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Constitution and Standing Orders

of Deanery Synods

The Constitution and Standing Orders were adopted by the Diocese of Bath and Wells Synod at a session held on 17 June 1989, the Standing Orders to take effect from the close of that session and the Constitution to take effect from 1 June 1991. Standing Orders 57 and 58(a) were amended in 1997.

Diocese of Bath and Wells

Deanery Synod Constitution and Standing Orders

Preface

1. The constitution and standing orders of deanery synods take their authority from the   
   Church Representation Rules (CRR) and with a resolution of diocesan synod to implement   
   the constitution and standing orders contained herein which are consistent with those   
   rules. Deanery synods are free to determine their own procedures provided that they are   
   not inconsistent with these standing orders.

2. References herein to “clergy” relate to all clerks in holy orders and the “laity” to all others.

3. Except where qualified, references herein to “synod” and “constitution” refer to the   
deanery synod and deanery constitution with unqualified references to “standing   
committee” being to the deanery standing committee.

4. Co-opted members have the same rights of participation as elected and ex-officio   
members but are not themselves electors to diocesan or general synod.

5. The term “chair presiding” has been used to identify whichever joint chair (or the   
chair elected under standing order 7) is in the chair for that particular item on the   
agenda.

6. Any periods of notice required by these standing orders shall be deemed to consist of   
clear days or weeks not including the date of despatch and the date of the event before   
which the notice must be delivered.

7. Where the circumstances permits reference herein to the male gender includes also the   
female.

8. Those cross references contained herein within parenthesis are to facilitate the use of   
this standing order but form no part of them.

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Constitution of Deanery Synod

Deanery Synods shall consist of a house of clergy and a house of laity constituted as follows:

1**.** The House of Clergy

(a) All clerks in holy orders beneficed in or licensed to any parish in the deanery or   
licensed to any institution in the deanery under the Extra-Parochial Ministry   
Measure 1967.

(b) All clerks in holy orders holding the bishop’s licence and resident or working in any   
part of the deanery.

(c) One retired clerk in holy orders who has attained the retiring age within the meaning   
of the Clergy Pensions Measure 1961 by 31 December of the year immediately   
preceding any elections of the parochial representatives of the laity, chosen in such   
manner as may be approved by the bishop, by and from among the retired clerks in   
holy orders who have attained that age at that date, are resident in the deanery and   
are not licensed to any parish in the deanery or to any institution under the said   
measure of 1967.

(d) Any clerical members of the general synod or diocesan synod resident in the   
deanery.

(e) The house of clergy may co-opt additional clerks in holy orders according to   
procedures determined by them provided that the numbers so co-opted shall not   
exceed five per cent of the total number of members of that house or three   
whichever is the greater and not so as to preclude the right of the standing   
committee from making its own nominations. (SO 13)

2.The House of Laity

(a) The parochial representatives elected to the synod by the annual meetings of the   
parishes in the deanery based on the numbers on their electoral rolls as follows:

Electoral roll Representatives 1 – 25 1   
 26 – 100 2   
 101 – 200 3   
 201 – 300 4   
 301 – 400 5   
 401 – 500 6   
 501 – 750 7   
 751 – 1000 8   
 Over 1000 9

(b) Such other stipendiary lay persons, being deaconesses or whole-time lay workers   
licensed by the bishop to work in any part of the deanery, or for work in the diocese,   
whose names are entered on the electoral roll of a parish in the deanery.

(c) If in the opinion of the bishop of the diocese any community of persons in the   
deanery who are in the spiritual care of a chaplain licensed by the bishop should be   
represented in the house of laity, one lay person, being an actual communicant

member of the Church of England of eighteen years and upwards, chosen in such manner as may be approved by the bishop by and from among the members of that community.

(d) Any lay member of the general synod or diocesan synod whose names are entered   
on the electoral roll of any parish in the deanery.

(e) The house of laity may co-opt additional lay persons according to procedures   
determined by them provided that the numbers so co-opted shall not exceed five   
per cent of the total number of members of that house or three whichever is the   
greater and not so as to preclude the right of the standing committee from making   
its own nominations. (SO 13)

3. All lay members of synod must be on the electoral roll of a parish in the deanery, be aged   
eighteen years and upwards and be a communicant member of the Church of England.   
No lay person may be an elected member of more than one deanery synod at the same   
time.

Standing orders

Roll of members  
1.The secretary shall keep a roll of the members of the synod constantly up to date,

including the name, address and parish of any person notified to him by the secretary of   
the diocesan synod and qualified under 1(b – d) and 2(b – d) of the constitution.

Participation by non-members

2.The following persons may attend meetings of synod and shall, subject to the same   
obligations as members, have the right to address synod, to speak on any motion or   
amendment, make a personal explanation or answer questions:

(a) the diocesan 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) any reader licensed to a parish in the deanery who is not an elected parochial

representative;

(f) any person appointed or invited under standing order 3;

(g) an officer of synod who is not himself a number of synod (SO 9).

Attendance of General Synod members

3.The deanery synod or its standing committee may invite, and the diocesan synod standing   
committee may appoint, a member or members of the general synod who represent the   
diocese but are not themselves ex officio members of the deanery synod to attend any or   
all of its meetings with the rights as set out in standing order 2. They shall be entitled to   
receive copies of all documents and notices circulated to members of synod for all   
meetings for which their invitation or appointment relates.

Term of office

4.The parochial representatives of the laity elected by annual meetings shall be so elected   
every three years, and shall hold office for a term of three years beginning with the 1 June   
next following their election. Casual vacancies may be filled by the election by the PCC of   
a person qualified to be so elected. Unless the house concerned fixes a shorter period of   
office, co-opted members shall retire on the 31 May in the year of triennial elections.

Joint chairs

General

5.There shall be joint chairs of the deanery synod, being the rural 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 he resigns or ceases to be qualified shall continue in office until   
the commencement of the meeting at which his successor is elected.

Election of lay joint chair

6.Immediately prior to the first meeting of the synod after any triennial election or in the   
event of a vacancy in the office immediately prior to the next meeting of synod, the house   
of laity shall meet to elect a lay joint chair. A member of the house appointed by the   
rural 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.

Meetings of the synod

7.The joint chairs (as provided in standing order 5) shall agree between them who shall   
chair each meeting of the deanery 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 members   
present shall elect a chair for that meeting.

Powers of chair presiding

8.Subject to these standing orders, the proceedings at any meeting of the synod shall be   
regulated by the chair presiding at that time and those of the proceedings of either   
house by the chair of that house or in his absence a member of that house chosen   
by the members present.

Officers of Synod

9.At the first meeting after each triennial election the synod shall appoint:

a) A secretary, not necessarily from amongst its own members, and may likewise   
appoint an assistant secretary. Where an assistant secretary is appointed he shall   
where the secretary is of the laity be a clerk in holy orders and vice versa. Such   
appointments do not confer membership status but do entitle the office holders to   
attend meetings of synod and of its standing committee with the rights of   
participation in both as set out in standing order 2;

b) A treasurer from amongst its own members (not excluding the possibility of co-   
option).

The person so appointed, unless they resign or cease to be qualified, shall serve   
until the conclusion of the meeting at which their successors are appointed.

Standing Committee

Membership

10.There shall be a standing committee of the synod consisting of the joint chairs who will   
share the chairship in the manner set out in standing order 7 for meetings of synod,   
the officers of synod where they are themselves members of synod (see standing order 9   
where officers are not elected members of synod) together with such other numbers of   
people elected by the members of each house in equal numbers from amongst their   
members as the synod shall determine. This committee will have no power to co-opt   
additional members.

Elections to the Standing Committee

11.Elections shall be triennial at the first meeting of each new synod following the election of   
parochial representatives of the laity.

a) Elected members shall retire on the election of their successor or on ceasing to be   
qualified;

b) Casual vacancies will be filled by election at the next meeting of the synod by the   
house concerned;

c) The outgoing standing committee will make no nominations;

d) Not later than 31 May in the year of the triennial elections, the synod shall decide

whether the next elections shall be conducted:

i.At a meeting of synod, using the same procedure with essential modifications   
as for election at an annual parochial church meeting [CRR 10(2-9)] or

ii.By post, using the same procedure with essential modifications as for   
elections to diocesan synod [CRR 26 (3-6)].

In the event that no such decision is taken the former alternative will be adopted.

Functions of the Committee

12.The functions of the standing committee shall be to initiate and advise on proposals; to   
ensure that members 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.

13.The standing committee shall have the right to nominate persons for co-option by either   
the house of clergy or the house of laity of synod and will bear in mind the particular   
circumstances that resulted in such persons not being elected, the special needs of the   
house or of synod (see SO 96) to have that person as a member and any other relevant   
factors.

Other committees

14.The synod will establish a pastoral committee from the membership of each house in   
equal numbers, of such size as synod shall determine and with such chairship, mode   
and duration of appointment or election as it thinks fit. Pastoral responsibility in the   
diocese is exercised by the diocesan pastoral committee which works through   
Archdeaconry pastoral sub-committees and deanery pastoral committees, whose work is   
of an advisory nature. In the event that synod fails to establish such a committee the   
standing committee will fulfil its functions.

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

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

Meetings of Synod and its houses

Ordinary meetings

17.(a) The synod shall hold not less than two meetings in each year at such times and   
places as the joint chairs shall decide after consulting with the standing committee.

(b) The date, time and place of ordinary meetings of the synod, shall be notified to   
members at least six weeks before each meeting in such manner as the joint chairs   
approve.

Special meetings

18.(a) The joint chairs may summon a special 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 20 members of the synod such members may forthwith summon a meeting.

(b) The minimum notice for summoning a special meeting shall be 7 days and the   
quorum for the transaction of business shall be a majority of the members of each house.   
The notice must include the date, time, place and agenda of the meeting and only   
business specified therein may be transacted.

Separate meetings of houses

19.Each house shall meet separately when and where it is required to do so under these   
standing orders and for the purposes stated. Additional meetings may be held when   
either:

(a) The chair of the house has so directed; or   
(b) Synod has so directed.

Subject to any directions by synod or standing committee the date, time and place of separate meetings will be fixed by the chair of each house allowing members at least fourteen days’ notice in writing. Unless specifically directed otherwise by synod, separate meetings of houses shall not involve formulating motions or amendments for consideration by synod or voting thereon. No business, except as authorised in these standing orders, conducted by a single house of synod has authority over the whole synod.

Agenda

Preparation and content

20.Every agenda of an ordinary meeting shall include the approval as a correct record of the   
minutes of the last ordinary meeting and of any subsequent meetings, also of any other   
reports of proceedings as referred to in standing order 55. Subject to these standing   
orders and 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   
that synod, the standing committee shall settle the agenda for each synod meeting, and   
shall determine the order in which the business so included shall be considered subject   
only to any resolution of synod.

Circulation

21.The secretary shall post or deliver an agenda paper to every member 14 days at least   
before an ordinary meeting or, in the case of a special meeting called at less than 14   
days’ notice, at the same time as the notice. Where draft minutes have not been sent to   
members before the agenda paper of an ordinary meeting they shall be sent with it.   
Supporting documentation on matters referred by diocesan synod shall be sent to   
members at least 28 days before the meeting at which they will be considered (SO 52).

Business of Synod

Permitted business

22.No business shall be considered by synod other than:

(a) Business specified on the agenda or any paper relating thereto or arising therefrom;

(b) Urgent and other specially important business added by the joint chairs and

matters arising there

(c) from;

(d) Matters raised or questions asked under “Any other business”. Such matters shall

not be considered in detail and the mind of synod shall not be tested by the moving   
of any motion.

23.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. (See SO 25a for notice required).

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

Notice of Business

Form and length of notice for business for synod

25.(a) Notice of any business for an ordinary meeting of the synod shall be in writing, signed   
and delivered to the secretary by hand or by post not later than the period before the   
meeting which is specified hereunder:

New business for the agenda 28 days

Motions and amendments arising from the agenda 7 days

(b) Motions and amendments thereto arising from a debate on an item specified on the   
agenda or any paper relating thereto (known as “following motions”) may, under   
standing order 22(a), be in order without any prior notice if in the opinion of the   
chair presiding:

(i) due notice could not reasonably have been given prior to that debate; and

(ii) it would be the wish of synod to debate such motions or amendments; and

(iii) time is available to debate them.

A copy of such motion or amendment shall be delivered to the secretary unless the chair presiding dispenses with this requirement.

(c) Questions arising after a motion has been moved or resulting from a debate may be   
asked and answered without notice.

26.A procedural motion (see SO 44) May with the permission of the chair presiding be   
moved without notice.

Rules of Debate (Quorum)

Quorum

27.To form a quorum the following minimum proportion of members if required in each of the   
houses of clergy and laity:

(a) ordinary meetings: more than one third (b) special meetings: a majority

If quorum not present

28.The chair presiding shall, if requested by any member, take a count of the members   
present and shall adjourn the meeting if a quorum is wanting. In the absence of such   
request no decision of the synod shall be invalidated by the absence of a quorum unless   
the chair presiding’s attention is called thereto immediately upon the vote having   
been taken.

Rules of debate (general)

Moving motions or amendments

29. (a) Matters debated in the synod shall have been moved by a member and the member

speaking to such matter will be deemed to have moved it;

(b) A motion or amendment which, when called by the chair presiding, is not   
moved by the member who has given notice thereof may be moved by some other   
member in his stead;

(c) A member may move following motions or amendments under standing order 25(b)   
if the reasons given are acceptable to the chair.

Withdrawal

30. A motion or amendment, once moved, may be withdrawn with the consent of synod by or   
on behalf of the mover.

One motion at a time

31. During the debate on a motion or amendment no other motion shall be moved except a   
procedural motion under standing order 44 and no other amendment may be moved on   
the same motion before the prior amendment is decided; provided that the chair   
presiding may permit a following motion or other amendments to be discussed, but not   
voted on, if circumstances suggest to him that this course would facilitate the conduct of   
synod’s business (see also SO 43).

Division

32. The presiding chair may, with the consent of the mover, divide any motion or   
amendment in such manner as to enable synod to express its judgement separately upon   
each part of the motion or amendment so divided.

Putting to the vote

33. The presiding chair, or in the case of a successful closure motion the synod, will   
decide when any debate is to be terminated and the matter put to the vote. The   
procedure for incorporating amendments into the main motion is contained in standing   
orders 40-43 and in the event that the main motion falls, amended or otherwise, any   
following motions will be put to the vote.

Personal explanations

34. A member may ask permission of the chair presiding to interrupt a debate to make a   
personal explanation but only to correct an important misunderstanding or   
misrepresentation of fact during a debate with regard to what he has said and for this   
purpose may interrupt another speaker.

Reconsideration and rescission

35. 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.

Speaking more than once

36. Subject to standing order 37, no member shall speak more than once on a motion or   
amendment under debate except that:

(a) the mover of any motion shall have a right of reply to the debate on his motion but   
such reply shall not introduce any new matter and shall close the debate;

(b) a speech on an amendment shall not be deemed a speech on the main motion;

(c) a point of order (an alleged contravention of standing orders) or a request to make a

personal explanation (SO 34) may be made at any time, whether or not another   
member is interrupted.

General discussions

37. The chair presiding may at any time suspend the last preceding standing order for so   
long as he thinks the purposes of the synod would be more usefully served by a general   
discussion and he may direct that such discussion shall be held in informal groups. A   
general discussion under this standing order or any discussion on an address or paper   
presented to synod shall be conducted in accordance with procedure to be determined by   
the chair presiding but no motion or amendment shall be moved or put to the vote   
during such discussion and the number of speeches made by any member while it   
continues shall be disregarded for the purpose of standing order 36.

Speaking

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

Length of speeches

39. The chair presiding may at any time impose a limit of not less than 5 minutes on the   
length of speeches and may vary or revoke such limit; provided that he shall inform   
members of each ruling which shall not be open to question.

Rules of debate (amendments to motions)

When permitted

40. Except as precluded in standing order 41 any member may move an amendment to a   
motion which has been duly moved and such amendment shall be disposed of before   
that motion is put (see also SO 43). Amendments accepted by synod will be incorporated   
into the main motion before it is itself put to the vote.

When not permitted

41. Amendments to the following shall not be permitted:

(a) a procedural motion under standing order 44;

(b) a motion in reply to any matter referred by diocesan synod (SO 53);

(c) another amendment;

(d) a motion to receive a report.

Content

42. An amendment shall be a modification or variation of the main motion and shall not have   
the effect of negating it.

Order of consideration

43. In the event that more than one amendment to a motion is moved they may at the   
chair presiding’s discretion all be discussed prior to being put to the vote in the order   
he determines. He may pay regard to:

(a) the order in which the amendments were raised;

(b) the sequence in which they affect the motion;

(c) those with, in his opinion, a wider impact before those of detail;

or such other criteria as in his opinion will enable synod best to express its mind.

Rules of debate (procedural motions)

44. Subject to these standing orders, the following procedural motions may, with the consent   
of the chair presiding, be moved with or without notice but not so as to interrupt the   
speech of any member:

(a) “That the synod do now pass to the next business” (“Next business”)

(b) “That the synod do now adjourn” (“adjournment of the synod”)

(c) “That the debate be now adjourned” (“adjournment of debate”)

(d) “That the debate be now closed” (“closure”)

45. Restrictions on the use of procedural motions.

(a) “Next business” shall not be moved on an amendment, another procedural motion   
or any matter referred by diocesan synod.

(b) “closure” shall not be moved on any matter referred by diocesan synod.

46. The following rules of debate will apply to “next business” and “closure”. If moved the   
debate will be limited to a brief speech by the proposer of not more than three minutes   
and a brief reply by the mover of the original motion, or failing him, one other member.

47. If carried the result of procedural motions will be as follows:

“Next business” the original motion may not be reconsidered during   
the same meeting of synod.

“Adjournment of synod” unless otherwise resolved the resumption of   
business interrupted shall be resumed at the next

meeting of synod.

“Adjournment of debate” unless otherwise resolved the resumption of

business interrupted, will be at the discretion of the   
standing committee.

“Closure” the debate to which it relates shall be closed and   
the matter put to the vote (see SO 46).

If negatived the chair presiding may withhold his consent to the same procedural   
motion being put to synod until such time as he is satisfied that circumstances have   
changed sufficiently to so warrant.

Voting

General

48. 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 presiding so rules;

(b) if not fewer than five members so request;

(c) on any matter referred by the diocesan synod.

Assent of both houses

49. 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

50. The chair presiding on putting any matter to the vote shall either:

(a) take a show of hands, the result of which as announced by him shall be conclusive   
except that he or any five members of synod may then require that the hands be   
counted or:

(b) call for a ballot if he feels that this would result in the will of synod being more truly   
reflected or if this is called for by a member of synod and supported by the majority   
of members present.

A count of hands (or a ballot) shall always be taken on a vote by houses.

Recording votes

51. The voting on a vote by houses (SO 49) shall be recorded in the minutes.

References by Diocesan Synod

52. When a reference is received from the diocesan synod, the standing committee shall   
ensure that members of synod receive at least twenty eight days notice of the referral   
together with supporting documents and the date, time and place of the meeting.

53. Prior to voting on any issue referred by diocesan synod the synod may, subject to the   
timetable laid down, refer it or any matter arising from it to parochial church councils or   
parochial church meetings for an expression of their views. The procedure for debate on   
such matters shall be as follows:

(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 the vote shall be taken   
separately by houses. If the motion is defeated or the votes are equally divided 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 there from may, if otherwise in order, be moved by any   
member or members.

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

Reports by the Deanery Synod to Parochial Church Councils

Report of proceedings

55. Within six weeks after a meeting of the deanery synod the secretary shall prepare and   
circulate to the secretaries of the parochial church councils in the deanery a draft report   
(which may be in the form of draft minutes) of the proceedings of that meeting with any   
corrections or additions subsequently made by a meeting of synod being minuted.

Matters raised by Parochial Church Councils and Parochial church meetings

Mode of representation

56. Any parochial church council or parochial church meeting in the deanery may ask one of   
its deanery synod representatives to bring before that synod any matter either of general   
Church interest or affecting that parish. It may also move that the deanery synod bring   
such matter to the diocesan synod. If such a motion is accepted by the deanery synod,   
the deanery standing committee shall request the diocesan standing committee to put   
such a motion before the diocesan synod, and may propose one of its own deanery   
representatives on diocesan synod to speak to and move such motion.

Financial business

Quota

57. Synod is charged with assisting in the apportionment of the Common Fund to its parishes   
and with helping to ensure prompt payment to the board of finance.

Annual accounts

58. The standing committee or such other committee as the synod shall appoint not later   
than 31 May in each year submit to the synod:

(a) a report and audited accounts, including synod expenditure, for the preceding   
financial year;

(b) a statement showing the estimated expenditure of the synod during the next   
financial year; and

(c) proposals for raising the income required to meet such expenditure.

Banking

59. The standing committee or other appointed committee shall have authority to open and   
operate bank accounts.

Admission of the press and public

60. Apart from persons entitled to attend and participate in synod meetings under standing   
order 2, members of the press and general public are welcome to attend synod meetings   
as observers unless members vote to exclude them on any occasion or for any item of   
business.

Procedural defects

61. A meeting of the synod or of any of its committees that has itself been duly summoned   
shall by approving and authorising the signing of the minutes of the preceding meeting,   
validate the proceedings and that meeting notwithstanding any defect in the procedure   
for summoning or conducting that meeting; provided that if and when any such defect   
becomes known the secretary will, without undue delay, notify members (of the synod or   
the committee as the case may be) of the nature of such defect and of the meeting at   
which such minutes are due to be approved and invite comment (if any) upon such   
defect.

Amendment of standing orders

62.The constitution, standing orders and preface have been authorised by the diocesan   
synod and shall not be varied, revoked or suspended except by a further resolution of   
that synod. (See also paragraph 1 of preface).