

Minutes of the Special Meeting of Edinburgh Diocesan Synod held on 25 June 2025

The meeting was held online at 7.00pm via Zoom only

ATTENDANCE

Clergy (44 Members)

Lay (41 Members)

Bishop John reported that a Eucharist had duly taken place at the Cathedral, as required by Canon, in order to constitute a meeting of Synod. He opened the online session with a further prayer.

He thanked members for taking the time to attend the meeting.

It was a necessary meeting of one item. An amendment to Canon 4 was needed, which had its First Reading at General Synod earlier in June. In order to get the change enacted in time to elect our new bishop, via a Second Reading, consultations were needed with the Synods of each diocese.

The paperwork had been circulated prior to the meeting, which was a note from the Convenor of the Canons Committee to explain the need for the changes. In Section 12 there was a change under (12b) where the “*electoral process should be completed within one year of the date of the vacancy*” was being changed to “...*within one year of the date of the ~~vacancy~~ **mandate being issued even if it is necessary to engage in all 3 stages***”. This would enable any necessary work in the diocese to be undertaken before a mandate was issued. This might be needed in the event of a death, as was witnessed in the Diocese of Argyll & The Isles, or in the case of any pastoral breakdown. This would enable the mandate to be delayed.

Revd Nick Bowry (Rector of Penicuik & West Linton) – could some expectation of timescale be included to impose some time-limit, maybe 6 months, as the maximum time delay?

Gavin McEwan (Diocesan Chancellor) – in Section 5 the Primus would issue mandate “within 21 days of a vacancy” but there was a provision that enabled an Episcopal Synod to postpone that if needed.

Philip Sawyer (Lay Representative, St Barnabas, Edinburgh) – suggested an amendment to Section (12b) to say “*the electoral process shall be completed within 1 year of the **issuing** of the mandate*”

Revd Gill Hitchen (Priest in Charge, St Matthew’s, Rosslyn Chapel) – noted that in (12b) it did say “...of the mandate *being issued*”

All comments were noted and would be passed back to the Canons Committee.

The second area concerned Section 26. The version of the Canon which went to the Faith & Order Board was the correct one, but an earlier incorrect version was somehow presented to General Synod. In getting to the point of the Electoral Synod using the transferable vote, by voting in individual Houses (Clergy and also Laity) both Houses could potentially choose two totally different candidates to remain on the ballot paper, and that would clearly make a nonsense of the process.

Neil Stewart (Lay Representative, St Paul's & St George's, Edinburgh) - If candidates with the lowest votes were both tied, what would happen?

Gavin McEwan (Diocesan Chancellor) – indeed, that could happen, and the point needed to be fed back.

Robin Wilson (Lay Representative, Innerleithen) – would that also apply if two candidates at the top were tied?

Bishop John – in that instance it would go to a ballot and not to a transferable vote.

Simon Filsell then explained the voting process using a Google Form with the link only being made accessible to Synod members. It allowed votes of “agree”, “oppose” or “abstain” as well as a space for comments.

VOTING:

- 83 votes cast
- 2 attendees failed to cast a vote
- 100% - “I AGREE with the proposed changes to Canon 4” (no abstentions)
 - 54.2% Clergy
 - 33.7% Lay Reps
 - 12.1% Bishop & Diocesan Officers/GS Reps

The Bishop confirmed the Acts of Synod