

GENERAL SYNOD
OF THE
CHURCH OF IRELAND

2022

BILLS

AND

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDA

INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet contains those Bills which were lodged with the Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod at least six weeks before the day appointed for the opening of the session of the Synod.

A Bill is a proposal for legislation which, if passed, will become a Statute, binding on all members of the Church of Ireland. The procedure is designed to ensure that the proposed legislation is considered carefully, both in principle and in detail, and that there is a day's interval for reflection before final approval is given.

The Bills will be taken into consideration in the order in which they appear in this pamphlet, unless the Synod directs otherwise. On the first stage, the proposer moves "That leave be given to introduce Bill no. .," unless leave has been given in the previous session. This is a formal motion which is normally put to the Synod without debate, but, in certain circumstances, one speech in support of the motion and one in opposition to it may be permitted.

If that motion is passed, the Synod proceeds to the Second Reading, when the principles of the Bill are open to debate. At the conclusion of the debate on this stage, the motion "That the Bill be approved in principle and given a second reading" is put to the Synod. If this motion is passed, indicating that the Synod approved the Bill in principle, the Committee stage follows.

In the case of Special Bills leave to introduce such a Bill may be given only at an ordinary session of the Synod; leave having been given, the Bill shall be deemed to have been read a first time, but it shall not be processed further until the next ordinary session when it will come before the Synod for second reading.

On the Committee stage, the Bill is considered in detail, the clauses being put to the Synod one by one for debate and decision. The clauses are taken first in their order; then, the schedules (if any); and, finally, the Preamble (the introductory matter). Amendments, notice of which was given to the Honorary Secretaries not later than the Friday before the session, will appear on the agenda paper for the first day; no other amendment may be moved on Committee stage except with the leave of the Synod. An amendment is taken on the clause to which it relates, and is disposed of before the clause itself is put to the Synod.

In the case of Special Bills, an amendment can be moved on Committee stage only if notice has been given in the previous session, except for any dealing with omissions or grammatical errors.

When the Committee stage has been concluded, the Bill is reported to the Synod, and a day – usually the third day – is fixed for the remaining stages.

On the third day the Report stage is taken. Any amendments which have been lodged with the Honorary Secretaries before the close of business on the second day will appear on the supplemental agenda paper for the third day. After these amendments have been disposed of – or immediately if there are not any amendments – the Synod proceeds to the Third Reading. At this stage, debate is confined to the provisions of the Bill, and at its conclusion the motion "That the Bill be now read a third time and passed" is put to the Synod.

A simple majority of the House of Representatives is required to pass any and every motion during the passage of a Bill through the Synod, except when

- (a) a vote by orders has been requisitioned by ten members of either order (which may be done on any motion), in which case a simple majority of each order, voting separately, is required.
- (b) a two-thirds majority of each order, voting separately, is required to pass the Second Reading and the Third Reading of a Bill which proposes a modification or alteration in the articles, doctrines, rites, rubrics or formularies of the Church.

For fuller information on Bill procedure reference should be made to Part II of Chapter I of the Constitution and to the Standing Orders. A leaflet on Bill procedure is available on application to the Honorary Secretaries.

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BILL NO. 1

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The purpose of this bill is to provide for the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, the Diocesan Synods of the Church of Ireland, and the General Vestry meetings of the Church of Ireland to have the flexibility to meet electronically, rather than, or as well as, in person, should it be desirable or necessary for them so to do.

MR KEN GIBSON
REV CANON GILLIAN WHARTON

BILL

To amend Chapter I, Chapter II, and Chapter III of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland

WHEREAS it is desirable, both during the current COVID-19 pandemic and generally, that the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, the Diocesan Synods of the Church of Ireland and the General Vestry meetings of the Church of Ireland should have the flexibility to meet electronically rather than, or as well as, in person;

AND WHEREAS for this purpose it is necessary to amend Chapter I, Chapter II and Chapter III of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland;

BE IT ENACTED by the Archbishops and Bishops and by the clergy and laity of the Church of Ireland in General Synod assembled in Belfast in the year 2022 and by the authority of the same, as follows: -

1. In this Statute, 'Chapter I' means Chapter I of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, 'Chapter II' means Chapter II of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland and 'Chapter III' means Chapter III of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland.
2. In Chapter I, section 14 shall be amended by the substitution of the following:
 1. There shall be an ordinary meeting of the General Synod in every year, at such time and place as shall from time to time be prescribed in that behalf by the General Synod.
 2. For the avoidance of doubt, the reference to 'place' in subsection (1) shall include a meeting held by electronic communications technology, provided that such electronically held meeting complies with the requirements and procedures prescribed in subsections (3) to (9).
 3. The General Synod may conduct its meetings wholly or partly by the use of electronic communications technology provided that all attendees have a reasonable opportunity to participate in the meeting in accordance with the provisions of this section.
 4. The Standing Committee may provide for participation in meetings of the General Synod by providing or facilitating for that purpose, the use of electronic communications technology, including a mechanism for casting votes by a member during the meeting.
 5. The mechanism referred to in subsection (4) shall not require the member to be physically present at the meeting.
 6. The use of electronic communications technology pursuant to subsection (4) may be made subject only to such requirements or restrictions put in place by the Standing Committee as are necessary to ensure the identification of attendees and the security of the electronic communications technology.
 7. The Standing Committee shall inform the members of General Synod before the meeting concerned, of any requirements or restrictions which it has put in place pursuant to subsection (6).
 8. If the Standing Committee determines that electronic communications technology is to be

used for all or part of a meeting of the General Synod, it shall ensure as far as practicable that –

- a. in the case of any failure or disruption of such technology, that failure or disruption is remedied as soon as practicable; and
 - b. such technology enables the members of General Synod to hear what is said by the President or other member of the House of Bishops having the Chair, as well as anyone else addressing the meeting; and
 - c. speak and submit questions and comments during the meeting to the President or other member of the House of Bishops having the Chair.
9. Any temporary failure or disruption of electronic communications technology shall not invalidate the meeting or any proceedings relating to the meeting.

3. In Chapter II, the following section shall be inserted after section 21:

21A

1. For the avoidance of doubt, the references to ‘place’ in section 21 shall include a meeting held by electronic communications technology, provided that such electronically held meeting complies with the requirements and procedures prescribed in subsections (2) to (8).
2. The Diocesan Synod may conduct its meetings wholly or partly by the use of electronic communications technology provided that all attendees have a reasonable opportunity to participate in the meeting in accordance with the provisions of this section.
3. The Diocesan Council may provide for participation in meetings of the Diocesan Synod by providing or facilitating for that purpose, the use of electronic communications technology, including a mechanism for casting votes by a member during the meeting.
4. The mechanism referred to in subsection (3) shall not require the member to be physically present at the meeting.
5. The use of electronic communications technology pursuant to subsection (4) may be made subject only to such requirements or restrictions put in place by the Diocesan Council as are necessary to ensure the identification of attendees and the security of the electronic communications technology.
6. The Diocesan Council shall inform the members of the Diocesan Synod before the meeting concerned, of any requirements or restrictions which it has put in place pursuant to subsection (5).
7. If the Diocesan Council determines that electronic communications technology is to be used for all or part of a meeting of the Diocesan Synod, it shall ensure as far as practicable that –
 - a. in the case of any failure or disruption of such technology, that failure or disruption is remedied as soon as practicable; and
 - b. such technology enables the members of Diocesan Synod to hear what is said by the President as well as anyone else addressing the meeting; and
 - c. speak and submit questions and comments during the meeting to the President.
8. Any temporary failure or disruption of electronic communications technology shall not invalidate the meeting or any proceedings relating to the meeting.

4. In Chapter III the following section shall be inserted after section 11:

11A

1. For the avoidance of doubt, the references to ‘place’ in section 4 and section 11 shall include a meeting held by electronic communications technology, provided that such electronically held meeting complies with the requirements and procedures prescribed in subsections (2) to (8).
2. The General Vestry may conduct its meetings wholly or partly by the use of electronic communications technology provided that all attendees have a reasonable opportunity to participate in the meeting in accordance with the provisions of this section.
3. The Select Vestry may provide for participation in meetings of the General Vestry by providing or facilitating for that purpose, the use of electronic communications technology, including a mechanism for casting votes by a member during the meeting.
4. The mechanism referred to in subsection (3) shall not require the member to be physically present at the meeting.
5. The use of electronic communications technology pursuant to subsection (3) may be made subject only to such requirements or restrictions put in place by the Select Vestry as are necessary to ensure the identification of attendees and the security of the electronic communications technology.
6. The Select Vestry shall inform the members of the General Vestry before the meeting concerned, of any requirements or restrictions which it has put in place pursuant to subsection (5).
7. If the Select Vestry determines that electronic communications technology is to be used for all or part of a meeting of the General Vestry, it shall ensure as far as practicable that –
 - a. in the case of any failure or disruption of such technology, that failure or disruption is remedied as soon as practicable; and
 - b. such technology enables the members of the General Vestry to hear what is said by the chairperson as well as anyone else addressing the meeting; and
 - c. speak and submit questions and comments during the meeting to the Chairperson.
8. Any temporary failure or disruption of electronic communications technology shall not invalidate the meeting or any proceedings relating to the meeting.
9. For the purposes of this section the phrase ‘the General Vestry’ shall include a meeting of persons pursuant to section 4.

BILL NO. 2

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

This Bill has a very simple purpose, namely to ensure that those who act as parochial nominators are part of the parish for which they are elected as parochial nominators. At present, in theory, the Constitution allows for a member of Parish X to be a Parochial Nominator of Parish Y. Given the gravitas and importance of the role of a parochial nominator, it would also be appropriate that a parochial nominator is invested in their parish to the extent of at least being a registered vestry member.

VEN BARRY FORDE
MS HAZEL CORRIGAN

BILL

To amend Chapter III and Chapter IV of the Constitution

WHEREAS it is desirable that a Parochial Nominator is invested in their parish to the extent of at least being a registered vestry member of their parish;

AND WHEREAS for this purpose it is necessary to amend Chapter II and Chapter IV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland;

BE IT ENACTED by the Archbishops and Bishops and by the clergy and laity of the Church of Ireland in General Synod assembled in Belfast in the year 2022 and by the authority of the same, as follows: -

1. In this Statute, 'Chapter III' means Chapter III of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland and 'Chapter IV' means Chapter IV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland.

2. In Chapter III, Part 1, section 14 (b) shall be amended to read

14. In the year 2005 and triennially thereafter, there shall be elected from among the registered vestry members:

(b) Parochial nominators and supplementalists in accordance with the provisions of Part II of Chapter IV.

3. In Chapter IV, Part II, section 4 shall be amended to read

4. Every layperson of the age of eighteen years, being a member of the Church of Ireland and a communicant of the said Church and a registered vestry member, shall be a qualified person to be a parochial nominator or a supplemental nominator for the parish, parochial district or union or group of parishes under one incumbent for which they are a registered vestry member.

4. In Chapter IV, Part II, section 8 (2), shall be amended to read

8(2). Every parochial nominator and supplemental nominator shall, within one month from the date of the notification, sign and transmit to the bishop the following declaration:

I, A.B., do solemnly declare that I am a member of the Church of Ireland and a communicant of the said Church and a registered vestry member of the parish, parochial district or union or group of parishes under one incumbent by whom I have been elected.

5. In Chapter IV, Part II, section 17 shall be amended to read

Members of the Board of Nomination shall not be capable of performing any of the duties of office until they shall have signed the following declaration:

I, A.B., [1] (do solemnly declare that I am a member of the Church of Ireland, and a communicant of the said Church, and a registered vestry member of the parish, parochial district or union or group of parishes, and) being fully sensible how important it is that the cure of souls should be committed only to those well fitted and qualified to undertake the

same, do (further) solemnly declare that I will nominate such person only as I believe in my conscience to be of such virtuous and godly character as to be fitted for admission to the cure of souls in the parish _____, and that I am not acting herein through favour or affection, but in singleness of heart, for the glory of God, the good of his Church, and the welfare of his people.

And I further declare that I will not disclose to any person whatsoever any information regarding the proceedings of the Board of Nomination other than that which may be agreed upon by the Board of publication.

(Signed),

A.B.

Dated

day of