



The Church of England  
in Essex and East London

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Diocese of Chelmsford

# **DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD**

## **RULES FOR DEANERY SYNODS**

**2023 VERSION**



**RULES FOR DEANERY SYNODS**  
**made by the Chelmsford Diocesan Synod pursuant to rule 26 of the**  
**Church Representation Rules**

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## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE SYNOD**

### *Roll of members*

1. The secretary of the Deanery Synod shall keep a roll of the members of the synod constantly up to date, including the name, address (postal and email) and parish of any person notified by the secretary of the diocesan synod and qualified as an ex-officio member.

### *Co-opted members*

2. Each house may, by resolution, co-opt additional members of that house in accordance with the provisions of Church Representation Rule 18.

### *Participation by non-members*

3. The following shall have the right to attend and speak but not to move any motion or amendment or to vote in the synod:
  - a) the bishop or a duly appointed commissary;
  - b) the archdeacon;
  - c) the registrar of the diocese;
  - d) visitors invited by either of the joint chairs or the standing committee;
  - e) persons appointed by the standing committee of the diocesan synod under rule 4.

### *Members of General Synod appointed to attend meetings*

4. If there is no member of the synod who is a member of the General Synod, the standing committee of the diocesan synod shall, if it thinks fit, appoint for the purposes of this rule one or more members of the General Synod resident in the diocese. Such persons shall report regularly to the synod on the proceedings of the General Synod and shall be entitled to receive copies of notices and other documents circulated to members of the synod and to attend and speak at its meetings but not to move any motion or amendment or to vote.

## **THE JOINT CHAIRS**

### *General*

5. There shall be joint chairs of the synod, being the area dean and a member of the house of laity elected triennially by that house; provided that, during the absence or incapacity of one, the functions exercisable jointly may be performed by the other alone. The lay chair, unless she or he resigns or ceases to be qualified, shall continue in office until the commencement of the meeting at which a successor is to be elected.

#### *Election of lay joint chair*

6. Before the first meeting of the synod after any triennial election or in the event of a vacancy in the office, the house of laity shall hold a separate meeting to elect the lay joint chair. A member of that house appointed by the area dean shall act as chair for such meeting. Whoever so presides shall have a vote but no casting vote in the election and in the case of an equality of votes the decision shall be taken by lot. No person may serve as lay joint chair for more than two full successive terms of office. The House of Laity of the Deanery Synod may decide that this term limit does not apply in the Deanery concerned.

### **CHAIR OF MEETING**

#### *Meetings of the synod*

7. The joint chairs shall agree between them who shall chair each meeting of the synod or particular items of business in the agenda of the synod. If either is absent, the other shall preside. If both are absent, the meeting shall elect a chair.

#### *Separate meetings of the houses*

8. The joint chairs shall preside over any separate meetings of their respective houses, but if either is absent, a member of the house concerned chosen by the members present shall take the chair.

### **OFFICERS**

#### *Appointment and term of office*

9. At the first meeting after any triennial election the synod shall appoint from among its members a secretary and a treasurer, and may appoint an assistant lay chair and an assistant secretary. In the event of a vacancy in any such office, the synod shall elect a successor as soon as possible after the vacancy arises. The persons so appointed, unless they resign or cease to be qualified, shall serve until the conclusion of the meeting at which their successors are appointed.

#### *Secretary*

10. The synod secretary must collect and record details of changes in membership and provide information to the diocesan electoral registration officer in accordance with the requirements and timetables of Church Representation Rules 20 and 27D.

## **STANDING COMMITTEE**

### *Membership*

11. There shall be a standing committee of the synod consisting of the joint chairs, assistant lay chair (if appointed), secretary, assistant secretary (if appointed), treasurer and persons elected by the members of each house. The numbers of elected clergy and laity must be equal and the total combined number must be not less than six and no more than twelve. The standing committee shall have no power to co-opt additional members, except that it may co-opt any person(s) appointed as assistant area dean in the deanery.

### *Elected members*

- 12.
- a) Elected members shall retire on the election of their successors or on ceasing to be qualified;
  - b) Elections shall take place as soon as practicable after any triennial elections to the synod;
  - c) Voting shall be by houses;
  - d) Subject to paragraph (e) below, not later than the 31st day of May in the year of the triennial elections, the synod shall decide whether the next elections shall be conducted at a meeting, using the same procedure with essential modifications as for elections at an annual parochial church meeting, or by post or electronic means, using the same procedure with essential modifications as for elections to the diocesan synod;
  - e) Voting shall be by simple majority unless, not later than the said 31st May, the synod shall have determined that the method of the single transferable vote under the regulations as from time to time in force shall apply.

### *Functions*

13. The functions of the standing committee shall be to initiate and advise on proposals; to ensure that members of the synod are adequately informed on questions raised and other matters of importance to the deanery; to prepare the agenda; to transact the business of the synod between meetings; and to make such appointments and do such other things as the synod may delegate to it.

## **OTHER COMMITTEES**

### *Constitution*

14. The synod may constitute additional committees with such chairs, membership, term of office, functions, mode of appointment and other procedure as it thinks fit.

*Procedure*

15. Subject to these rules and to any resolution of the synod, the chairing and other procedure of a committee, including the standing committee, shall be determined by itself.

**MEETINGS OF THE SYNOD**

(see rule 73 for interpretation provisions)

*Meetings required annually*

16. The synod shall hold two meetings at least in every year at such times and places as the joint chairs shall decide after consulting with the standing committee and taking account of the dates fixed for meetings of the diocesan synod.

*Other meetings*

17. The joint chairs may summon a meeting of the synod at any time. If they refuse or neglect to do so within 28 days after a requisition for that purpose signed by not less than a quarter of the members of the synod such members may forthwith summon a meeting.

*Notice of ordinary meetings*

18. The date, time and place of ordinary meetings of the synod, when fixed, shall be announced to members as soon as possible in such manner as the joint chairs may approve; provided that not less than four weeks before each meeting a notice signed by the secretary, specifying any business proposed to be transacted thereat and inviting other business, shall be delivered to every member.

*Special meetings*

19. In the case of sudden emergency or other special circumstances the joint chairs may summon a special meeting at not less than one week's notice but the quorum required for business at such meeting shall be a majority of the members of each house and only business specified on the agenda may be transacted.

**SEPARATE MEETINGS OF THE HOUSES**

*When held*

20. Either house shall sit and vote separately if the synod so resolves, the house itself so decides or these rules or the rules of the house so provide. Each house may determine its own procedure consistent with these rules.

## **AGENDA**

### *Content*

21. Subject to these rules and to any resolution of the synod, and without prejudice to the rights of individual members to a reasonable opportunity within the time available of bringing matters before the synod, the standing committee shall settle the agenda for each of the meetings of the synod, specifying therein all business:
- a) of which due notice has been received and which is in order;
  - b) of an earlier meeting not disposed of or withdrawn;
  - c) of the diocesan synod which is of concern to the synod, and particularly any matters referred to the diocesan synod by the General Synod;
- and shall determine the order in which the business on the agenda shall be considered.

### *Circulation*

22. The secretary shall deliver an agenda paper to every member one week at least before a meeting.

### *Report on proceedings*

23. Every agenda shall include the approval as a correct record of the minutes of the last meeting and also, unless it consists of those minutes, of a report by the standing committee of the proceedings of that meeting intended for circulation to parochial church councils in accordance with rule 65.

### *Addresses, papers and discussions*

24. Either of the joint chairs or, with the consent of the standing committee, any other member, may give notice for the agenda of a subject for an address, paper or general discussion without the moving of a formal motion. An address or paper may be given by the member signing the notice or by a visiting speaker, and then be followed by a general discussion, if the standing committee so decides.

### *Business permitted to be considered*

25. Nothing shall be considered at a meeting of the synod except business on or arising from the agenda; provided that at the request or by consent of both joint chairs urgent matters may be considered but not decided by the synod.

### *Varying the order of business*

26. The order of business may be varied at the discretion of the chair, or by a resolution of the synod to be put without debate.



## **NOTICE OF BUSINESS**

### *General*

27. Notice of any business for a meeting of the synod shall be in writing and delivered to the secretary, by hand, post or electronic means, not later than the period before the meeting which is required by these rules.

### *Length of notice*

28. Subject to rule 18, the following periods of notice are required:-

New business for the agenda: 3 weeks

Motions and amendments arising from the agenda: 4 days

### *Dispensing powers*

29. Notice of a motion arising from the agenda or of an amendment may be dispensed with by permission of the chair or by resolution of the synod, but a copy shall, if the chair so requests, be signed and delivered to the secretary.

### *Procedural motions*

30. A procedural motion mentioned in these rules may be moved without notice, unless express provision is made to the contrary.

## **POWERS OF CHAIR**

### *Procedure*

31. Subject to these rules, the procedure at any meeting of the synod or either house shall be regulated by the person who presides. The Chair of any meeting shall have the same voting rights as other members and shall have no second or casting vote.

## **MINUTES**

### *Circulation*

32. The secretary shall prepare minutes of every meeting which shall be circulated to members and shall record the names of those attending.

## **QUORUM**

### *One-third of each house*

33. Except as provided in rule 19, a quorum shall be one-third of the members of each house of the synod. Unless at least a quorum is present no business shall be considered at a meeting except a motion to adjourn a debate or the meeting.

*If quorum not present*

34. The chair shall, if requested by any member, take a count of the members present and shall adjourn the meeting if a quorum is wanting. No decision of the synod shall be invalidated by the absence of a quorum unless the chair's attention is called thereto immediately upon the vote being taken.

**GENERAL RULES OF DEBATE**

*Moving instead of another member*

35. If the member who gave notice of a motion or amendment on being called to speak chooses not to move it, another member may do so in their stead.

*Opportunity for questions*

36. Immediately after a motion has been moved the chair may give members an opportunity to ask questions of the mover or speaker, solely for the purpose of elucidating facts.

*One motion at a time*

37. During the debate on a motion or amendment no other motion shall be moved except a procedural motion under rule 50 and no other amendment may be moved on the same motion before the prior amendment is decided; provided that the chair may permit two or more motions or amendments to be discussed but not voted on if circumstances suggest that this course would facilitate the proper conduct of the synod's business.

*Reconsideration and rescission*

38. No motion or amendment to the same effect as or dependent on one which has been rejected within the preceding twelve months and no motion to rescind a resolution passed within the same period shall be proposed without the agreement of the standing committee or the consent of the synod.

*Speaking more than once*

39. Subject to rule 40, no member shall speak more than once on a motion or amendment under debate except that:
- a) the mover of a motion shall have a right of reply to the debate on the motion;
  - b) a speech on an amendment shall not be deemed a speech on the main motion;
  - c) a point of order or a personal explanation may be made at any time whether or not another member is interrupted.

*General discussion*

40. The chair may at any time suspend rule 39 for so long as the purposes of the synod would be more usefully served by a general discussion and may direct that such discussion shall be held in informal groups. A general discussion under this rule shall be conducted in accordance with procedure to be determined by the chair under rule 67, but no motion or amendment shall be moved or put to the vote during such discussion.

*Speaking*

41. Every speech shall be addressed to the chair and shall be succinct and relevant to the matter under debate.

*Length of speeches*

42. Save as otherwise provided in these rules, no speech shall exceed five minutes or, in the case of a member moving a motion (other than a procedural motion under rule 48) or introducing a report, ten minutes, but the chair may at any time lengthen or shorten either of these periods, provided that members are informed of each ruling, which shall not be open to debate or question.

*Withdrawal*

43. A motion or amendment which has been moved may be withdrawn by the mover with the consent of the synod.

*Division of text*

44. The chair may, with the consent of the mover, so divide any motion or amendment as to enable the synod to vote separately upon each part.

**AMENDMENTS**

*Content*

45. An amendment shall be relevant to and shall not have the effect of negating the motion.

*Moving*

46. No amendment shall be moved to:
- a) a motion to receive the report of a committee;
  - b) a motion, under rule 62(a), on a question referred by the diocesan synod;
  - c) another amendment.

*Order of consideration*

47. Unless the chair rules otherwise, amendments shall be moved in the order in which they affect the motion.

**PROCEDURAL MOTIONS**

*Content*

48. With the consent of the chair the following procedural motions may be moved with or without notice, but not so as to interrupt the speech of any member:
- a) that the synod be now adjourned;
  - b) that the debate be now adjourned;
  - c) that the synod do now pass to the next business;
  - d) that the debate be closed;
  - e) that the matter under discussion be referred back.

*Motions under rule 48(c)–(e)*

49. In the case of the motions mentioned in rule 48(c), (d) and (e):
- a. such motion shall not be moved on any question referred by the General Synod;
  - b. the debate shall be limited to a brief speech by the proposer of not more than two minutes and, unless the chair permits further speeches, a brief reply by the mover of the original motion or, instead, one other member;

*Amendments and other procedural motions*

50. The adjournment or closure may be moved on an amendment or another procedural motion but a motion to pass to the next business shall not be so moved.

*Effect of procedural motions*

51. In the event of any procedural motion being passed, the debate to which it relates shall be closed or stand adjourned, as the case may be, except that in the case of a motion that the debate on a motion be closed the mover thereof shall have a right to reply before the matter is put to the vote.

*Adjourning amendments*

52. The adjournment of an amendment shall be deemed to adjourn the debate on the original motion.

*Resumption of business interrupted*

53. Unless otherwise resolved, business interrupted by an adjournment of the synod shall be resumed at the next meeting, and by an adjournment of debate, if and when the standing committee so decides.

*Reference back*

54. If a motion to refer back specifies no one to whom the matter is to be referred, this question shall be decided by the standing committee.

*Suspension of rules*

55. After notice, or by permission of the chair without notice, a member may move that a rule be suspended during a particular debate or meeting. Such motions shall not be deemed to be carried unless at least three quarters of those members present and voting are in favour. On each occasion the fact of such a suspension must be reported by the secretary to the secretary of the diocesan synod. This is without prejudice to the chair's discretion at any time to suspend rule 39, as provided for in rule 40.

**VOTING**

*General*

56. Decisions shall be taken by a majority of the members of the synod present and voting, except that a separate vote of each house shall be taken in the following cases:
- a) if the chair so rules;
  - b) if not fewer than five members so request;
  - c) on any matter referred by the diocesan synod.

*Votes by houses*

57. On a vote by houses, decisions of the synod shall be taken by a majority of the members of each house present and voting.

*Mode of voting*

58. Unless otherwise provided in these rules, voting shall be by show of hands without a count, except that:
- a) the chair shall order a count on a vote by houses or if a member so requests either before or immediately after the result is announced;
  - b) the chair may choose to order a count on any other vote.

*Recording votes*

59. The voting on a vote by houses shall be recorded in the minutes.

**REFERENCES BY THE DIOCESAN SYNOD**

*When considered*

60. References by the diocesan synod shall be included in the agenda of such meeting as the standing committee shall consider appropriate, taking

account of any timetable laid down by the diocesan synod.

*Prior notice and documents required*

61. Unless the standing committee otherwise decides:
- a) at least 28 days' notice of any matter referred shall be given to every member;
  - b) a report or other document prepared by or on behalf of the General Synod, diocesan synod or standing committee shall be circulated.

*Procedure of debate*

- 62.
- a) When the reference by the diocesan synod is in the form of a question requiring the answer Yes or No, the question shall be put to the synod as a formal motion in the affirmative sense. No amendment shall be in order and a separate vote of each house shall be taken under rule 56. If the motion is defeated, the question shall be decided in the negative.
  - b) When the reference invites a fuller statement of opinion a motion containing a draft of such statement shall be moved on behalf of the standing committee and amendments to such a motion shall be in order.
  - c) When all motions under the foregoing paragraphs (a) and (b) have been decided, other motions arising therefrom may, if otherwise in order, be moved by any member.

*Report on result*

63. The decisions (together with the number of votes in each house) on every matter referred and on every additional motion shall be reported by the secretary to the secretary of the diocesan synod.

*Consultations within the deanery*

64. Subject to any timetable laid down by the diocesan synod, the synod before voting on a reference may refer any question to the parochial church councils or parochial church meetings in the deanery.

## **REPORTS TO PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCILS**

*Report of proceedings*

65. Within six weeks after a meeting of the synod the secretary shall prepare and circulate to the secretaries of the parochial church councils in the deanery a report of the proceedings of that meeting approved by the standing committee under rule 23. Such report may be in the form of the minutes.

## **MATTERS RAISED BY PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCILS AND MEETINGS**

### *Mode of representation*

66. Any parochial church council or parochial church meeting in the deanery may, on a motion moved by a member representing that parish, bring before the synod any matter either of general Church interest or affecting that parish and may move that a representative of the deanery on the diocesan synod be instructed to bring such matter before that synod on behalf of the deanery. Subject to any direction by the synod, the standing committee shall appoint such representative.

## **ADDRESSES, PAPERS AND GENERAL DISCUSSION**

### *Procedure determinable by chair*

67. The chair presiding shall determine the procedure for any part of a meeting during which the item under consideration is not a motion or amendment but is:
- a) an address or the presentation of a paper, whether a report or other document, by a member or a visiting speaker;
  - b) a general discussion, whether or not introduced by such address or paper, including a discussion permitted by the chair under rule 40.

## **FINANCIAL BUSINESS**

### *Annual review*

68. The standing committee shall not later than the 30th day of April in each year submit to the synod:
- a) a report and independently examined financial statements of the synod for the year ending on the 31st December immediately preceding;
  - b) a statement showing the estimated expenditure of the synod during the current year;
  - c) proposals for raising the income required to meet such expenditure.

## **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### *Admission of press and public*

69. Subject to any directions by the synod or the standing committee, any member of the synod may move that the representatives of the press and members of the public shall withdraw during the whole or part of the business before the synod. If the motion is seconded and carried, the chair shall request the representatives of the press and members of the public to withdraw.

*Periods of notice*

70. Any period of notice required by these rules shall be deemed to consist of clear days or weeks, not including the date of dispatch and the date of the event before which the notice must be delivered.

*Procedural defects*

71. A meeting of the synod or any of its committees of which the minutes have been approved and signed shall be deemed to have been duly summoned and held notwithstanding any defect in the procedure for summoning or conducting such meeting, and no proceedings thereat shall be invalidated by the accidental omission to give the required notice of the meeting to any member.

*Electronic communication*

72. Any communication required or authorised to be given under these Rules may be sent by email, post or hand.
73. Electronic meetings in these Rules:
- a) A reference to a meeting includes a reference to a meeting which persons may attend, speak at, vote in, or otherwise participate in without all of the persons, or without any of the persons, being together in the same place.
  - b) A reference to a place where a meeting is held, or is to be held, includes a reference to more than one place, including electronic, digital or virtual locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers.
  - c) A person is to be regarded as present at a meeting at any given time if the person is at that time able to hear and be heard, and where practicable see and be seen, by the other persons present.
  - d) A reference to being present at a meeting includes a reference to being present by electronic means, including by telephone conference, video conference, live webcast and live interactive streaming.

*Variation of rules*

74. Any of these rules which have been made by resolution of the diocesan synod shall not be varied, revoked or suspended except by a further resolution of that synod.



## **RULES FOR THE HOUSES OF DEANERY SYNODS**

### *Joint Chairs of the Synod*

1. A candidate for election to the office of Joint Chair of the Synod shall be proposed and seconded by members of the House of Laity and if there is more than one candidate a vote shall be taken. If the votes are equal the decision shall be taken by lot.

### *Co-opted Members*

2. The term of office of a person co-opted to either of the Houses is (subject to termination or resignation) for the lifetime of the deanery synod.

### *Voting*

3. On a proposal to elect the Joint Chair of the Synod; to co-opt a member; or to elect members of the House Standing Committee under Rule 12 voting shall be by a show of hands unless any member objects or the Chair rules otherwise in which case there shall be a ballot.
4. In all other respects voting in the Houses shall be governed by Rules 31 and 56 to 59 of the Synod.

### *Officers*

5. The House shall appoint a Secretary who may be the Secretary or Assistant Secretary of the Synod.
6. The Secretary shall keep minutes of meetings and perform such other duties as may be required by these Rules, by the House, or by the House Standing Committee constituted under Rule 12.

### *Meetings*

7. Except as provided in Rule 20 of the Synod the House shall meet upon the summons of the Chair.
8. The Chair may summon a meeting whenever he or she sees fit and shall do so when required by these Rules or by those of the Synod, whenever the House Standing Committee so resolves, or if not less than ten members or one third of the House, whichever is less, in writing so request.
9. The Secretary shall send a notice of any meeting to all members not less than four weeks and the agenda at least a week before the day of the meeting.

10. New business for the meeting shall be notified to the Secretary not less than two weeks before the day of the meeting.
11. A special meeting may be held at not less than one week's notice under Rule 19 of the Synod.
12. Except with the Chair's consent no business shall be considered at any meeting other than that specified in the agenda or arising therefrom.

#### *House Standing Committee*

13. Those members of the House who are members of the Standing Committee of the Synod shall form the Standing Committee of the House and the House may elect additional members.
14. The Chair and Secretary of the House shall respectively be the Chair and Secretary of the House Standing Committee.
15. Subject to any resolution of the House or of the Synod and particularly to Rule 13 of the Synod, the function of the House Standing Committee shall be to ensure the proper working of the House and it may do anything consistent with these Rules and those of the Synod to that end.

#### *General Provisions*

16. Subject to these Rules the procedure of the House shall be the same mutatis mutandis as that of the Synod and the Rules of the Synod where appropriate shall apply to the House.
17. The House may by resolution adopt additional rules provided they are consistent with these Rules and with those of the Synod.

## **APPENDIX: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEANERY SYNOD MEMBERS**

People serve on Deanery Synods as either parish delegates, licensed clergy or members of other synodical bodies. As members of the Deanery Synod, they work in collaboration with the Bishop, Area Dean, other deanery officers and members of the Synod to forward the mission of the Church. That involves a commitment to:

1. Live and grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ, sustained by word and sacrament within the fellowship of the worshipping Church.
2. Represent the best interests of the parish on the Deanery Synod, by all means available, including turning up at meetings! Be a point of contact between the deanery and the parish, participating fully in the life of the PCC, remembering that a primary purpose of the deanery is to support and enable work in parishes, but not to direct it.
3. Help to develop forward-looking deanery projects to support the parishes in their local mission and ministry.
4. Collaborate in the development, implementation and monitoring of deanery plans for the deployment of Clergy and Lay Ministers with the aim of providing the most effective pastoral care possible for the people of the Deanery.
5. Elect and support the officers of the Deanery, including the Lay Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and members of the Standing Committee, and contribute to the shaping of the Synod's agendas.
6. Support the mission of the Church by prayer and personal example. Support good practice in collaboration between parishes and in ecumenical partnerships. Promote honest and harmonious working relationships throughout the Church in the deanery.
7. Seek ways of linking to appropriate secular structures within the deanery, such as local government bodies. Participate fully in the corporate life of the area in Christ's name, seeking ways of communicating with its communities and people.
8. Keep well-informed about issues under discussion at diocesan and national levels.
9. Act as electors for the Diocesan and General Synods.
10. Work to grow cultures of generosity and genuine stewardship within the Church, to recognise and develop the gifts and ministry resources of everyone.
11. Promote relationships which link local activities with the Diocese and the world-wide Church.

*(Adapted from a paper by the national Church House Deaneries Group - April 2002)*