office staff were also thanked.

9.5 Closing Worship and Acts of Synod

The Primus confirmed the Acts of Synod and after a closing hymn, closed Synod with the blessing.

Note on changes to Canon 4 – for Second Reading

Following first reading at General Synod in June 2025, this special sitting of General Synod is convened for the purpose of bringing minor updates to Canon 4 for second reading. At first reading, the Canon passed by an overwhelming majority; it has been followed by a period of consideration by diocesan synods at record-breaking speed, for which we are enormously grateful!

As highlighted at first reading, changes to Canon 4 alter the operation of two sections, section 12 and section 26. In all cases, the amendments are focused on ensuring that the process of election of a new bishop runs as smoothly and as effectively as possible.

By way of reminder the changes made at first reading and brought for second reading are as follows:

Changes to section 12:

Canon 4 currently requires that the electoral process for a new bishop be completed within 12 months of a vacancy arising. However, where it is necessary to delay the issuing of a mandate, as permitted by the Canon (in Section 5; for example, to allow for a period of mourning to take place), this time limit may give rise to a risk that the process cannot be carried out in the required time. This would frustrate the process.

As such, Faith and Order Board proposes that Section 12(b) of this Canon be updated so that the 12-month time limit starts from the date upon which the mandate is issued (usually three weeks from the date of the vacancy arising).

Changes to Section 26:

The new process for the election of a bishop of a vacant see was used successfully to appoint the new Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway as well as for the most recent episcopal election in Argyll and the Isles. Whilst this process was successful on both occasions, it became clear that Section 26 of the new Canon 4 did not fully reflect the wording which had been endorsed by the Faith and Order Board. In one aspect, this error gives rise to potentially serious repercussions for the effective running of the Canon 4 process.

Section 26 operates where there are more than two Candidates and where no Candidate receives a majority of the votes of each house in any of the previous rounds of voting. It allows for a transferable voting procedure to reduce the number of candidates to two.

The changes are to allow this transferable voting procedure to take place as a whole Electoral Synod, as opposed to in houses. The existing version of Canon 4 requires that this vote take place in houses, potentially frustrating the process by preventing the list being shortened to two preferred candidates.

For example, if there are four candidates, the House of Clergy could select candidates A & B by way of this process, whilst the House of Laity could select candidates C & D. If that were the case, the impasse which the Section 26 process is designed to navigate would be reached for a second time.

The amendments therefore create a process which would instead result in a list of two candidates, who would then be voted upon by the Electoral Synod in their houses.

There are other minor textual changes to this section which had been previously approved by the Faith and Order Board in order to make the Canon less legalistic and more readily navigable, as well as increasing internal consistency.

CANON FOUR

OF THE CALLING AND ELECTION OF BISHOPS TO VACANT SEES

1. DEFINITIONS

In this Canon

“Bishop-Elect” means the person stated in the Declarations referred to in Sections 28 and 30 of this Canon as the person elected as the Bishop of the Diocese in question;

“Candidate” means any person whose name shall have been included by the Preparatory Committee in the list of candidates for the vacant bishopric at the conclusion of its work in terms of Section 16 of this Canon, and "Candidates" shall be construed accordingly;

"Commentary" means the Commentary adopted by the General Synod under Resolution 2 of this Canon, which Commentary is at all times subordinate to this Canon;

“Convener of the Preparatory Committee” means the person so specified to act as the Convener of the Preparatory Committee in terms of Section 15 of this Canon;

“Convener of the Electoral Synod” or "Convener" means the person so specified to act as the Convener of the Electoral Synod in terms of Section 6 of this Canon;

“Description of the Diocese” means the document or other method of presentation describing the diocese in question referred to in Section 4 of this Canon;

"Electoral Process" means the process for the election of a Bishop-Elect contained in this Canon;

“Electoral Synod” means the body constituted in Section 8 of this Canon;

“Electoral Meeting” means the electoral meeting of the Electoral Synod;

“Electors” means the members of the Electoral Synod present at any meeting;

"Electronic Means" means any method of transmission of information, sound or images between computers or other machines, other than facsimile machines, designed for the purpose of sending and receiving such transmissions and which allows the recipient to reproduce the information, sound or images transmitted in a tangible medium of expression;

"Guidelines" means the Guidelines adopted by the General Synod under Resolution 1 of this Canon, which Guidelines are at all times subordinate to this Canon;

“the List” means the list of names of candidates prepared by the Preparatory Committee in terms of Section 16 of this Canon;

[“majority” means, where the context so provides in this Canon, either an absolute majority in the case of more than two Candidates, or a simple majority by way of first past the post in the case of two Candidates only;](#)

“Mandate” means the document in terms of Appendix 1 to the Code of Canons;

“Preliminary Meeting” means the Preliminary Meeting of the Electoral Synod being the meeting referred to in Section 10 of this Canon;

“Preparatory Committee” means the body constituted in Section 15 of this Canon;

“Provincial Panel for Episcopal Elections” means the standing body constituted under Section 3 of this Canon;

"Stage" means the First Stage, Second Stage and Third Stage of the electoral process specified in Section 12 of this Canon and "Stages" shall be construed accordingly.

PRELIMINARIES

2. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISPOSAL OF DOCUMENTATION

- (a) All documents and proceedings arising under this Canon shall be subject to a duty of confidentiality such that they shall be treated as strictly confidential by all persons involved in all or any of the proceedings arising under the Canon and who are subject to the Canons of the Church.
- (b) At the conclusion of the Electoral Process all documentation issued to the Electoral Synod and the Preparatory Committee shall be disposed of in such a way as the Convener shall direct.

3. PROVINCIAL PANEL FOR EPISCOPAL ELECTIONS

- (a) There shall be a Provincial Panel for Episcopal Elections.
- (b) The Diocesan Synod of each diocese shall elect from among its own number two persons, one lay and one clerical, to serve on the Provincial Panel for Episcopal Elections.
- (c) The period of office of such persons shall be not more than four years in the first instance, but they may be re-elected for a second term of office.
- (d) The Standing Committee of the Diocese shall have the power to fill any casual vacancies arising in the membership including a clerical member disqualified in terms of Section 16, on the condition that such person appointed will hold office until the next Diocesan Synod.
- (e) If, before the next Diocesan Synod, an Electoral Process under this Canon has commenced, the person shall continue in office until the Diocesan Synod following the completion of the Electoral Process.
- (f) The person shall be entitled to stand thereafter for such office for the full period of four years.
- (g) Any member of the Panel who has been appointed to a Preparatory Committee shall continue to serve on that Committee notwithstanding an expiry of period of office.

4. OVERSIGHT DURING VACANCY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DIOCESE

- (a) During the vacancy of the see, until the newly elected Bishop is installed, a Bishop nominated by the College of Bishops shall act as Bishop of the Diocese, with full powers.
- (b) As soon as the intention of the Bishop to resign has been intimated in terms of Canon 7, or after the death of the Bishop, or the removal of the Bishop due to incapacity in terms of Canon 64, or the removal of the Bishop in terms of Canon 54, the Standing Committee of the Diocese shall complete and circulate a Description of

the Diocese, together with such future plans and intentions for the work of the Diocese as seem relevant to said Standing Committee.

- (c) It shall also promote training on the Electoral Process and discernment for the calling of a Bishop.
- (d) The Description of the Diocese shall be circulated to all members of the Electoral Synod, the College of Bishops, the Preparatory Committee and the Candidates.

5. ISSUE OF THE MANDATE

- (a) Within twenty-one days of a Diocese becoming vacant, the Primus shall issue the Mandate to the Dean of that Diocese with a copy to each of the Chancellor of the Diocese, the Clerk to the Episcopal Synod and the Convener of the Standing Committee of the General Synod.
- (b) The date of issuing the Mandate may be extended by the College of Bishops [for a period not normally exceeding six months](#).
- (c) In the event of there being a vacancy in the office of Dean, the Mandate shall be issued to the Synod Clerk of that Diocese.
- (d) The issue of the Mandate shall inaugurate the Electoral Process.

THE ELECTORAL SYNOD

6. CONVENERSHIP OF ELECTORAL SYNOD

- (a) The meetings of the Electoral Synod shall be convened by the Primus.
- (b) The Convener shall have no vote in the deliberations of the Electoral Synod.
- (c) The organisation of the meetings of the Electoral Synod shall be the responsibility of the Convener with the assistance of the Standing Committee of the Diocese.
- (d) Notwithstanding Section 5 of Canon 3, if the Primus is unable or unwilling to act for any part of the procedures set out in this Canon, another Diocesan Bishop at the request of the Primus or on the instruction of the College of Bishops shall act in place of the Primus.
- (e) If a Bishop is appointed to replace the Primus in the conduct of the Electoral Process, that Bishop shall act in place of the Primus in all subsequent matters concerning that Electoral Process.
- (f) Should the Bishop so appointed become unable or unwilling to act, the College of Bishops shall appoint another of their members to act.

7. ASSESSOR

- (a) The Convener of the Electoral Synod shall appoint the Chancellor of the Diocese, whom failing the Registrar of the Diocese or a legally qualified person to act as Assessor to the Electoral Synod and Assessor to the Preparatory Committee.
- (b) The Assessor shall attend all meetings of Electoral Synod and the Preparatory Committee.
- (c) If the Assessor is not able to attend any meeting, the Convener shall be entitled to

excuse such non-attendance, and at the Convener's sole discretion appoint a legally qualified person to act as Assessor.

8. MEMBERSHIP OF THE ELECTORAL SYNOD

- (a) The membership of the Electoral Synod shall comprise the members, as defined in Sections 3 and 4 of Canon 50, of the Diocesan Synod who as at the date of the Mandate are qualified to vote at that Synod.
- (b) Any cleric who has allowed their name to appear on the List at any Stage may not participate in the Electoral Process at that Stage.
- (c) Such cleric shall not be excluded from participation at a Stage when their name does not appear on the List.
- (d) Any Lay Representative who ceases to be a communicant member of the congregation by which that Lay Representative was elected shall be ineligible to serve, in which case that person's place at the Electoral Synod shall be taken by the Alternate Lay Representative of that congregation in office at the date of the Mandate.
- (e) In the event of any Lay Representative being unable to attend any Meeting of the Electoral Synod, the Alternate Lay Representative may attend any such Meetings as a voting member of the Electoral Synod and shall continue as a voting member of the Electoral Synod in place of the Lay Representative until the election has taken place.
- (f) Written confirmation of such substitution should if possible be made by the Lay Representative or the Vestry Secretary of the congregation to the Convener of the Electoral Synod within 10 days of the date of the next Meeting, to ensure inclusion in the roll of Electors for such meeting.
- (g) In unforeseen circumstances where any Lay Representative or the Alternate Lay Representative has suddenly become indisposed, the Convener has a discretion to allow the Lay Representative or the Alternate Lay Representative to attend later meetings of the Electoral Synod.
- (h) The roll of Electors shall be amended accordingly.

9. DIVISION INTO HOUSES

- (a) It shall be competent for the Electoral Meeting held under this Canon to divide into a house of Clergy and a house of Laity for discussion, should that be the wish of a majority of the members of either house present and voting, for such time as the Convener shall decide.
- (b) If before the two houses reassemble together, a majority of either house considers it advisable that the trend of their discussions should be transmitted to the other, the Convener shall arrange for this.
- (c) During such separate meetings, each house shall elect one of their number to take the chair for that meeting.

10. PRELIMINARY MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL SYNOD

- (a) The Convener shall summon a Preliminary Meeting of the Electoral Synod.
- (b) The Summons can be by Electronic Means or by letter.
- (c) The Preliminary Meeting shall take place within 21 days of the issuing of the Summons.
- (d) Recipients of the Summons should also receive a copy of the Mandate, the Guidelines and the Commentary with a copy of this Canon attached.
- (e) All members of the College of Bishops shall normally attend the Preliminary Meeting.
- (f) They may contribute to the discussion but shall have no vote in the deliberations.
- (g) All members of the Preparatory Committee already appointed shall normally attend the Preliminary Meeting.
- (h) They may contribute to the discussion but shall have no vote in the deliberations unless they are members of the Electoral Synod in their own right.

11. PROCEDURES OF THE PRELIMINARY MEETING

- (a) The Preliminary Meeting shall start with a celebration of the Eucharist at which the Convener of the Electoral Synod shall preside, following which the Convener shall constitute the Preliminary Meeting.
- (b) Following the reading of the Mandate, the roll of clerical and lay members of the Electoral Synod shall be called.
- (c) Immediately thereafter, objection may be stated to the inclusion of any name on that roll, and any person claiming to be a member may ask to be included on that roll.
- (d) Such objection or claim shall be disposed of forthwith and shall not be competent at a later stage of the proceedings.
- (e) The Convener, acting on the advice of the Assessor, shall decide on any such objection or claim, and the Convener's decision shall be final and not subject to appeal.
- (f) At the Preliminary Meeting the Convener shall explain to the members of the Synod the working of the process under this Canon.
- (g) The Preliminary Meeting may discuss, in whatever manner may be directed by the Convener or chosen by the Meeting, all procedures to be followed in the implementation of this Canon, the Description of the Diocese or the subjects which it might have been expected to cover and all matters relating to the election of a Bishop under this Canon.
- (h) If not already elected at the last Diocesan Synod prior to the issue of the Mandate, the Preliminary Meeting shall, from its own membership, elect two additional clerical members and two additional lay members to join the Preparatory Committee.
- (i) No congregation shall be represented by more than one member on the Preparatory Committee.

12. TIMETABLING BY PRELIMINARY MEETING AND STAGES

- (a) The Preliminary Meeting shall approve a provisional timetable for all possible meetings of the Electoral Synod under a single Mandate including all of the Stages.
- (b) The Electoral Process shall be completed within one year of the date of the ~~Vacancy~~ Mandate being issued even if it is necessary to engage in all three Stages.
- (c) The provisional timetable may be extended at the discretion of the Convener with the support of a majority of the Electoral Synod.
- (d) Consultation may be carried out by Electronic Means or letter and notice of a decision shall be transmitted by the same method to all members of the Electoral Synod.
- (e) The three Stages of the Electoral Process are as follows:-

FIRST STAGE

ELECTION BY ELECTORAL SYNOD AT FIRST ATTEMPT

- The Preparatory Committee sends the List to the Electoral Synod.
- The Meeting of the Electoral Synod with the Candidates.
- The Electoral Meeting at which the Bishop-Elect is elected.

SECOND STAGE (Should there be no List or no successful election)

ELECTION BY ELECTORAL SYNOD AT SECOND ATTEMPT

- Further Meeting of Electoral Synod.
- The Preparatory Committee sends the List to the Electoral Synod.
- The Meeting of the Electoral Synod with the Candidates.
- The Electoral Meeting at which the Bishop-Elect is elected.

THIRD STAGE (Should there be no List or no successful election at the second Stage)

ELECTION BY EPISCOPAL SYNOD

- A meeting between members of the Episcopal Synod and the Diocesan Members of the Preparatory Committee.
- The Meeting of the Episcopal Synod at which the Bishop-Elect is elected.

13. QUORUM

- (a) The quorum for all meetings of the Electoral Synod shall be as defined in the Diocesan Constitution or, should no quorum be specified, it shall be one half of those entitled to vote.
- (b) Should circumstances make it difficult to ensure a quorum, the Convener shall have the discretion to extend the periods within which such meetings may be held.

14. VALIDITY OF PROCEEDINGS

- (a) The validity of the proceedings at any meeting under this Canon shall not be affected by the failure of any of the members of the Electoral Synod, Preparatory Committee or Episcopal Synod to attend.

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR A DIOCESAN EPISCOPAL ELECTION

15. MEMBERSHIP

- (a) The preparation of all documentation for meetings of the Electoral Synod, other than the Preliminary Meeting, shall be the responsibility of a Preparatory Committee.
- (b) The Preparatory Committee shall comprise
 - (i) the Convener of the Electoral Synod who shall act as Convener of the Preparatory Committee,
 - (ii) one other bishop, nominated by the College of Bishops,
 - (iii) five members of the Provincial Panel for Episcopal Elections chosen by the Standing Committee of the General Synod (of whom at least two shall be laity and at least two shall be clerics, including both members from the diocese concerned), and
 - (iv) two further lay and two further clerical members chosen by the last Diocesan Synod prior to the issuing of the Mandate, which failing the Electoral Synod from among its own members at the Preliminary Meeting.

16. WORK OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

- (a) All meetings of the Preparatory Committee shall take place within the Diocese concerned.
- (b) Where it is not possible or permissible to meet in person, or it is easier for members to participate, meetings can be held using Electronic Means.
- (c) The Convener and six members shall constitute a quorum of the Preparatory Committee provided that this includes at least two diocesan members and one provincial member.
- (d) The Preparatory Committee shall prepare a List consisting of not less than three and not more than five names.
- (e) In determining the content of this List, the Preparatory Committee shall consult interested parties, including the Diocesan Standing Committee and the College of Bishops.
- (f) In determining the content of this List, the Preparatory Committee may receive suggestions from whomsoever wishes to make them; may interview prospective Candidates; and may use such other means as it sees fit to employ.
- (g) Any suggestions submitted shall include an indication of the willingness of the person suggested to be considered for candidacy by the Preparatory Committee.
- (h) In addition to the List, the Preparatory Committee shall provide
 - (i) a *curriculum vitae*, prepared by each Candidate,
 - (ii) a statement from each, in the form of responses to a questionnaire prepared by the Preparatory Committee and completed by each Candidate, and
 - (iii) a form of assent to nomination as Candidate (in terms of Appendix No.2) from each Candidate.

- (i) The List shall not be made public and shall be treated as confidential by all those who receive it.
- (j) If a clerical member of the Preparatory Committee declares a willingness to be considered for inclusion on the List, that member shall immediately cease to be a member of the Preparatory Committee.
- (k) If the member concerned is a member of the Provincial Panel for Episcopal Elections but not the member for the Diocese in question, the Standing Committee of the General Synod shall select a replacement from the Provincial Panel for Episcopal Elections.
- (l) If the member concerned is one of the additional clerical members chosen by either the Diocesan Synod or the Electoral Synod, the Standing Committee of the Diocese shall nominate a replacement cleric from among those who were members of the Diocesan Synod at the date of the issue of the Mandate.
- (m) In the event of the clerical member of the Provincial Panel for Episcopal Elections being the Diocesan member thus disqualified, a replacement shall be appointed in terms of Section 3.
- (n) The Preparatory Committee shall endeavour to produce the List within the provisional timetable at both the first and second Stages agreed by the Electoral Synod in terms of Section 12, but if this cannot be done it may seek an extension.
- (o) In the second Stage the List shall contain not less than two and not more than five names.
- (p) If the Preparatory Committee is unable to produce a List at the Second Stage, or if no Candidate is elected at the Second Stage, the third Stage shall commence and the right of Election shall pass to the Episcopal Synod.

17. ASSENT OF THE COLLEGE OF BISHOPS

- (a) Once nominations have been received, but before any interviews take place, the Preparatory Committee shall send details of those nominated to the College of Bishops, who must assent to any names going forward for further consideration.
- (b) The name of any person who is not agreed as acceptable by the College of Bishops may not be included in the List.
- (c) The reasons for such decisions shall be recorded in the minutes of the College of Bishops, which minutes shall be confidential.
- (d) Such members of the Preparatory Committee as are bishops shall be charged by the College of Bishops with informing the Preparatory Committee of the unacceptability of any proposed candidate.
- (e) The appearance of any name on the List shall be regarded as evidence that that name is acceptable to the College of Bishops.

18. PROMISES TO AND STATEMENTS BY CANDIDATES

- (a) No promises, either written or spoken, other than the subscriptions prescribed in Canon 12 shall be required from or given by any person as a condition of proposal as a Candidate.

- (b) No person who has been proposed as Candidate shall make any public statement, spoken or written, relating to that candidacy or the Electoral Process, other than as provided in these Canons.
- (c) Any infringement of this provision by a Candidate shall be notified to the Convener and then considered by the Electoral Synod prior to the Electoral Meeting with Candidates and the Electoral Synod may decide that the candidacy shall be treated as having been withdrawn.

THE MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL SYNOD WITH THE CANDIDATES

19. CONVENING

- (a) The Convener of the Electoral Synod shall summon the Meeting of the Electoral Synod with the Candidates by Electronic Means or letter.
- (b) Recipients of the Summons should also receive confirmation of the date of the Electoral Meeting and receive the List and those other papers prepared by the Preparatory Committee for the use of the Electoral Synod.

20. MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL SYNOD WITH CANDIDATES

- (a) The Electoral Synod's meeting with the Candidates shall start with a celebration of the Eucharist at which the Convener shall preside, following which the Convener shall constitute the meeting.
- (b) The roll of Electors as constituted under Section 11 shall be checked.
- (c) Any amendments to the roll of Electors under Section 8 shall be intimated, and if any objection is raised to the inclusion or omission of a name on the electoral roll, the Convener, on the advice of the Assessor, shall decide on such objection.
- (d) The Convener's decision shall be final and not subject to an appeal.
- (e) The Candidates shall be introduced to the meeting by the Convener, and the meeting will proceed as the Convener may direct.

THE ELECTORAL MEETING

21. CONSTITUTION AT CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

- (a) The Electoral Meeting shall start with a celebration of the Eucharist, at which the Convener shall preside, following which the Convener shall constitute the Electoral Meeting.

22. READING OF MANDATE AND CHECKING OF ROLL OF ELECTORS

- (a) Following the reading of the Mandate, the roll of Electors as constituted under Sections 11 and 20 shall be checked.
- (b) The Convener shall have discretion to admit latecomers to the Electoral Meeting on good cause being shown, although no person will be admitted once these initial proceedings have come to an end.

- (c) The initial proceedings, consisting of the Eucharist, the reading of the Mandate and the checking of the roll of Electors, shall take place in public.
- (d) All subsequent proceedings shall be in private and shall be and shall remain confidential.
- (e) Confidentiality as to the result of the election shall be maintained by all members until the Convener formally intimates that the Bishop-Elect has accepted the appointment.

23. VOTE OF "NONE"

- (a) Abstentions shall not be counted as votes.
- (b) However, any member of the Electoral Synod may vote 'None' as a vote or, in the transferable ballot, as an expressed preference, if that member wishes to express the view that none of the Candidates, or none of the remaining Candidates, should be elected.
- (c) If at any stage in the voting process in terms of Section 25, Section 26 or Section 27 of this Canon, the number of votes of "None" exceeds one half of the total number of votes cast in either house, the Convener shall declare the Electoral Process unsuccessful.

24. ADJOURNMENTS

- (a) On the motion of any member of the Electoral Synod the Electoral Meeting may, before proceeding to any vote, resolve to adjourn to a specified later period of the same day.

25. PROCEDURE FOR INITIAL VOTES

- (a) After checking the roll, the Convener of the Electoral Synod shall place before the Electoral Synod the List and may invite discussion.
- (b) In due course, the Convener shall call upon the Electoral Synod to vote upon the List.
- (c) The vote shall be by ballot by houses, one vote being cast by each member of the Electoral Synod.
- (d) No votes may be cast by proxy.
- (e) At the end of the vote, the result shall be declared by the Convener.
- (f) In the event of a Candidate receiving an ~~an absolute~~ majority of the votes of each house of members of Electoral Synod recorded as present and admitted, in terms of Section 22 of this Canon, and voting, that Candidate shall be declared by the Convener to have been elected.
- (g) In the event of no Candidate receiving an ~~an absolute~~ majority in both houses, the Convener shall call upon the meeting, following any further discussion which the Convener may decide to allow, to vote for a second time upon the List.
- (h) This second vote shall also be by ballot by houses, one vote being cast by each member of Electoral Synod.

- (i) At the end of the second vote, the result shall be declared by the Convener in the same manner as for the first vote.
- (j) In the event of the second vote being inconclusive, where there are more than two Candidates, the Convener shall move to the voting procedure specified in Section 26 of this Canon.
- (k) Where there are only two Candidates, the Convener shall move to the voting procedure specified in Section 27 of this Canon.

26. PROCEDURE FOR A TRANSFERABLE VOTE WHERE THERE ARE MORE THAN TWO CANDIDATES

- (a) Where there are more than two Candidates, in the event of no Candidate receiving a majority of the votes of each house in any of the previous votes, the Convener of the Electoral Synod shall call upon the Electoral Synod to proceed without further discussion to vote by placing the Candidates in order of preference.
- (b) An option for 'None' shall be included on the ballot paper and may be listed as a preference ~~A vote of 'None' is competent and may be included as a preference.~~
- (c) This vote shall take place without division into houses and will reflect the votes of the whole Electoral Synod.
- (d) The count of first preference votes will be tallied.
- (e) The Candidate who receives the lowest number of first preference votes shall be eliminated.
- (f) The ballot papers which listed the eliminated Candidate as the first preference shall then be recounted and the second preference votes shall be redistributed amongst the remaining Candidates.
- (g) This process will continue until two Candidates remain.
- (h) If at any point where a second preference vote on a ballot paper is being counted and that vote is in favour of a Candidate who has been eliminated, the third preference vote shall be counted instead and so on and so forth until a preference is reached in respect of a Candidate who has not been eliminated. That preference vote shall be counted as though it were the second preference ~~For these purposes 'None' may validly be considered a Candidate.~~
- (i) When only two Candidates remain, a final round of voting will take place ~~using a first past the post system.~~
- (j) The vote shall be by ballot by houses, one vote being cast by each member of the Electoral Synod.
- (k) No votes may be cast by proxy.

~~(l) At the end of the vote, the result shall be declared by the Convener.~~

~~(a) In the event of a Candidate receiving a majority of the votes of each house of members of Electoral Synod recorded as present and admitted, in terms of Section 22 of this Canon, and voting, that Candidate shall be declared by the Convener to have been elected. Where there are more than two Candidates and no Candidate has received an absolute majority of votes in both houses, the Convener of the Electoral Synod shall call upon the Electoral Synod to proceed without further discussion to a transferable vote in which the members of Electoral Synod shall vote by placing each of the Candidates in order of preference.~~

~~(m)~~

~~(b) An option for 'None' shall be included on the ballot paper and may be listed as a preference.~~

~~(c) The vote shall be by ballot in each of the houses, with a transferrable vote being cast by each member of the Electoral Synod.~~

~~(d)~~

~~(e) The count of first preference votes against each Candidate will be tallied.~~

~~(f) The Candidate who receives the lowest number of first preference votes in each house shall be eliminated.~~

~~(g) The ballot papers which listed the eliminated Candidate as the first preference shall then be recounted and the second preference votes on those ballot papers shall be counted and added to the tally of the remaining Candidates. This process will continue until two Candidates remain.~~

~~(h) If at any point where a second preference vote on a ballot paper is being counted and that vote is in favour of a Candidate who has been eliminated, the third preference vote shall be counted instead and so and so forth until a preference is reached in respect of a Candidate who has not been eliminated. That preference vote shall be counted as though it were the second preference.~~

~~(i) At any stage in the process, if a Candidate receives an absolute majority of the votes of each house of members of Electoral Synod recorded as present and admitted, in terms of Section 22 of this Canon, and voting, that Candidate shall be declared by the Convener to have been elected.~~

~~(j) When only two Candidates remain, a final round of voting under this Section shall take place using a first past the post system.~~

~~(k) The vote shall be by ballot by houses, one vote being cast by each member of the Electoral Synod.~~

~~(l) No votes may be cast by proxy.~~

~~(m) At the end of the vote, the result shall be declared by the Convener.~~

~~(n) In the event of a Candidate receiving an absolute majority of the votes of each house of members of Electoral Synod recorded as present and admitted, in terms of Section 22 of this Canon, and voting, that Candidate shall be declared by the Convener to have been elected.~~

~~(o)~~

27. FINAL VOTE

(a) If voting has taken place under Section 25 and, where appropriate, under Section 26, and neither Candidate has obtained an absolute majority in both houses in the first past the post vote, the Convener may call upon the Electoral Synod to adjourn.

- (b) This adjournment will last for a period of not less than thirty and not more than ninety minutes.
- (c) Following the adjournment, the Convener shall ask the Electoral Synod to vote again on the two Candidates.
- (d) This final vote shall be by ballot by houses, one vote being cast by each member of the Electoral Synod.
- (e) No votes may be cast by proxy.
- (f) In the event of a Candidate receiving an ~~absolute~~ majority of the votes of each house of members of Electoral Synod, recorded as present and admitted, in terms of Section 22 of this Canon and voting, that Candidate shall be declared by the Convener to have been elected.
- (g) If at the end of this process no Candidate has an ~~absolute~~ majority in both houses the Convener shall declare the Electoral Process unsuccessful.

28. DECLARATION OF ELECTION BY ELECTORAL SYNOD

- (a) When a Candidate has been elected after Stage 1 or Stage 2, a Declaration in triplicate stating the result in terms of Appendix No.3A shall be signed by the Convener of the Electoral Synod in the presence of the Electoral Synod.
- (b) One copy of the Declaration shall be transmitted to the Registrar of the Episcopal Synod, one to the Bishop Elect, and one to the Diocesan Registrar for preservation and registration.

29. EPISCOPAL SYNOD RIGHT OF ELECTION

- (a) Where the Convener of the Electoral Synod has declared the Electoral Process to be unsuccessful at Stage 2, the right of election shall pass to the Episcopal Synod.
- (b) Prior to the Election Meeting of the Episcopal Synod, the members of the Episcopal Synod shall meet with the Diocesan Members of the Preparatory Committee. 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.

30. DECLARATION OF ELECTION BY EPISCOPAL SYNOD

- (a) When a Candidate has been elected by the Episcopal Synod, a Declaration in triplicate stating the result in terms of Appendix No.3B shall be signed by the Convener of the Episcopal Synod.
- (b) One copy of the Declaration shall be transmitted to the Registrar of the Episcopal Synod, one to the Bishop Elect, and one to the Diocesan Registrar for preservation and registration.

31. ACCEPTANCE BY BISHOP-ELECT

- (a) The Bishop-Elect shall give written acceptance of election to the Primus within seven days of the date of the election.
- (b) The period of seven days may be extended at the discretion of the College of Bishops.
- (c) A verbal acceptance on the day of the Electoral Meeting or of the meeting of the Episcopal Synod is sufficient for the Convener of the Electoral Synod or the Primus to make a public announcement of the election result.
- (d) If the Bishop-Elect declines to accept election, or does not accept election within the seven day period or any other period extended at the discretion of the College of Bishops, the election shall proceed to the next Stage.
- (e) If all Stages have been exhausted, a Mandate shall be issued for a fresh Election.

EPISCOPAL ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION

32. ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF THE BISHOP-ELECT

- (a) The College of Bishops shall make provision for the ordination to the episcopate of the person elected, unless already a Bishop, and installation into the vacant see.
- (b) The ordination, if required, and the installation shall take place at the latest within one hundred days after the date of acceptance of election, unless the College of Bishops deem it necessary to postpone it beyond that period.

33. JURISDICTION

- (a) The newly elected Bishop shall take jurisdiction within the Diocese from the time of the installation.

OBJECTIONS TO PROCEEDINGS OF ELECTORAL SYNOD

34. APPEALS

- (a) The Convener of the Electoral Synod shall decide all questions of order or of any issues arising in the course of the proceedings.
- (b) There shall be no appeal in relation to decisions about the inclusion or omission of a name on the Electoral Roll.

- (c) An appeal against any other decision of the Electoral Synod or the conduct of proceedings in the Electoral Synod shall be competent to the Episcopal Synod.
- (d) Any such objections, with reasons, must have been made at the relevant meeting of the Electoral Synod and be supported by not less than one-third of the Electoral Synod members who were present at said meeting.
- (e) A written statement of the objections, with the names of the objectors, must be lodged with the Registrar of the Episcopal Synod within four days of the meeting to which they refer.
- (f) The decision of the Episcopal Synod shall be final.

35. POWERS OF EPISCOPAL SYNOD

- (a) The Episcopal Synod shall hear any appeal under this Canon
- (b) Following such hearing, the Episcopal Synod shall declare: **EITHER**
A: that the objection does not affect the validity of the result of the election and that the election stands; **OR**
B: that the objection has affected the validity of the result and that the election is void.
- (c) If the election is set aside, the Primus shall forthwith issue a Mandate for a fresh election.
- (d) No Bishop who has acted as the Convener in the Electoral Process shall be a member of the Episcopal Synod in any appeal.

RESOLUTIONS UNDER CANON FOUR

Resolution 1

Guidelines

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.

Resolution 2

Commentary

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.

CANON FOR SECOND READING

OPINIONS FROM DIOCESES SEPTEMBER 2025

CANON FOUR

Of the Calling and Election of Bishops to Vacant Sees

Aberdeen and Orkney:

The only comment made was in relation to Canon 4, Section 12, with the concern raised that the College of Bishops do not have a time limit in place by which time they will have to issue the mandate so could overly delay the process.

We voted as a whole Synod, the voting results are below:

Canon 4, Section 12: For 21; Against 2; Abstentions 0

Canon 4, Section 26: For 23; Against 0; Abstentions 0

Argyll and The Isles:

The amendments were unanimously approved by all members present.

Brechin:

Motion 1 was: “That this Synod approve the revised text of Section 12(b) of Canon 4 so that the 12-month time limit starts from the date upon which the mandate is issued rather than when the vacancy arises, this revision as approved by General Synod in June 2025.”

Voting was as follows:

Bishop: in favour; House of Clergy: 6 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention; House of Laity: 13 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention

During the discussion on this motion, the issue of extending the date of issuing the mandate, as specified in Section 5(b) of Canon 4 arose. The mind of the Brechin Diocesan Synod during the meeting was that it would be advisable to limit such an extension to, for instance, three to six months. The following amendment was proposed:

“That section 5(b) of the Canon should read “The date of issuing the Mandate may be extended by the College of Bishops for a period not normally exceeding six months.””

Motion 2 was: “That this Synod approve the revised text of Section 26 of Canon 4 requiring the transferable voting procedure to take place as a whole Electoral Synod, as opposed to ‘in houses’, this revision as approved by General Synod in June 2025.”

Voting was as follows: Bishop: in favour; House of Clergy: 8 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions; House of Laity: 14 in favour, 0 against, no abstentions

There was no discussion on motion 2.

Edinburgh:

Diocesan Synod voted as follows:

- 83 votes
- 54.2% Clergy
- 33.7% Lay Reps
- 12.1% Bishop & Diocesan Officers/GS Reps
- 100% - "I AGREE with the proposed changes to Canon 4" (no abstentions)

Comments Submitted:

1. If the situation occurs where the vote in one house returns a tie for the second candidate, would you not simply omit the 4th candidate and vote again with the 3 that are left to find the 2nd candidate? Or vote directly in one house on who should be the second candidate?
2. From a quick search of the PDF, it seems like Philip Sawyer's suggestion about "the issuing of the Mandate" would make the phrasing more consistent with the rest of the canon.
3. In Dr White's notes to the proposed changes in Canon 4 the Diocese of Argyll and The Isles is mis-spelled as the Diocese of Argyll and **the** Isles.
4. I suggest 5b have the following text added, "The date will normally be within three months of the Diocese becoming vacant."
5. Section 12 (b): I suggest either "the issuing of the mandate" OR "the mandate's being issued".
6. I don't like the upper case capital letters of Mandate, Stages and Electronic Means. These should perhaps be changed in section 1 which uses " " and capitalisation!
7. Suggest that General Synod considers whether there needs to be a brief mechanism dealing with an equality of votes at any stage of the process.
8. Concerning the question this evening about what to do if two candidates tie for least number of votes, this excerpt may be helpful from the document at the link below (see p. 20):
<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/gs-2167-stv-rules-feb-2020-final.pdf>

Selection of candidate for exclusion 20.—(1) If, when a candidate is to be excluded, two or more candidates are each credited with the same lowest value, the presiding officer must exclude the candidate (of those two or more) who was credited with the lowest value at the earliest stage at which they were credited with unequal values. (2) If the relevant candidates were each credited with the same value at all stages of the count, the presiding officer must determine by lot which of those candidates to exclude.

Glasgow and Galloway:

Section 12

- Passed *nem con* by the House of Clergy

- Passed *nem con* by the House of Laity

Section 26

- Passed by the House of Clergy: 19 in favour, 9 against
- Passed by the House of Laity: 35 in favour, 3 against

There was a thorough discussion about the changes to Section 26, and the Diocese asks for consideration of the following amendment:

That the original wording of Section 26, Subsection (b) be reinstated:

"An option for 'None' shall be included on the ballot paper and may be listed as a preference."

It was felt by the Diocesan Synod that the original wording provides a stronger safeguard if a House feels that they are left with no candidates for whom they can vote.

- We request clarification on what will happen if the two candidates remaining after the single transferable vote included "None", and on whether, if "None" achieves a majority of votes in both Houses, the election is declared to have failed at this stage. We suggest that this is made clear in the text of the Canon.
- For clarity on how votes will be counted at the single transferable vote stage when a preferred candidate has already been eliminated, we suggest:

That the original Section 26, Subsection (j) be reinstated:

"If at any point where a second preference vote on a ballot paper is being counted and that vote is in favour of a Candidate who has been eliminated, the third preference vote shall be counted instead and so and so forth until a preference is reached in respect of a Candidate who has not been eliminated. That preference vote shall be counted as though it were the second preference."

It was noted that in some dioceses there is an uneven distribution of votes between the House of Clergy and the House of Laity, and the Synod had a discussion about the potential implications of conducting Section 26 in one House in this case. There were concerns expressed that this could result in candidates being "forced" on the minority group by the majority group. It was felt that this could be avoided by maintaining "None" as a strongly valid Candidate in subsequent voting rounds, but we note these concerns and ask the Province to consider whether balancing the distribution of votes in such circumstances might be required.

Moray, Ross and Caithness:

The amended Canon 4 could be usefully clarified in relation to the difference between "absolute" and "first past the post/simple majorities". There is a degree of confusion here when there are only two candidates, as the terminology "absolute majority" is not really relevant when there are only two candidates (whether to start with or through the section 26 transferable vote process). A reference to "simple" would be better when there are only two candidates.

This may be seen as being a little pedantic, in that the terminology “absolute majority” in the context of there being only two candidates arguably is in effect a simple majority, but it would be best to clarify the point if possible in the amended Canon as follows:

That an addition to Section 1 Definitions should read:

“majority” means, where the context so provides in this Canon, either an absolute majority in the case of more than two Candidates, or a simple majority by way of first past the post in the case of two Candidates only;

That Section 25 (f) should read:

In the event of a Candidate receiving an ~~n-absolute~~ majority of the votes of each house of members of Electoral Synod recorded as present and admitted, in terms of Section 22 of this Canon, and voting, that Candidate shall be declared by the Convener to have been elected.

That Section 25 (g) should read:

In the event of no Candidate receiving an ~~n-absolute~~ majority in both houses, the Convener shall call upon the meeting, following any further discussion which the Convener may decide to allow, to vote for a second time upon the List.

That Section 26 (i) should read:

When only two Candidates remain, a final round of voting will take place ~~using a first past the post system.~~

That Section 27 (a) should read:

If voting has taken place under Section 25 and, where appropriate, under Section 26, and neither Candidate has obtained an ~~n-absolute~~ majority in both houses ~~in the first past the post vote~~, the Convener may call upon the Electoral Synod to adjourn.

That Section 27 (f) should read that:

In the event of a Candidate receiving an ~~n-absolute~~ majority of the votes of each house of members of Electoral Synod, recorded as present and admitted, in terms of Section 22 of this Canon and voting, that Candidate shall be declared by the Convener to have been elected.

That Section 27 (g) should read that:

If at the end of this process no Candidate has an ~~n-absolute~~ majority in both houses the Convener shall declare the Electoral Process unsuccessful.

St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane:

There were no comments. Synod unanimously voted to support the amendments as follows: Bishops House: 1 for; Clergy House: 18 for; Lay House: 22 for.