

## After General Synod November 2014: reporting back

The voting results are published in the 'Business Done' document on the Church of England website.

I attach it.

### Archbishop of Canterbury's Presidential Address

Archbishop Justin said that in the Anglican Communion we should strive for "visible unity in Christ despite functional diversity". The full text of his speech is on his website:

<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5443/archbishop-justins-presidential-address-to-the-general-synod-video>

### Anglican-Methodist Covenant (GS 1971)

There was an encouraging debate - no-one spoke against and the motion to endorse the recommendations in the Report (see below) was passed on a show of hands.

### Women Bishops (GS 1926D, GS Misc 1090, GS Misc 1087)

The Synod voted by a show of hands "That the Canon entitled 'Amending Canon No.33 be made, promulgated and executed." This was the final legal procedure to permit the ordination of women as bishops.

On 23 November, the Dean of Guildford and I were interviewed on BBC Radio Surrey and Sussex regarding our reaction to the vote and our assessment for Church unity going forward.

I attach a transcript of the interview.

On 17 December the appointment of the first woman bishop was announced - the Revd Libby Lane will become Bishop of Stockport, Chester Diocese, on 26 January 2015.

### Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy (GS 1970).

This was discussing an updated draft of the current Guidelines. Synod members were invited to subsequently email in with further suggestions for amendment. I have emailed to suggest that in respect of paragraph 12.8 a sample or model policy be made available.

### Draft Diocesan Stipend Funds (Amendment) Measure (GS 1969 and GS 1969X)

This was passed and now goes to the next stage which is a Revision Committee.

### Draft Naming of Dioceses Measure (GS 1935A)

I am a member of the Steering Committee for this legislation. I gave a speech raising concerns about the legislation as drafted.

I attach the text of my speech.

The subsequent vote, to 'take note' of the report was 105 for, 94 against, 10 abstained (I abstained). The debate on the draft legislation will continue at the February Synod.

### Fringe meetings / other information received

- Safe Haven: I attended the launch by Christian Concern of their initiative *Safe haven*. Their website <http://www.safe-haven.org.uk/> states "Safe Haven gives refuge to those who live under threat of violence for freely choosing to leave Islam and follow Jesus."

- St George's College Jerusalem: is an adult education centre located in the grounds of the Anglican Cathedra close to the Old City of Jerusalem. It offers study pilgrimages throughout the year, and includes en suite accommodation, a large library, lecture room, chapel and garden. More information is on their website: <http://sgcjerusalem.org/>
- The Synod debated the Spare Room Subsidy (GS 1965A & B), during which the mover of the motion, Mr Ian Fletcher made reference to the organisation "Faith in Affordable Housing" <http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/fiah.html> which has guidance on using church land and property for affordable housing.

## Before General Synod November 2014: inviting your views

All the documents for the 17-18 November 2014 General Synod are on the Church of England website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/general-synod/agendas-and-papers/november-2014-group-of-sessions.aspx> There are around a dozen matters to be debated, the following are some of the more substantial.

### Anglican-Methodist Covenant (GS 1971)

In 2003 the Anglican Church and Methodist Church jointly signed a covenant (Annex 1 of GS 1971), which included

*We commit ourselves, as a priority, to work to overcome the remaining obstacles to the organic unity of our two churches, on the way to the full visible unity of Christ's Church.*

Eleven years on and we haven't made a huge amount of progress. Problems have included that the Methodist Church didn't like that Church of England didn't have women bishops; whilst the Church of England didn't like that the Methodist Church didn't have bishops at all! Also, the Methodist Church don't like that we don't really have a proper order of deacons (our deacons tend to be those training for the priesthood, rather than deacons being a permanent and distinctive order of ministry). However, the recent approval of women bishops has removed one of the barriers and given some fresh energy to the process. This Report makes three recommendations (pages 20-22), the most significant of which is the first:

*We recommend that the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England and the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church work together to bring forward proposals for*

- i. the Methodist Church to consider afresh expressing the Conference's ministry of oversight in a personal form of connexional, episcopal ministry and the Church of England to recognise that ministry in the Methodist Church as a sign of continuity in faith, worship and mission in a church that is in the apostolic succession.
- ii. the Church of England and the Methodist Church to address the question of reconciling, with integrity, the existing presbyteral and diaconal ministries of our two churches, which would lead to the interchangeability of ministries.

In July the Methodist Conference approved the recommendations. The General Synod is being asked to do the same. However, we shouldn't get too excited and start thinking that unity with the Methodists is just around the corner, page 6 states,

*the resolution is intended to set work in hand to bring forward proposals, not at this stage to make decisions about the reconciliation and interchangeability of presbyteral ministries.*

### Women Bishops (GS 1926D, GS Misc 1090)

On 17 November the Synod will be asked to vote “That the Canon entitled ‘Amending Canon No.33’ be made, promulgated and executed.” This will be the final rubber stamp on the legal process permitting women to be ordained as bishops. The vote is a formality.

It has also been announced that Sir Philip Mawer will be the Independent Reviewer, whose job it is to “consider grievances from parochial church councils where they consider that a bishop has not acted consistently with the House of Bishops’ Declaration.” I worked under Sir Philip from 1995-2002 during his time as Secretary General of the General Synod. I know him as a man of integrity who will be scrupulously fair.

### Draft Diocesan Stipend Funds (Amendment) Measure (GS 1969 and GS 1969X)

This would allow the capital account of a diocesan stipends fund to be invested on a “total return” basis. I am told by those with expertise in this area that this should help diocesan funds to be invested for the best overall return, since investment decisions will not be affected by having to try to create a certain percentage annual income flow.

### Canon law in relation to the funerals of those who have taken their own life (GS 1972A and GS 1972B)

This is a private members motion from the Revd Canon Mike Parsons. His paper explains:

1. When writing my short Grove Booklet, *Suicide and the Church: A Pastoral Theology*, I was disturbed to discover that in most circumstances to use the Church of England burial service for the burial of suicides is in contravention of canon law.
2. This astonishing fact is largely unknown to most clergy (and bishops); completely ignored in almost all cases and may lie behind a widespread public perception that suicide is the unforgivable sin and hence the church will disapprove.

The motion calls for Canon B 38 to be amended so as to bring canon law in line with current pastoral practice. This motion is down as contingency business, if we don’t get to it in November, I would expect it to be voted on at the February meeting.

**GENERAL SYNOD**  
**NOVEMBER 2014 GROUP OF SESSIONS**  
**BUSINESS DONE AT 7.15 P.M.**  
**ON MONDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2014**

**WORSHIP**

Dr Philip Giddings led the Synod in an act of worship.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

1 The following introductions were made:

New members

The Rt Revd Robert Innes, the Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe (who had replaced the Rt Revd Geoffrey Rowell)

The Rt Revd Richard Frith, the Bishop of Hereford (who had replaced the Rt Revd Anthony Priddis)

The Rt Revd Paul Bayes, the Bishop of Liverpool (who had replaced the Rt Revd James Jones)

The Ven. Sarah Bullock, the Archdeacon of York (who had replaced the Revd Jeremy Fletcher)

Mr Paul Tapp (Exeter) (who had replaced Mrs Judith Ayers)

Mr Martin Sewell (Rochester) (who had replaced Mr Jim Cheeseman)

Air Vice-Marshal Malcolm Brecht (Armed Forces Synod) (who had replaced Colonel Peter McAllister)

The Ven. Michael Kavanagh, Chaplain-General of Prisons (*ex officio*) (who had replaced the Ven. William Noblett).

The Synod also thanked the following outgoing Church of England Youth Council Representatives:

Mr Samuel Magorrian

Miss Charlotte Cook

Miss Heather Pritchard.

**PROGRESS OF MEASURES AND STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS**

2 The ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY reported that:

the Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 had been laid before Parliament and would come into force on 30 November 2014;

the Ecclesiastical Judges, Legal Officers and Others (Fees) Order 2014 had been laid before Parliament and would come into force on 1 January 2015;

the Payments to the Churches Conservation Trust Order 2014 had been laid before Parliament and would come into force on 1 April 2015;

the Church Representation Rules (Amendment) Resolution 2014 had been laid before Parliament. Paragraphs 16 to 20 of the Resolution would come into force on 1 January 2015. Paragraphs 1 to 15 would come into force on the same date as the coming into force of Amending Canon No. 32;

all the remaining provisions of the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 2014 which were not yet in force would come into force on 1 January 2015;

the Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure 2014 had been laid before Parliament and received the Royal Assent. Section 1(1) and (so far as not already in force) section 4 of the Measure had come into force on 14 November. It was intended that the remaining provisions of the Measure would be brought into force from the date of the making, promulgating and executing of Amending Canon No. 33.

## **REPORT BY THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE (GS 1967)**

3 The motion

‘That the Synod do take note of this Report.’

was carried.

## **SPECIAL AGENDA I**

## **LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

### **AMENDING CANON No. 33 (GS 1926D)**

#### **(Article 7 and 8 Business)**

#### **Canon for Enactment (Final Approval July 2014)**

500 The motion

‘That the Canon entitled “Amending Canon No. 33” be made, promulgated and executed.’

was carried.

## **PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

4 The ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY gave a Presidential Address.

## **SPECIAL AGENDA I LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

### **DRAFT CARE OF CHURCHES AND ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION (AMENDMENT) MEASURE (GS 1919B)**

#### **Draft Measure for Final Drafting and Final Approval (Revision July 2014)**

#### **Report of the Steering Committee (GS 1919Z)**

501 The motion

‘That the Synod do take note of this Report.’

was carried.

509 The special amendment (Order Paper I) was carried.

510 The special amendment (Order Paper I) was carried.

502 The motion

‘That the Measure entitled “Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction (Amendment) Measure” be finally approved.’

was carried after a division by Houses. The voting was as follows:

	AYES	NOES
Bishops	17	0
Clergy	102	0
Laity	101	0

One abstention was recorded in the House of Clergy.

The Chair reported that the Measure automatically stood committed to the Legislative Committee.

## **SPECIAL AGENDA I LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

### **DRAFT CHURCH OF ENGLAND (ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY) MEASURE (GS 1921B)**

#### **Draft Measure for Final Drafting and Final Approval (Revision July 2014)**

#### **Report of the Steering Committee (GS 1921Z)**

503 The motion

‘That the Synod do take note of this Report.’

was carried.

504 The motion

‘That the Measure entitled “Ecclesiastical Property Measure” be finally approved.’

was carried after a division by Houses. The voting was as follows:

	AYES	NOES
Bishops	20	0

Clergy	75	0
Laity	90	0

One abstention was recorded in the House of Laity.

The Chair reported that the Measure automatically stood committed to the Legislative Committee.

**SPECIAL AGENDA I  
LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

**DRAFT AMENDING CANON No. 35 (GS 1964A)**

**(Article 7 Business)**

**Draft Amending Canon for Revision (First Consideration July 2014)**

*Paragraph 1*

511 The motion

‘That paragraph 1 stand part of the Canon.’

was carried.

The Chair reported that the Canon automatically stood committed to the House of Bishops under Article 7 of the General Synod’s Constitution.

**SPECIAL AGENDA I  
LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

**DRAFT SCHEME AMENDING THE DIOCESE IN EUROPE  
CONSTITUTION 1995 (GS 1968)**

**Draft scheme for approval**

508 The motion

‘That the draft scheme amending the Diocese in Europe Constitution 1995 be approved.’



was carried.

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT OF THE CLERGY (GS 1970)**

5 The motion

‘That the Synod do take note of this Report.’

was carried.

## **WORSHIP**

Canon Anne Foreman led the Synod in an act of worship.

## **QUESTIONS**

6 Questions 1 to 46, as set out in the Questions Notice Paper, were answered.

The ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY dismissed the Synod with the blessing at 7.15 p.m.

**GENERAL SYNOD**  
**NOVEMBER 2014 GROUP OF SESSIONS**  
**BUSINESS DONE AT 1 P.M.**  
**ON TUESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2014**

**VIOLENCE AGAINST RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN IRAQ AND SYRIA**

7 The Bishop of Coventry led a presentation under Standing Order 97.

**SPECIAL AGENDA I**  
**LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

**DRAFT DIOCESAN STIPENDS FUNDS (AMENDMENT) MEASURE**  
**(GS 1969)**

**Draft Measure for First Consideration**

507 The motion

‘That the Measure entitled “Diocesan Stipends Funds (Amendment) Measure” be considered for revision in committee.’

was carried.

The Chair reported that the draft Measure now stood automatically committed to a Revision Committee and that notice of amendments should be submitted to the Clerk to the Synod not later than 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2014.

**SPECIAL AGENDA I**  
**LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

**DRAFT NAMING OF DIOCESES MEASURE (GS 1935A)**

**Draft Measure for Revision (First Consideration February 2014)**

**Report of the Revision Committee (GS 1935Y)**

505 The motion

‘That the Synod do take note of this Report.’

was carried after a division of the Whole Synod. The voting was as follows:

IN FAVOUR	105
AGAINST	94

Ten abstentions were recorded.

The Chair adjourned the sitting at 1 p.m.

## **GENERAL SYNOD**

### **NOVEMBER 2014 GROUP OF SESSIONS**

#### **BUSINESS DONE AT 4.55 P.M.**

**ON TUESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2014**

### **THE ANGLICAN-METHODIST COVENANT: REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

The Revd Kenneth Howcroft, President of the Methodist Conference, sitting in the public gallery, was welcomed by the Synod.

8 Dr Peter Howdle (Methodist Co-Chair, Joint Implementation Commission on the Anglican-Methodist Covenant) led a presentation under Standing Order 97.

9 The motion

‘That this Synod:

- (a) thank the Joint Implementation Commission on the Anglican-Methodist Covenant for its work in its second phase;
- (b) endorse the three recommendations made in its Final Report (appended to GS 1971);
- (c) invite the Appointments Committee to appoint the Church of England co-chair and two Church of England members of the proposed Joint Covenant Advocacy Group; and
- (d) request the Council for Christian Unity and the Faith and Order Commission to work with the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church to undertake the work set out in Recommendation 1 of the Final Report.’

was carried.

### **SPECIAL AGENDA IV**

## **DIOCESAN SYNOD MOTIONS**

### **SPARE ROOM SUBSIDY (GS 1965A and GS 1965B)**

#### 10 The motion

‘That this Synod, noting the rise in the number and seriousness of reported concerns about the impact of the Spare Room Subsidy (the ‘Bedroom Tax’) on the vulnerable and others, call on the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

- (a) to evaluate the findings of research into the effect of removing the Spare Room Subsidy across the country; and
- (b) to promote with Her Majesty’s Government and partners from the social and housing sector ways of ensuring access to suitable local housing for all, especially for those who are vulnerable without increasing levels of debt.’

was moved.

#### 13 The amendment (Order Paper II) was lost.

#### 10 The motion

‘That this Synod, noting the rise in the number and seriousness of reported concerns about the impact of the Spare Room Subsidy (the ‘Bedroom Tax’) on the vulnerable and others, call on the Mission and Public Affairs Council:

- (a) to evaluate the findings of research into the effect of removing the Spare Room Subsidy across the country; and
- (b) to promote with Her Majesty’s Government and partners from the social and housing sector ways of ensuring access to suitable local housing for all, especially for those who are vulnerable without increasing levels of debt.’

was carried after a division of the Whole Synod. The voting was as follows:

IN FAVOUR	249
AGAINST	0

Three abstentions were recorded.

## **FAREWELLS**

- 11 The ARCHBISHOP OF YORK paid tribute to the Rt Revd Martin Wharton (Bishop of Newcastle) who was attending his last meeting of the Synod.

## **PROROGATION**

- 12 The ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY prorogued the Synod at 4.55 p.m.

**Transcript of Emily Jeffery's interview with the Dean of Guildford and Adrian Vincent  
BBC Radio Surrey and BBC Radio Sussex, 23 November 2014**

**Emily Jeffery:** “The Church of England has this last week formally adopted legislation which means its first female bishops could be ordained next year. The first women priests were ordained in 1994, but to date they’ve not been able to take on the Church’s most senior roles. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said the move meant the start of a new way of being the Church. But divisions remain between Anglicans who feel it is consistent with their faith, and traditionalists who disagree. The General Synod voted to back plans for female bishops in July, a prior move to allow women to stand as bishops was defeated in 2012 by six votes cast by lay members of the General Synod, which is the law making body of the Church of England. In a moment we’ll speak to Adrian Vincent who is a lay member of the General Synod representing the Diocese of Guildford. Adrian voted against the motion to allow women bishops, back in 2012, but, in July he did vote for the amended Measure. First of all though let’s speak to the Dean of Guildford Cathedral, the Very Revd Dianna Gwilliams. I wonder can you cast your mind back to when you were first made a priest in the Church of England. Did you think back then that there would ever be women bishops, or are you surprised that it’s taken so long to reach this point?”

**The Very Revd Dianna Gwilliams:** “I think I did think that there would be women bishops because it seems to me that our first calling as Christians is to be baptised, and if we’re baptised then it makes sense that ordination is also open to women as well as men. I think that’s probably what I thought but I’m not sure that I did think about it!”

**Emily Jeffery:** “[...] How are you feeling now that this has finally, finally, been fully approved?”

**The Very Revd Dianna Gwilliams:** “I think I’m feeling relieved that we can now move forward without this – well it’s not really been a distraction of course because it’s about the gospel and about God’s call to all people – but the Church can now move forward in a fuller way in terms of serving the community, and that we will just get on with things in a different way.”

**Emily Jeffery:** “The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, says the move will mean the start of a “new way of being Church”. What actual difference will it make, and how soon do you think that will we see that difference?”

**The Very Revd Dianna Gwilliams:** “I don’t know how soon we’ll see the difference. I don’t think the difference is going to necessarily be seen because the first women are ordained as bishops, which will come I would expect at the top of 2015. Women can be considered now in the pools, drawing up the shortlists of bishops that will be considered in the next few months, and so we will have women bishops next year. In terms of the difference it will make, I think it may well make more of a difference outside the Church than inside the Church in that we will be able to say to the community we serve that the gifts of God are for all people and that we can demonstrate it because the Church is for all people clearly because all areas of the Church are open to everyone.”

**Emily Jeffery:** “Huge amounts of time and effort have gone into making sure that there are measures in place to accommodate those in the Church who feel unable to accept women

bishops. Are you confident that the Church can remain united over this when those first women bishops start being appointed?”

**The Very Revd Dianna Gwilliams:** “I am confident because my confidence is placed in God who has called us all together. Not called us all to agree. And being able to find ways of living with our disagreements is what’s going to continue to speak volumes to the world that we serve. And what’s so important in all these discourses, like in everything else, is trust. And I’m prepared to trust our bishops, I’m prepared to trust God mostly, and I would hope that that trust would begin to be much more palpable in the Church so that we can trust the provisions and the bishops who will be ordained regardless of their gender, or in fact their theological convictions.”

[...] **Emily Jeffrey:** “Let’s now talk to Adrian Vincent who is a lay member, a person in the congregation I suppose you’d call yourself Adrian, who is elected onto the General Synod. Adrian, how do you feel now that the final approval for women bishops has been given?”

**Adrian Vincent:** “Well I sat in the Synod chamber on Monday when the final vote went through, and I was expecting to feel depressed, downhearted etc, because it’s not my theological view that women can be priests and bishops. However, the feeling I felt when the vote went through was just one of relief, because, I’ve only been a member of the General Synod for four years, but those four years have been dominated by the arguments over the draft legislation, and it was just a feeling that that fighting is now over and we can move on. And actually, although the decision in principle is not one that I personally agree with, we have actually got a good package for all in the Church, and it’s based on what’s called “mutual flourishing”. That those of all constituencies within the Church have signed up to the mutual flourishing of the other constituencies. So there is a commitment to traditionalists in the Church, that the Church officially recognises their position and still wants them to flourish when we move forward. “

**Emily Jeffrey:** “That must have been a difficult path to tread then. You said back in July that you were going to vote in favour of this Measure even though as you’ve just been explaining, your theological convictions mean that that was betraying what you believed in, and I think you said betraying those who trusted you. And then Christina Rees who used to be the Chair of the campaigning group WATCH, Women and the Church, said that after you’d done this you’d shown loyalty as an Anglican, and said “he’s making a sacrifice, it’s absolutely stunned me.” Was that the reaction from others on both sides of the debate?”

**Adrian Vincent:** “When I made that speech - the crucial vote in July was to send the legislation to Parliament and that was the main vote - and when I made that speech in July, people on all sides were actually very kind to me in saying they appreciated what I said. And yes I was in a difficult position because traditionalists in the diocese had voted for me, wanting me to represent their views and wanting me to argue against this change. But the majority in the Diocese of Guildford are fully supportive of the ordination of women as bishops and priests, and I had to take account of their views as well. So the tightrope I was walking was that I would vote in favour if there were sufficient provisions for traditionalists in the Church. But I did feel like I was betraying those traditionalists who had voted for me; for me to then go and vote for women bishops, so it was a difficult decision.”

**Emily Jeffrey:** [...] Are you confident then that the Church can remain united over this issue when the first women bishops are appointed in the New Year?



**Adrian Vincent:** “There are two main parts of the traditionalists within the Church. One is the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church, and I think there is enough for all Anglo-Catholics in these provisions. The other side is the Conservative Evangelical, which takes a strong biblical interpretation on male headship. Some of that group say that the provisions are enough for them to stay in the Church of England, and others of that group say they can’t see a way round it where their theological integrity can still be accommodated. So I think we’ll have to wait and see a bit in terms of the Conservative Evangelical part of the Church. But I think we’ve got the best that we can really in terms of keeping the Church together, and it does need, and will need, goodwill and commitment on all sides to work with the new provisions. And I think if there is that goodwill, and my sense is there is that goodwill at the moment, then it can work with us all remaining as united as possible and remaining part of one Church.”

## **Adrian Vincent speech on Draft Naming of Dioceses Measure (GS 1935A)**

Church of England General Synod, 18 November 2014.

Adrian Vincent, Guildford 320. Although I am a member of the Steering Committee for this Measure, I speak today in an entirely personal capacity.

When the Appointments Committee invited me to be on the Steering Committee, this was time I'd ever been invited to be on a steering committee, or revision committee, or anything like that, so I was mad keen to do the best job I could. So I went for a residential stay at Gladstone's Library to do some reading up on the subject. In my researches I found that:

In most cases in the history of the Church in England, the diocesan bishop had a see or cathedra in a particular city, the bishop's title was of that city, and the diocese shared that name.

In some cases the bishop did not have a see in any one location and his title was named after the region, for example Bishop Birinus in the 7<sup>th</sup> century who was a regionary bishop without a definite see.

However, I could only find one example where the title of the diocese was of a region, whereas the title of its bishop was of the cathedral city. That was the case of St Wilfrid, and I quote from J.R.H. Moorman's "A History of the Church in England":

"Wilfrid [...] was appointed bishop of Northumbria. Because he regarded the English bishops as somehow unsound in their beliefs or doubtfully consecrated, he went to Compiègne in France to receive consecration at the hands of the bishop of Paris [...] on his return in 666 [he] found that the king had appointed St Chad in his place, so Wilfrid retired for a time to his monastery at Ripon. On Chad's resignation he was restored as bishop and settled in York"

So, whilst St Wilfred gives the Church of England a precedent for the title of the diocesan bishop being different from the title of the diocese, I don't think we should use this as a model to copy!

The more I have thought about the proposed draft legislation, the more concerns I have about it.

What I have done is look again at the flexibility we already have within the Church of England's current legislation. Take for example "The Dioceses of Bradford, Ripon and Leeds and Wakefield Reorganisation Scheme 2013". Clause 4 of that Scheme, I quote:

"A new diocesan bishopric is founded and a new diocese created, the city of Leeds being the see of the bishop of the new diocese.  
The name of the new diocese is the diocese of Leeds but it may be known as the diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales."

So the Church's current legislation maintains the link of name between the diocesan bishop and his or her diocese (which is important for theological reasons); whilst at the same time stating in legislation that the diocese may also be known after the geographical region (which is important for missiological reasons).

So I don't think we actually need new legislation. We are trying to fix something that is already working. And if we make this change, and break entirely the link between the title of the diocesan bishop and the title of the diocese, we might damage the theological link between the diocesan bishop and their diocese.

Of course if the Synod votes today to proceed with this draft legislation, I will do my best on the Steering Committee to bring to fruition that legislation, but I felt I ought to bring these concerns to the Synod's attention.