

STANDING COMMITTEE

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS LAID BEFORE

THE GENERAL SYNOD AT ITS

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOURTH ORDINARY SESSION 2024

**THE GENERAL SYNOD
OF THE
CHURCH OF IRELAND**

HONORARY SECRETARIES OF THE GENERAL SYNOD



Rev Canon Gillian Wharton, The Rectory, Cross Avenue, Booterstown, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

Mr Ken Gibson, 11 Magheralave Court, Lisburn, Co. Antrim, BT28 3BY

Ms Hazel Corrigan, Liscolman House, Tullow, Co Carlow

Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston, St Mark's Rectory, Portadown Road, Armagh, BT61 9EE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY - Mrs Janet Maxwell

SYNOD OFFICER - Dr Nicole Gallagher

SYNOD OFFICER (Maternity Cover) – Ms Sukhneet Dhir

SYNOD ADMINISTRATOR – Ms Aisling Sheridan

COMPLIANCE AND COMMITTEE SUPPORT – Mr Stuart Wilson

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1. SUMMARY

Some significant matters dealt with by the Standing Committee in the past year were:

2. NAMES AND ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS

During the period June 2023–March 2024 (inclusive), 5 meetings were held. The number of meetings attended by each member is placed before his/her name.

At the March meeting of Standing Committee in 2024 the Primate thanked all members who had served on Standing Committee during the triennium. He paid particular tribute to Mr Wilfred Baker and Mrs Joan Bruton who have given extended periods of service to Standing Committee over several decades. Mr Wilfred Baker has served on many prominent committees but most recently has acted as chair of the Budget Sub-Committee which is central to the ongoing work of the Standing Committee he also previously served as one of the ACC representatives. Mrs Joan Bruton’s contribution to various committees of the Church was also noted for its great depth and for the clearly stated humanity of her approach. Mrs Bruton has also been a forthright champion of those living with disability and ensuring that the Church not only makes provision within its pastoral services but also works hard in the role of public advocacy.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS

THE HONORARY SECRETARIES OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

| | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| 5/5 | Rev Canon Gillian Wharton |
| 5/5 | Mr Kenneth Gibson |
| 5/5 | Ms Hazel Corrigan |
| 5/5 | Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston |

ELECTED MEMBERS

| | | |
|-------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| Armagh | 2/5 | Rev Henry Blair |
| | 5/5 | Rev Gary McMurray |
| | 4/5 | Mrs Mary Caldwell |
| | 3/5 | Mrs Caroline Nesbitt |
| Clogher | 5/5 | Rev Canon Ian Berry |
| | 4/5 | Rev Mark Gallagher |
| | 5/5 | Miss Irene Knox |
| | 4/5 | Mr Glenn Moore |
| Derry & Raphoe | 5/5 | Rev Canon Henry Gilmore |
| | 3/5 | Rev Peter Ferguson |
| | 2/5 | Mr John Junkin |
| | 2/5 | Mr Robert Ellis |
| Down & Dromore | 3/3 | Ven Roderic West* |
| | 5/5 | Rev Catherine Simpson |

Standing Committee – Report 2024

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| | 2/2 | Ven James Cheshire* |
| | 5/5 | Mr Andrew Brannigan |
| | 1/5 | Mrs Paula McIlwaine |
| Connor | 5/5 | Rev James Boyd |
| | 5/5 | Ven Barry Forde |
| | 4/5 | Mr Roy Totten |
| | 2/5 | Dr Andrew Scholes |
| Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh | 3/5 | Ven Patrick Bamber |
| | 2/5 | Rev Canon Ruth West |
| | 4/5 | Mr Edward Lindsay |
| | 3/5 | Mr Alan Williamson |
| Tuam, Killala & Achonry | 3/5 | Very Rev Lynda Peilow |
| | 4/5 | Rev Stephen McWhirter |
| | 4/5 | Mrs Ann Nethaway |
| | 0/5 | Mr Arthur Foster-Sweeney |
| Dublin & Glendalough | 3/5 | Rev Dr William Olhausen |
| | 1/5 | Very Rev Stephen Farrell |
| | 4/5 | Mr Lyndon MacCann, S.C. |
| | 2/5 | Dr Lucy Michael |
| Meath & Kildare | 4/5 | Rev Canon Katharine Poulton |
| | | VACANT |
| | 5/5 | Mrs Joan Bruton |
| | | VACANT |
| Cashel, Ferns & Ossory | 2/5 | Rev Dr Christine O’Dowd-Smyth |
| | 4/5 | Rev Canon Nicola Halford |
| | 3/5 | Mr Richard Codd |
| | 3/5 | Ms Emma Purser |
| Cork, Cloyne & Ross | 5/5 | Ven Andrew Orr |
| | 2/5 | Rev Canon Paul Arbuthnot |
| | 4/5 | Mr Wilfred Baker |
| | 4/5 | Ms Hilda Connolly |
| Limerick & Killaloe | 4/5 | Rev Canon Jane Galbraith |
| | 5/5 | Very Rev Niall Sloane |
| | 3/5 | Mr Adrian Hilliard |
| | 3/5 | Mr Edward Hardy |

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

| | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| 5/5 | Very Rev Nigel Dunne | 5/5 | Very Rev Kenneth Hall |
| 4/5 | Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott | 5/5 | Ven David Huss |
| 4/5 | Rev Ruth Elmes | 3/5 | Rev David White |
| 4/5 | Very Rev Shane Forster | | |

* The Ven James Cheshire was elected to Standing Committee in December 2023 following the resignation of the Ven Roderic West.

The Secretary General, and the Assistant Secretary of the General Synod are entitled to attend and speak at meetings of the Standing Committee.

COMMITTEES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

FINANCE AND ARRANGEMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

Mr Wilfred Baker
The Honorary Secretaries

LEGAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

His Honour Judge Tom Burgess
His Honour Judge Alastair Devlin
Mr Lyndon MacCann, SC
The Hon Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness
Mr Oswyn Paulin
The Honorary Secretaries

Mr William Prentice
His Honour Judge Derek Rodgers (d. Feb 2024)
The Right Honourable Lord Justice Stephens

PRIORITIES FUND COMMITTEE

Mr Glenn Moore
Mrs Joan Bruton
Ms Hazel Corrigan
Rt Rev George Davison
Rev Peter Ferguson
Ven Andrew Orr

Very Rev Lynda Peilow
Mr Roy Totten

BUDGET SUB-COMMITTEE

Mr Wilfred Baker
Rev Henry Blair
Ms Hazel Corrigan
Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston
Miss Irene Knox

WORLD DEVELOPMENT- BISHOPS' APPEAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Rev John Ardis
Rt Rev Dr Ferran Glenfield (Chair)
Ms Ruth Handy
Rev Claire Henderson
Mrs Claire Holmes
Rev Canon Jonathan Pierce
Very Rev Niall Sloane
Mrs Iris Suitor (Hon Sec)

LAY JUDGES OF THE COURT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

His Honour Judge Tom Burgess

His Honour Judge Alistair Devlin
Mr Charles Galloway
Mr Patrick Good KC
Mr Lyndon MacCann SC
The Hon Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness
Mr Ronald Robins
The Right Honourable Lord Justice Stephens

3. APPOINTMENTS/NOMINATIONS

During the period covered by this report, the Standing Committee made the following appointments/nominations:

- The following were nominated by the Standing Committee to the Select Committee on Clergy Tenure: Rev Ruth Elmes, Rev James Boyd, Ms Irene Knox, Ms Joan Bruton (joining Honorary Secretary Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston and episcopal nominee Rt Rev George Davison who were respectively nominated at General Synod 2023 and in March 2024).
- The following were appointed to the Consultative Group on Disability: Ms Gemma Willis, Ms Dorothy Jones, Ms Kirsty McCartney.
- The following were nominated to the AGM of the Secondary Education Committee, with renomination (if appropriate) to take place in March 2024, March 2025: Mr Wilfred Baker, Ms Hazel Corrigan, Ms Elizabeth Hassell, Ms Joyce Ryder, Mr Gavan Woods, Rev Canon Paul Arbuthnot, Ms Susanne Campbell, Mr Ian Coombes.
- Rt Rev Adrian Wilkinson was nominated to attend the 2023 General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church.
- Mr Stephen Addis and Most Rev Pat Storey were nominated to attend the 2024 Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- Mr Robbie Syme was appointed to the Church of Ireland Pensions Board.
- Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott was appointed to attend the Kirchentag in June 2023.
- Rev David White was appointed to attend the AGM of CTBI in October 2023.
- Ven Andrew Orr was appointed to attend the Assembly of the European Christian Environmental Network in Denmark in 2023.
- The following were appointed to attend the AGM of the Irish Council of Churches in March 2024: The Archbishop of Dublin, The Bishop of Connor, The Dean of Limerick, Canon Dr Kenneth Milne, Dr Catherine Smith, Dr Nicole Gallagher, the General Synod Officer (or substitute), Mr Glenn Moore, a lay person from the Diocese where the AGM is to be held, Ms Cate Turner, Ms June Butler, Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston (Hon Secretary of General Synod), Rev Canon Katharine Poulton, Rev Canon Kevin O'Brien, Rev Dennis Christie (The Rector of the Parish (Ahoghill) where the AGM is to be held), Mr David Ritchie, the Chief Officer, Rev Suzanne Cousins, Rev Abigail Sines, Rev Philip McKinley, Rev Maithrie White-Dundas, An Ordinand.
- Rev Canon Stephen Fielding was appointed the Church of Ireland contact person to Porvoo.
- Ms Judith Cairns was appointed to the Disciplinary Panel.
- Ms Claire Callanan was appointed Chair of the Disciplinary Panel.
- The following were appointed members of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue: Rev Canon Kevin O'Brien, Dr Bridget Nichols, Dr Ryan Hawk, Mr Femi Atoyebi.
- Prof Noel Purdy, Ms Sarah Taylor and the Very Rev Niall Sloane were appointed to the Advisory Council of the Church of Ireland Centre, DCU.
- Ms Faith Sithole was appointed a member of the Bishops Appeal Advisory Committee.
- The following were nominated to attend the AGM of the Irish Inter Church Meeting: Very Rev Kenneth Hall, Ven Peter Thompson, Mr Glenn Moore, Ms Gina Copty, Ms Cate Turner, Mrs June Butler.
- The following were appointed to the Church and Society Commission: Mr Ken Gibson, Archbishop of Dublin, Archbishop of Armagh, Mr Neville Armstrong, Mrs June Butler, Rev

Jane Burns, Ms Zephryn Patton, Rev Andrew Campbell, Mr Michael Trimble, Mr Steven McQuitty KC, Rev Andrew Irwin, Dr Claire Jones, Ms Hannah O’Neill, Dr Harriet Wilkinson, Asst Prof Caroline Elliott Kingston and Mr Keith Gardiner.

- The following were appointed as members of the committee of the Priorities Fund to serve from the first day of the General Synod 2024 to the day before the first day of the General Synod 2027: Ms Hazel Corrigan, Rt Rev George Davison, Rev Peter Ferguson, Ven Andrew Orr, Very Rev Lynda Peilow and Mr Roy Totten.
- Ms Heather James was appointed to the Marriage Council in March 2024.

4. APPENDED MOTIONS

Motions amending the terminology used in the Bills Procedure and other amendments to two Standing Orders can be found in Appendix A on page 138.

5. ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE CHURCH OF IRELAND CENTRE, DCU

The report of the Advisory Council appears as Appendix B on page 141. A report from the Church of Ireland Centre, DCU is also contained in the Board of Education Report.

6. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS

In June 2023, PricewaterhouseCoopers were appointed as auditors of the accounts of the Representative Church Body for the financial year 2023.

7. BILLS PROCESS

During the triennium, the Standing Committee considered a proposal drawn up by the Honorary Secretaries to amend the terminology used in the bills procedure at General Synod with the aim of making the bills process more accessible to members and to encourage greater participation. The resulting bill will be presented at General Synod 2024 with the related resolution.

8. BOARD FOR MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Standing Committee approved the report of the Board and agreed to recommend a proposal to extend the project for a further three-year period to the Allocations Committee of the Representative Body. The following resolution was agreed:

That Standing Committee approves the report of the Children and Families Ministry Board.

The standing Committee approves the proposal for a further three-year programme to be undertaken by the Board for Ministry with Children and Families and recommends its reappointment for a further term and approves that the financial proposal for 2025 - 2027 should be brought forward to the Allocations Committee for consideration at its next meeting.

That the Standing Committee extends the term of office of the existing members of the Board of Ministry for Children and Families until the day before the meeting of Standing Committee in June 2024, requesting that the nomination of new members will be proposed at the June 2024 meeting of the Standing Committee.

9. CHRISTIAN AID

The Honorary Secretaries sought expressions of interest from those interested in representing the Church of Ireland on the Board of Christian Aid. This role involves six half day meetings per year with substantial agendas and some preparation time in advance of each meeting. Most meetings are

remote but at least one will require travel and attendance in-person. It has proved difficult to fill the two positions available, but the Honorary Secretaries would welcome contact from those interested.

10. CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMISSION

In January 2024, the Commission's membership was appointed by Standing Committee to serve until September 2027, including nine new members who engaged in the expression of interest process run by the Honorary Secretaries.

The report of the Church and Society Commission can be found in Appendix F on page 170.

11. CHURCH OF IRELAND CENSUS

The Church of Ireland Census was taken again in February/March 2024 gathering figures mainly from the Preachers' Book of 2023. The Census was run electronically, so that parishes could upload their figures directly and reports could be generated and returned with less work needed in parishes or dioceses.

The Standing Committee is grateful to Mr Jonathan Hull for his assistance in designing and running the Census reports. As we go to print, there has been a 91% response recorded from parishes, which has been very encouraging. The data from the census is currently being analysed and will be reported back in due course.

12. CLERGY DEFINED CONTRIBUTION (DC) PENSION SCHEMES

In September 2023, Mr Henry Algeo, Chair of the RB Executive Committee with Mr David Ritchie, Chief Officer presented a paper outlining proposed changes to the Clergy Defined Contribution (DC) Pension Schemes.

Standing Committee passed the following resolution:

That, as recommended by the Representative Body, and in accordance with Section 8 of Chapter XIV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, the Parish / Diocesan Council / Other contribution to the member's pension fund in the Church of Ireland Clergy Defined Contribution Pension Schemes (NI and RI) be increased to 13% per annum of the relevant Minimum Approved Stipend of Episcopal Stipend, with effect from 1 January 2024.

13. CLERGY PENSIONS FUND – SOLVENCY LEVY

In September 2023, Mr Henry Algeo, Chair of the RB Executive Committee with Mr David Ritchie, Chief Officer presented a report on proposed changes to the Clergy Pensions Fund – Solvency Levy. It was noted that it was intended that this levy would continue to be reduced to 0% in the longer term. Gratitude was paid to the parishes who paid the levy when it was introduced as well as to those who had their pensions frozen over a period for the part that they have played in getting to a stage where this levy could be reduced and finally removed.

Standing Committee approved the following resolution:

That, as recommended by the Representative Body and the Trustee, in accordance with Section 36 of Chapter XIV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, the rate of levy to be paid by each diocese towards the cost of securing the solvency of the Clergy Pensions Fund from 1 January 2024 be set at a reduced percentage level of 3% of the Minimum Approved Stipend in force at 1 January 2024.

14. COMMUNICATIONS FROM DIOCESAN SYNODS AND COUNCILS

During the year the Honorary Secretaries received communications from the Diocesan Synods of Dublin & Glendalough, Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe, Cashel, Ferns & Ossory and Down & Dromore Diocesan Council offering different perspectives on the subject of pastoral and liturgical provision for persons of the same sex previously married in State ceremonies. In addition, a letter was received by the Honorary Secretaries from the Archdeacon of Belfast, Ven Barry Forde outlining his views on the broader governance context of such communications within the structures of the Church of Ireland. The text of these communications is contained within Appendix R, which can be found on page 206.

15. COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

In January 2024, the Standing Committee considered the 2023 Income and Expenditure report for the Complaints Committee as required under Chapter VIII 23 (e). This report is appended as Appendix H on page 173. The appointment of the Complaint Administrator for the purposes of the relevant part of Chapter VIII was approved for another year.

16. CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON DISABILITY

The report of the Consultative Group on Disability can be found as Appendix J on page 176.

17. DIGNITY IN CHURCH LIFE POLICIES

In June 2023, in accordance with Statute Ch. I of 2015, the Standing Committee approved the amended Clergy Permanent Health Insurance Policy for inclusion in the Dignity in Church Life Charter.

18. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Following the Motion for Diversity and Inclusion which was passed at last year's General Synod communication was made to all Dioceses seeking to gather their responses. To date we have only received replies from Dublin & Glendalough, Cashel, Ferns & Ossory, Connor and Down & Dromore, however it is encouraging that these responses have been positive and welcoming towards such inclusion.

19. EPISCOPAL ELECTORAL REVIEW GROUP

The Working Group was appointed in November 2022. The Review Group has produced Regulations and a Bill which will be presented at General Synod in May 2024 having been approved by the Standing Committee in March 2024. The Working Group will develop further guidance for Facilitators before completing its work. The full report of the Review Group can be found as Appendix P on page 198.

20. FUTURE OF CURACIES: DEPLOYMENT, PROVISION AND FUNDING

The report of this group can be found as Appendix I on page 174.

21. GENERAL SYNOD 2025

Standing Committee has held extensive discussions around the future meeting structure preferred for the annual General Synod meeting and the item has been timetabled again for the June 2024 Standing Committee meeting. As previously agreed, the General Synod of 2025 will be held from 9th-10th May 2025 in the Lawlor's Hotel, Naas, subject to Standing Committee amending this decision. The third day will be a remote session on the evening of Tuesday 13th May with a further session being held on the evening of Thursday 15th May if required. Members are asked to note that the Hotel has been asked to hold the date of the 8th of May in reserve pending the outcome of the discussion in June.

22. GENERAL SYNOD/STANDING COMMITTEE FINANCES

At the September 2023 meeting of the Standing Committee, the Budget Sub-Committee presented its report which was accepted by the Standing Committee and forwarded to the Allocations Committee for consideration.

23. GENERAL SYNOD ROYALTIES FUND

The balance at 31 December 2023 was €109,379.22 and £796.72. In June 2023, the following resolution was passed for an allocation to be made from the fund to reprint the large-print pew edition of the Church Hymnal:

£45,000 grant to provide for the reprinting of 4000 copies of the large-print pew edition of the Church Hymnal by Oxford University Press.

Owing to the greatly reduced financial strength of the fund, the Central Communications Board requested the Representative Body for assistance and the Fund itself has been closed to further grant applications until it has been restored to a healthier position. Details are included in the reports of the Central Communications Board and the Literature Committee.

24. IN-PERSON STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Currently in-person meetings are held to deal with the two heaviest agendas each year in March and September. Remaining meetings are held by Zoom unless a substantive item requires in-person meetings to debate the issue. After considerable discussion of the desirability or otherwise of this pattern, it was agreed to continue but to keep the matter under review in order to ensure that the business of Standing Committee is dealt with in the most effective way possible. The June meeting of Standing Committee will take place in person in 2024.

25. JOURNAL OF THE GENERAL SYNOD – DEPUTY EDITOR

The Very Rev Gregory Dunstan has agreed to act as Deputy Editor of the Journal of the General Synod, working alongside the Editor, Dr Kenneth Milne.

26. LARGER FORMAT BOOK OF REPORTS

Standing Committee agreed to print the Book of Reports in A4 format, with a larger font and, with spiral binding making the book easier to keep open, it is hoped to be more user-friendly.

27. LEGAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Primate informed the March 2024 Standing Committee of the death of His Honour Judge Derek Rodgers, who was a long serving member of the Legal Advisory Committee of the Standing Committee. Judge Rodgers had been ill for some years. He had previously served as Chancellor of the Diocese of Connor. The Primate paid tribute to his distinguished contribution to the life of the Church of Ireland.

28. LETTER OF RESPONSE FROM KING CHARLES III

Following General Synod deciding to send a letter of good wishes to King Charles, a reply was received in which he conveyed his thanks to the members of the General Synod for their greetings and send his warmest good wishes to all Synod members.

29. MIND MATTERS

A special presentation of Mind Matters will be made to the General Synod by Most Revd Patricia Storey. The Standing Committee received a report following the Mind Matters Conference. The project has now concluded, with thanks expressed to the generous funding from All Churches Trust. The RB has included a mental health dimension in its strategic plan. This will embrace three strands: further training; support for clergy; seed funding for projects.

30. MINIMUM APPROVED STIPENDS

Under section 51 (1) of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland as revised by Chapter VI of 2011, the Standing Committee is required to consider recommendations from the Representative Church Body as to the rates of Minimum Approved Stipends to take effect from 1 January 2024.

At its meeting of 19th September 2023, the Standing Committee heard a submission by Mr Michael Johnston, Chairman of the Stipends Committee, which detailed the RCB's recommendations.

The Standing Committee approved the recommendations of the Representative Church Body and approved the following resolution:

That, as recommended by the Representative Body in accordance with Section 51 (1) of Chapter IV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, the rates of Minimum Approved Stipends shall be as follows with effect from 1 January 2024:

- (a) no stipend shall be less than £36,587 per annum in Northern Ireland or €44,657.50 per annum in the Republic of Ireland in the case of an Incumbent or a member of the clergy appointed as Bishop's Curate under the provisions of Section 42 of Chapter IV or of a Diocesan Curate over the age of 30 years appointed under the provisions of Section 43 of Chapter IV.
- (b) the stipend for a Curate-Assistant shall be in accordance with the following scale:

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| First Year | 75.0% | of minimum stipend for incumbent |
| Second Year | 77.5% | " |
| Third Year | 80.0% | " |
| Fourth Year | 82.5% | " |
| Fifth | and 85.0% | " |
| succeeding Years | | |

31. MORAVIAN INTERCHANGEABILITY OF MINISTRY

In 2023, General Synod rejoiced as it affirmed the interchangeability of ministry agreement presented for approval at General Synod and at the General Synod of the Moravian Church in Britain and Ireland. On 18th March 2024, representatives of the two Churches came together in St Patrick's Church, Ballymena and Gracehill Moravian Church for two shared services with a tree planting ceremony in each location involving the Archbishop of Armagh the Most Rev John McDowell and Bishop Sarah Groves of the Moravian Church, Bishop Michael Burrows and Bishop Joachim Kreusel and children from St Patrick's Church, Ballymena and Grace Hill Moravian Church.

32. PENSIONABLE STIPENDS

Under Section 2 of Chapter XIV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland as revised by Chapter V of 2011, the Standing Committee is required to consider a recommendation from the Representative Church Body and the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee Limited as to the rates of Pensionable Stipend to take effect from 1 January 2024.

At its meeting of 19th September 2023, the Standing Committee heard a presentation by Mr Henry Algeo, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Representative Church Body, which detailed the financial background to the recommendations of the RCB and the Church of Ireland Clergy Pensions Trustee Limited.

The Standing Committee approved the recommendations of the Representative Church Body by adopting the following resolution:

That, as recommended by the Representative Body and the Trustee, in accordance with Section 1 of Chapter XIV of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland, Pensionable Stipend shall be as follows with effect from 1 January 2024, on condition that the Clergy Pensions Fund continue to receive a Clergy Pensions Fund levy of 3% Minimum Approved Stipend for 2024, 2025 and 2026:

- (a) Pensionable Stipend shall be £31,800 per annum in Northern Ireland and €40,622 per annum in the Republic of Ireland in the case of an Incumbent or a member of the clergy appointed as Bishop’s Curate under the provisions of Section 42 of Chapter IV or of a Diocesan Curate over the age of 30 years appointed under the provisions of Section 43 of Chapter IV.
- (b) Pensionable Stipend for a Curate-Assistant shall be in accordance with the following scale:

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| First Year | 75.0% of Pensionable Stipend for incumbent |
| Second Year | 77.5% " |
| Third Year | 80.0% " |
| Fourth Year | 82.5% " |
| Fifth and succeeding Years | 85.0% "" |

33. PIONEER MINISTRY COUNCIL

The Pioneer Ministry Council will report directly to General Synod in 2024 in accordance with its Terms of Reference. The Pioneer Ministry Council also reports twice annually to the Standing Committee.

34. PRIORITIES FUND

The accounts of the Priorities Fund and the grants, approved by Standing Committee in March 2024, are contained as Appendix K on page 178.

35. CHURCH OF IRELAND SAFEGUARDING BOARD

The Standing Committee agreed the following resolution:

That Standing Committee requests that the Safeguarding Board give due consideration to the issue of gender identity in the revised Child Safeguarding Policy. In particular, providing policy direction for contexts where a biological male wishes to use toilets, accommodation and bathroom facilities designated for use by females (or vice versa).

The Safeguarding Board met in March and reported back to the Standing Committee that a review of the policy had been initiated to take on this work.

The full report of the Safeguarding Board appears as Appendix M on page 187.

36. STANDING COMMITTEE ELECTIONS – AGE EXCEPTION APPLICATION – DIOCESE OF CASHEL, FERNS & OSSORY (CFO)

At its March meeting, the Standing Committee agreed the following resolution:

In accordance with the provisions in Part 1, S5 of The Constitution of the Standing Committee of the General Synod, the Diocesan Council of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory requests the Standing Committee to direct substitution of the words ‘forty-five years’, in S5 with the words ‘fifty-five years’ in respect of election of CFO, diocesan representatives to the Standing Committee, there having been fewer than four or fewer beneficed of licensed clergy under the age of forty-five years of age on 1st December 2023.

37. STANDING COMMITTEE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AND GENERAL PURPOSES FUND ACCOUNTS 2023

The accounts are contained as Appendix N on page 191.

38. THIRD LEVEL CHAPLAINCIES

Standing Committee approved the interim report from the Committee. The report highlighted the excellence of the Third Level Chaplaincy Course run by CITI and recommended a joint funding approach for chaplaincies, with a working group being established to take the work further. The report of the Third Level Chaplaincies Review Group can be found in Appendix L on page 186.

39. WORKING GROUP CONCERNING A CO-ORDINATED RESPONSE BY THE CHURCH TO HISTORIC INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE

The report of the Working Group can be found in Appendix O on page 196.