

GENERAL SYNOD 2017

Bill No.1

Proposer: Mr Geoffrey Perrin

**Embargoed Against Delivery
Check Against Delivery**

Your Grace, members of Synod,

You will all be familiar with the debates in recent General Synods on pension matters, and the consequent changes that had to be made to Chapter 14 of the Constitution. Fortunately, this year, Bill No.1 is a relatively straightforward matter and the required change to Chapter 14, a minor one.

I say minor because as set out in the Explanatory Memorandum it just affects some 54 deferred members of the Clergy Pensions Fund who have preserved benefits under the CPF related to service in the Republic of Ireland. These are previous members of the CPF who have left service early and, in the main, are no longer involved with the Church of Ireland. As the Bill explains, the Minister specifies each year what the level of revaluation of such deferred pensions should be. Up to last year, all such specified revaluations have been positive – i.e. increases. However, in recent years the Republic of Ireland has experienced a number of periods of negative inflation, and as a result, the Minister has specified that deferred pensions in the Republic of Ireland be decreased in 2015 by 0.3% i.e. -0.3%. The existing wording of Chapter 14 does not facilitate any reduction in the accrued pension accumulation of these 54 deferreds because the word ‘increase’ is used in Chapter 14. So the key change being proposed by the Bill is that the word ‘increase’ in Chapter 14 at present will be replaced by the word ‘revalued’. This change will bring practice in the Republic of Ireland in line with that which applies to deferred pensioners in Northern Ireland but it also, more critically, ensures that our Church law – i.e. Chapter 14 of the Constitution – is consistent with State law in respect of future increases specified by the Minister for Social Protection in relation to deferred members’ accrued pensions.

This Bill comes to you with the recommendation of the Trustees of the Clergy Pensions Fund and is agreed by the Representative Body. The proposed change would take effect from 1st June this year. I am very happy to propose this Bill to General Synod.