

RECENT LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

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At the July 1989 Group of Sessions of the General Synod the Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules were approved and Final Approval was given to the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure. The Measure now goes to the Ecclesiastical Committee. It repeals the Diocesan Education Committees Measure of 1955 and takes account of synodical government in the dioceses. The Measure also seeks to recognise the proper role which the diocese must play in the overall strategy and planning for Church schools within the diocese.

The Synod also gave general approval to the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure. The Measure is now being considered by a revision committee.

At the November Sessions the Synod gave Final Approval to the Care of Cathedrals Measure. The Measure extends the Church's legal and administrative structures for the care and conservation of the cathedrals of the Church of England through a new central body to be known as the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England and a body for each cathedral to be called the Fabric Advisory Committee. During the revision stage of the Measure a power was included for a proposal to be determined by the Commission where the Commission declares that the proposal gives rise to considerations of special architectural, archaeological, artistic or historic interest. A further amendment was included which would enable a parish church cathedral in certain circumstances to opt out of this Measure and be subject to the ordinary faculty jurisdiction. The Measure will now go to the Ecclesiastical Committee.

The Synod also gave Final Approval to a number of instruments which modify the election rules of the three Houses of the General Synod and which come into force on 1st January 1990 in time for the elections to the General Synod which will be held between July and October 1990.

Most legislative time in November was devoted to the Revision Stage of the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure, Canon C 4B (Of Women Priests) and Amending Canon No. 13. The revision of all three pieces of legislation was completed but there was no time to revise the Ordination of Women (Financial Provisions) Measure. This will be dealt with at the February 1990 Group of Sessions after which the whole legislative "package" will be referred to diocesan synods in accordance with Article 8 of the General Synod's Constitution. The Standing Committee is expected to allow two years for the reference which means that the legislation is likely to return to the General Synod in July or November 1992.

The Synod also gave General Approval to the Church of England (Service Chaplaincies and Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure and draft Amending Canon No. 15. The Measure is the fifth in the series of Measures dealing with miscellaneous and uncontroversial amendments of the ecclesiastical law. As the title implies the main provisions deal with a new legal basis for the ministry of service chaplains to armed forces communities. Other clauses give effect to the recommendations on sequestrations in the Report of the Working Party on the work of diocesan registrars chaired by Canon O'Connor and to the recommendations of the Group on Funeral Duty chaired by the former Bishop of Dorchester. The Measure and Canon now go to a revision committee and are scheduled to return to the Synod for revision in February 1990.