

What is General Synod and what does it do

General Synod is the legislative body of the Church of England. Together with the Westminster Parliament, it is the only body in the land which is entitled to make national law for England.

Legislative Measures passed by the Church of England are signed off by the Queen as Head of State. In addition to legislation, the General Synod also agrees the national Budget for the Church of England and debates a wide range of public and social issues from the perspective of a faith organisation.

Why Stand

This is an opportunity to represent the concerns of your community and your diocese at a national level. You can have a say in national legislation that affects all parts of the Church of England. You can also raise issues and contribute to debates on social and policy matters.

Qualifications of Candidates

1. A candidate must be a lay person who:

(a) has received Communion according to the use of the Church of England or a Church in communion with it at least three times in the twelve months before the date of the dissolution of the General Synod and the person is to be treated as meeting the first condition for the purposes of these Rules if the person would have met it but for matters connected with coronavirus (within the meaning of the Coronavirus Act 2020)”

(b) either is confirmed (or ready and desirous of being confirmed) or comes within paragraph 1(b) of Canon B 15A (i.e. is a communicant member of a Church which subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity)

(c) is aged at least 18 on the date of the dissolution of the General Synod; and

(d) satisfies one of the following conditions:

(i) is on the church electoral roll of a parish in the diocese

(ii) N/A

(iii) is declared by the leader of a mission initiative in the diocese to be part of the worshipping community involved in the initiative.

2. Unlike electors, candidates need not be members of a deanery synod.

3. Candidates must normally be qualified as such at 6.00 a.m. on Tuesday 13 July 2021 (the date of the dissolution of the 2015-2021 General Synod).

4. A candidate must not be the holder of a paid office or employment to which one of the following central bodies may make or confirm an appointment:

the General Synod the Church Commissioners*

the Convocations the Church of England Pensions Board

the Corporation of Church House

the Archbishops' Council.

*(A Church Commissioner in receipt of a salary or other emolument is not so disqualified.)

5. A candidate may not stand for more than one diocese simultaneously

Qualifications of proposers and seconders

6. Proposers and seconders must be diocesan electors qualified as such at 6.00 a.m. on the date of the dissolution, Tuesday 13 July 2021. The diocesan electors are the members of the house of laity of each deanery synod in the diocese, other than the coopted members and the members of a religious community with representation in the General Synod.

7. Qualified electors may only be proposers and seconders in the electoral area in which they are entitled to vote, even where the candidate being proposed or seconded is a qualified elector in another area within the same diocese (see paragraph 5 above)

Meetings of the General Synod, Committees and Commissions

1. The frequency and length of meetings of the full General Synod follow a regular pattern of two or three meetings in a calendar year.

2. The months in which meetings are held are February, July and November (if required). The February meeting and any November meeting is non-residential and takes place at Church House, Westminster, London SW1; but the July meeting is held residentially at the University of York.

3. The weeks during which the meetings are held each year are fixed in advance by a Synod resolution passed no later than the July meeting of the previous year. The Business Committee of the General Synod then informs Synod members in the agenda paper for each meeting of the precise dates (within the pre-arranged weeks) on which the Synod will meet, in the light of the needs of that particular agenda.

4. The normal pattern of February meetings in London spans up to six days ending on a Saturday (though it is most unlikely that the meetings would begin as early as the Monday), the sitting hours on each day usually being from 9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and from 2.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. However, the Business Committee agreed that in 2023, the meeting dates will include a weekend.

5. In York, residential meetings are usually held over a weekend from Friday evening to not later than lunchtime on Tuesday. The Synod does not transact business on Sunday morning during a weekend residential meeting. Instead, by invitation of the Dean and Chapter, members are able to attend a Sung Eucharist in York Minster.

6. The dates already agreed for meetings of the Synod in 2021-2025 are as follows:

2021			
London	15 to 17 November		
2022		2023	
London	7 to 11 February	London	6 to 14 February
York	8 to 12 July	York	7 to 11 July
London	14 to 16 November (if required)	London	13 to 15 November (if required)

7. Members are not required to record their attendance at any full meeting and do not have to comply with any convention or Standing Order requiring them to attend any minimum number of meetings. It rests with each individual to do the best he or she can in the light of other commitments and particular concerns in each Synod agenda. The Business Committee do, however, try as far as possible to help members by ensuring that particular items of business begin at published times.

8. Any member of the Synod may be invited by the Appointments Committee to serve on a number of permanent or temporary bodies but he or she is entirely free to refuse such invitations. In accordance with normal practice, individual members' preferences are carefully taken into account in fixing dates of committee meetings and every

effort is made by the Appointments Committee to share out the committee work fairly among members who are qualified to deal with the tasks to be undertaken.

9. Although in the above paragraphs the term “meeting” has been used, it may be helpful to explain that the practice of the Synod, following the Convocation custom, is to call all its sittings in Full Synod on one day a “session” and any number of sessions on consecutive days a “group of sessions”. But this is only a matter of terminology and has no bearing on the frequency or length of sessions.