

**GENERAL SYNOD 2011**

**BILL NO 6**

**Proposed by Dean Patrick Rooke, Diocese of Armagh**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Your Grace, members of Synod,

This Bill is far from riveting stuff – it falls very much into the category of 'Armagh Housekeeping'. Nonetheless, it is important and represents a fairly comprehensive updating of the Statutes of St Patrick's Cathedral.

The Explanatory Memorandum written by Lady Sheil is an accurate summary of what the Bill seeks to achieve. Can I say at the outset how much we are indebted to Lady Sheil for her advice and guidance throughout the process of preparing this Bill for presentation to Synod. In proposing it, we do so with the backing of the Archbishop of Armagh, the Cathedral Chapter and the Cathedral Board.

I don't intend to take you through the Bill clause by clause and paragraph by paragraph – you already have these in the Explanatory Memorandum. I simply want to draw your attention to some anomalies that have become apparent in the Statutes as they are at present – and then to some additions that we wish to make.

In the Statutes as they are, members of the Chapter, with the exception of the Dean, are only permitted to hold an office for a maximum of ten years and I quote 'each such appointment, save that to the Deanery, shall be for such term of years, not exceeding ten'. So what happens when, for instance, the Precentor or the Chancellor have been ten years in office? Does the Archbishop demote them, or even sack them? Perhaps it's unlikely to happen very often, but let me assure you it has arisen twice in the last few years. Hence the

proposal is to have no time limit other than 'as the Archbishop shall determine'.

You will note too, in paragraph four of Schedule I, that in the case of the prebendaries, although not for the dignatories, we have removed the requirement to have all the Chapter involved in a form of musical chairs every time a vacancy occurs and an appointment is made. Although continuing to list the prebendaries in the traditional order, the proposal is that they will no longer represent a ladder of seniority.

Please note too, we have removed the option for a sub Dean in the belief that any substitute for the Dean should come from the Chapter which, in terms of the dignatories, already has its clear order of seniority – the Precentor being the senior member after the Dean.

Another anomaly concerns the Clerical Vicars Choral. The present Statutes state that each of the Clerical Vicars Choral 'shall resign as Vicar Choral, but shall be eligible for re-election'. So the initiative was with the Clerical Vicars to resign after three years – but they never did and no one said a word! So in the Bill, under 6 (iii) the appointment is for up to five years, with no requirement to resign and the initiative with the Dean and Chapter to offer a renewal.

You will note in Chapter 10 of Schedule I that we propose bringing the date of our Triennial meeting into the same timeframe as that for Parochial General Vestries and that in 10 (i) six members of the Cathedral congregation shall be elected to the Board. In the Statutes, as they are, the wording is 'six lay members..... of which members not more than two may be women'. That members of Synod, in 1972 may have represented a willingness to allow some participation in the affairs of the Board by women – but, wearing my Hard Gospel hat, it is not an acceptable statement by today's standards – and you will see our amendment in paragraph 10 (1).

So these represent the changes we have made.

In terms of additions, the major one is the provision for the appointment of two Ecumenical Canons – similar to those already in place in St Patrick's, Dublin and St Anne's, Belfast. In paragraph 7

and in Schedule II, we have kept the wording as near to that already agreed by the General Synod for those two Cathedrals.

The two Ecumenical Canons will become non-voting members of the Chapter and we are proposing that they will be joined by two of the six Lay Canons. Such representatives on the Chapter will bring a new and healthy dimension.

We have also made provision for the appointment of a Succentor. This appointment would, we believe, give that person authority to take a leading role in assisting with the musical contribution. A further addition, is the provision for the appointment of two Cathedral Wardens if the Dean believes that such offices would be a welcome addition to the present system of appointing Cathedral Stewards.

Finally, we have added one new responsibility to those listed for the Cathedral Board – namely 12 (e) which indicates that the Cathedral, through the Board, will play its part in the life of the Diocese by making a contribution towards Diocesan Assessment – and let me tell you, that without such a provision, a Dean can quickly get caught between a demanding Diocesan Finance Committee and a reluctant Cathedral Board – believe me!

Your Grace, members of Synod, I'm sure this all sounds rather mundane and parochial – but it is the stuff of Cathedral life, and we in Armagh are attempting to put in place Statutes that are workable, realistic, inclusive and fair. I trust that we can count on your support.

Your Grace, members of Synod, I propose that the Bill, Bill No.6 be given a second reading.