

C7 DIOCESAN SYNOD

Diocesan Synods were constituted for all dioceses in 1970, as part of the new system of Church government created by the Synodical Government Measure 1969. A Diocesan Synod has a threefold general function:

- a) to consider matters concerning the Church of England and to make provision for such matters in relation to its diocese, and to consider and express its opinion on any other matters of religious or public interest;
- b) to advise the Bishop on any matters on which he may consult the Synod;
- c) to consider and express its opinion on any matters referred to it by the General Synod, and in particular to approve or disapprove provisions referred to it relating to forms of worship or union with another Christian body. (Subject to the proviso that it shall not issue any statement purporting to be the doctrine of the Church of England.)

The provisions relating to Diocesan Synods are set out in CRR 24 -34.

A Diocesan Synod comprises three Houses: the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy and the House of Laity. In this diocese the Synod operates under a constitution and Standing Orders which were last amended in 2003. There are four categories of membership:

- a) Ex officio: Diocesan and Suffragan Bishops, Dean, Archdeacons, General Synod members, Diocesan Chancellor, Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance, and Diocesan Advisory Committee.
- b) Co-opted by the Synod itself
- c) Bishop's nominees
- d) Elected by the 19 deaneries. This is by far the largest category, comprising about 80% or more of the Synod's membership.

The full membership is to be found in the current *Diocesan Directory*. The Diocesan Secretary acts as Secretary to the Synod, and the Diocesan Registrar as its Registrar.

Elected members hold office for a three year period, beginning 1 September following their election. Co-opted and nominated members also retire at the end of the three year cycle. The cycles are 2003 – 2006, 2006 – 2009 and so on. Early in the year of election to a new Synod the Diocesan Office contacts the Deanery Officers with advice regarding the election procedures, for which the Deanery Synod membership constitute the electorate. Further details are to be found in the Church Representation Rules, at CRR 31-32.

The Diocesan Bishop is President of the Synod and the Houses of Clergy and Laity each elect a Chair, who is also vice-president of the Synod. The Bishop's Council constitutes the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod.

The Diocesan Synod normally meets three times a year.