



<b>Agenda ref</b>	10.3
<b>Report title</b>	General Synod Report
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<b>Date</b>	01/03/2025

## **General Synod Report – February 2026**

General Synod met from 9 to 13 February 2026 in London. Members from the Diocese of Bristol are the **Rt Revd Neil Warwick** (Acting Bishop of Bristol); the **Revd Adam Beaumont**, the **Revd Canon Alice Kemp** and the **Revd Kat Champion-Spall** (Clergy); **Brendan Biggs**, **Christiana Olomolaiye** and **Ed Shaw** (Laity); the **Very Revd Dr Mandy Ford** (Deans); and the **Revd Dr Sean Doherty** (Universities and Theological Education Institutions).

This was the first General Synod following the confirmation of election of the Most Revd Sarah Mullally as Archbishop of Canterbury. In her **Presidential Address**, Archbishop Sarah spoke of her calling to follow Christ and urged us to maintain our focus on him, with calmness, consistency and compassion.

### **Legislative Business**

The new **Clergy Conduct Measure** was approved last July, but returned to Synod in February because the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament has objected to the proposal that a court or tribunal hearing an allegation against a clergyperson would usually sit in private. Synod agreed that the draft Measure should be amended so that hearings will normally be public, unless the chair or judge considers it appropriate for some or all of the proceedings to be held privately.

The **National Ministry Register Regulations 2026**, which will establish a National Register of Lay Ministers similar to the National Register of Clergy, were approved. In debating the **Parochial Fees Order 2026**, Synod resisted proposals for a substantial increase in fees for burials. An updated **Code of Practice on Mission Initiatives**, incorporating the recommendations of the Scolding Report on Soul Survivor, was approved. Synod agreed a change to the Church Representation Rules relating to **PCC business taken by correspondence**: in future, a proposal may only be approved if, within the period specified by the chair of the PCC, at least one third of members agree and no member objects.

### **Safeguarding**

Synod welcomed a paper from the recently appointed Safeguarding Structures Programme Board entitled **Safeguarding Structures: Next Steps on Implementation**. The paper proposes the creation of a new independent body,

provisionally called the Independent Safeguarding Authority, with responsibility for the national safeguarding functions of the church. There are also proposals for a complaints policy and an independent ombudsman service.

### **Living in Love and Faith**

After a long debate, in which several amendments were discussed and rejected, Synod approved a motion proposed by the Archbishop of York bringing the **Living in Love and Faith** programme to a close. In summary, the motion (a) laments the distress and pain suffered during the LLF process, (b) affirms that the LLF programme will conclude by July 2026, (c) thanks the LLF working groups for their work, and (d) commends the House of Bishops in establishing two new groups for continuing work: a Relationships, Sexuality and Gender Working Group and a Relationships, Sexuality and Gender Pastoral Consultative Group.

### **Liturgical Business**

Synod considered draft texts making provision for a new **Festival of God the Creator** and **Commemoration of the Twenty-One Martyrs of Libya**.

### **Other Business**

Synod discussed and endorsed the report of the **Archbishops' Commission on Reimagining Care**. In a debate marking the fortieth anniversary of the publication of the **Faith in the City** report on Christian social action, Synod recommitted itself to ending poverty in all its forms and manifestations.

Debating **Mental Health and the Church**, Synod affirmed the work of the National Mental Health Working Group and requested appropriate training and counselling for clergy. Synod discussed **Working Class Vocation and Ministry Next Steps**, welcoming the recent consultation and endorsing the creation of a new advisory group. A Diocesan Synod Motion from Worcester embracing the principles of the **Sustainable Church Flowers** movement was passed.

Synod agreed that the formula and processes used to distribute **Lowest Income Communities Funding** (LInC) should be reviewed, and approved proposals for **Seat Allocation** for the next five-year term of General Synod (from 2026 to 2031; Bristol will continue to have three clergy and three lay seats).

Synod was addressed by the **Most Revd Marinez Rosa dos Santos Bassotto**, Primate of Brazil and Bishop of the Amazon, who spoke of the importance of mobilising faith communities to take action for environmental protection and social justice. There were farewells to the **Rt Revd Martin Warner**, Bishop of Chichester, and the **Rt Revd Steven Croft**, Bishop of Oxford, who are retiring.

The next meeting of General Synod, to be held in July in York, will be the final group of sessions of this quinquennium.