

General Synod 2022

Bill No.2

Proposer: Archdeacon Barry Forde

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Bishop, the Bill before Synod has a very simple purpose, and in all likelihood is one of those occasions of bringing the Constitution in line with what most members of Synod already presume to be the case, and with the likely practice at General Vestries up and down the land in every triennial year when electing parochial nominators.

That presumption and that practice is to elect nominators from among those attending the General Vestry, or who have given their apologies and who remain eligible for election. When a parish falls vacant it is imperative that those who represent it at Boards of Nomination and who carry out the vital work of meeting prospective Incumbents, are best placed and well able to truly reflect and represent that parish, its people, the local context, along with the hopes and fears of all the years that are met therein at day and night.

Sections 4 and 8 of the Constitution as they currently stand have the effect of permitting a General Vestry to elect **any** lay person of 18 years and over, who is a member and communicant of the Church of Ireland to be a parochial nominator. There is nothing stated that such a person be a member of the Parish hosting that General Vestry. In theory the parish of St Michael's & Stephen's on our doorstep, serving lunch both today and tomorrow with proceeds going towards a very worthy renovation fund, could elect a parochial nominator from St Ann's & St Stephen's in Dublin, and heaven help us if all the All Saints, Holy Trinities, and St Patricks of this world followed suit.

This Bill aims to put into constitutional print what is in all likelihood parochial practice, by stipulating that in order to be a parochial nominator for a parish, district, union or group of parishes, you must be a registered Vestry member within that parish, district, union or group. For the sake of clarity Synod members are reminded that for the purposes of electing Parochial Nominators a Group is deemed to be a union under one incumbent, and as such a registered Vestry member within the Group may be elected as a nominator as if it were a Union under one Incumbent. The Bill does nothing to effect the local arrangements of how nominators are elected within a Group. It merely serves to identify the pool of persons eligible to be elected as a parochial nominator as belonging to that parish, district, union or group.

One final matter to mention is that an amendment to delete clause 2 of the Bill will follow at Committee stage to avoid any confusion between the election of parochial nominators and supplementals and diocesan synod members and supplementals.

Bishop, I propose that the Bill be given a second reading.