

# GENERAL SYNOD 2016

## Bill No. 1

**Proposer: The Revd Stephen Farrell**

**Embargoed Against Delivery  
Check Against Delivery**

Your Grace

Last year the General Synod endorsed the work of the Commission on Episcopal Ministry and Structures, and requested that a Bill be brought this year to reform the procedure for electing Bishops along the lines we had proposed. Some alterations were made to take account of questions and feedback received at the General Synod last year, and from diocesan councils, but the Bill closely follows the principles and approached approved by the General Synod in 2015.

The procedure for episcopal elections set out in the Bill is fundamentally recognisable to anyone familiar with the current process. There are changes, and I will come on to those in a moment, but much of what is set out is an attempt at codifying or structuring that which we know quite often happens informally at present.

How will the process work? Once a Bishop signals their intention to resign the Archbishop will appoint a Facilitator to meet with the Episcopal Electors from that diocese. The Facilitator's role will be to help the diocese draw up a draft diocesan profile and statement of needs. This will allow a diocese to take stock, to consider as clergy and people together the needs of the diocese going forward and their priorities for the diocese in the next number of years.

The Electoral College will be very similar to the current college, elected by diocesan synods and charged by them with this important work. The proposed changes are designed to help the Electoral College discharge their duty. The most obvious change is that the Electoral College does not simply meet once, but meets twice, and may meet a third time.

All meetings of the college are preceded by a service of Holy Communion and a charge to the electors. At the first meeting of the college, electors will receive information on the vacant see and will suggest names of those who may be considered as the next Bishop of that see. The college will also elect from its number a smaller sub-committee called a shortlisting committee to consider all the names that have been suggested and to narrow these down to between three and five names before the second meeting of the college.

At its second meeting, the Episcopal Electoral College would be given information on those on the shortlist by the shortlisting committee. The sub-committee shortlists, but it is the full Electoral College that both suggests names in the first place, and ultimately elects.

The existing requirement for a two thirds majority in both orders would be retained, but to remove undue barriers to an election, if a candidate receives a simple majority in both orders their name alone is put to the college to see if they can obtain a two-thirds majority in both orders.

Where an election is made the consent of the person elected is obtained before their name is passed to the House of Bishops.

If no candidate is elected, the college may choose, by simple majority, to ask the President of the college to summon a third meeting of the college within one month and ask the shortlisting committee to bring forward additional names for consideration at that date. Alternatively, if the college does not elect it can opt to pass the election to the House of Bishops.

Where the election is passed to the House of Bishops, they must consider the names originally before the Electoral College but are not restricted to those persons.

There is a lot of detail in these proposals, but much remains familiar. We have stuck close to our vision and principles document, seeking to maintain a balance between diocese and wider church and between clerical electors and lay electors. We have sought to safeguard the dignity of all those considered for episcopal appointments.

Your Grace, I would say that the contents of this Bill amount to evolution rather than revolution. The aim has been to help episcopal electoral colleges to discern God's will for the Church and to choose Bishops for the Church, as they are charged to do.

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