

40/99 Weekend Meetings of the Synod 3rd Session of the 45th Synod

(A report from the Standing Committee.)

Introduction

1. By resolution 40/99 the Synod requested that the following format be trialed for the meetings of the 3rd ordinary session of the 45th Synod in 2001 -
 - (a) meeting on a Friday afternoon and evening, and all day on the next day (Saturday);
 - (b) repeating this a week later;
 - (c) total meeting time, exclusive of meal breaks, to be 25 hours.
2. The Standing Committee proposes that the meetings of the 3rd ordinary session be held on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 October 2001, and Friday 2 and Saturday 3 November 2001.

Meeting Times

3. The times during which the Synod will meet on the days referred to in item 2 depend upon a number of considerations -
 - (a) On Friday 26 October and Friday 2 November it is to be expected that a number of Synod members will be working. It is preferable that the meeting be held later in the day to maximise the ability of these members to attend and contribute.
 - (b) A large amount of administrative work needs to be done after the Synod meeting on a Friday night and before the meeting on Saturday. Such work includes finalising the minutes, preparing the business paper, preparing amendment sheets and answering questions. The Synod cannot meet too early on the Saturday otherwise much of the necessary paper work will not have been done.
 - (c) The Synod meetings on Saturday 27 October and Saturday 3 November should end as early as possible so that Synod members can return to their parishes for services the next day. Some Synod members have long distances to travel.
4. Having regard to the considerations referred to in item 3 the Standing Committee recommends the following meeting times -

<i>Friday 26 October 2001</i>	<i>Hours</i>
<i>1.00 pm to 3.00 pm - Synod Service</i>	
<i>3.00 pm to 5.45 pm</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>5.45 pm to 7.00 pm - Meal Break</i>	
<i>7.00 pm to 9.30 pm</i>	<i>2½</i>
 <i>Saturday 27 October 2001</i>	
<i>9.30 am to 12.30 pm</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>12.30 pm to 1.45 pm - Meal Break</i>	
<i>1.45 pm to 3.45 pm</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>3.45 pm to 4.15 pm - Rest Break</i>	
<i>4.15 pm to 6.30 pm</i>	<i>2¼</i>
 <i>Friday 2 November 2001</i>	
<i>3.00 pm to 5.45 pm</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>5.45 pm to 7.00 pm - Meal Break</i>	
<i>7.00 pm to 9.30 pm</i>	<i>2¼</i>
 <i>Saturday 3 November 2001</i>	
<i>9.30 am to 12.30 pm</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>12.30 pm to 1.45 pm - Meal Break</i>	

1.45 pm to 3.45 pm	2
3.45 pm to 4.15 pm - Rest Break	
4.15 pm to 6.30 pm	2¼
Total meeting hours	25

5. An amendment to the Standing Orders is required to authorise these meeting times.

Place of Meeting

6. No realistic alternative to the Wesley Centre has been found as a place of meeting. The Wesley Centre has the advantages of sufficiency of size, air conditioned comfort, relative ease of access and proximity to eating venues, car parking etc.

7. The Wesley Centre has been booked as the venue for the Synod meetings on the dates referred to in item 2.

Business Papers

8. Thought has been given to whether it is possible to have one business paper for 26/27 October and then another for 2/3 November. However, given the nature of the changes of the business paper which arise each day, this is not considered to be a feasible proposal. Therefore it is proposed that a new business paper be prepared each night in accordance with present practice.

9. The business takes between 3 and 4 hours to print. If the business paper is to be ready by 9.30 am on Saturday morning, staff will need to finalise the business paper on Friday night after the Synod meeting ends and arrange for it to be printed commercially that night. The Diocesan Secretary is making enquiries as to whether commercial printers are available.

Questions

10. The current Standing Orders provide that members of the Synod may ask questions on days 1, 2 and 3 of a session, and that answers be provided on days 2, 3 and 4.

11. Answers to most questions for which notice is formally given on Friday 26 October cannot be prepared by the commencement of business at 9.30 am on the following Saturday morning unless notice of the question is given to the Diocesan Secretary several days beforehand. In part, the difficulty in answering questions arises because there is a lack of time to prepare answers to questions (which need to be reviewed by the Synod Arrangements Committee), and because many questions need information from staff of other diocesan organisations who are unlikely to be working late on the Friday night and on the Saturday morning. As the Secretariat staff are fully involved in the administration of Synod it is also unlikely that answers can be prepared (and reviewed) during Saturday. Of course, these problems can be alleviated to some extent if notice of questions is given to the Diocesan Secretary beforehand.

12. Accordingly, it is proposed that questions for which notice is formally given on Friday 26 October will not be answered until Friday 2 November, although an attempt will be made on Saturday 27 October to answer those questions of which informal notice was given to the Diocesan Secretary before Friday 19 October.

13. Questions for which formal notice is given on Saturday 27 October will be answered on Friday 2 November.

14. Questions for which notice is formally given on Friday 2 November are unlikely to be able to be answered on Saturday 3 November unless notice is given to the Diocesan Secretary before Friday 2 November.

Elections

15. The Elections Ordinance 1970 provides that ballot papers for elections to be conducted during the session are to be handed out between 2.00 pm and 8.00 pm on the first 2 days of the session, and votes may be cast between 2.00 pm and 9.00 pm on those days. These rules need to be modified for the handing out of ballot papers and voting on Saturday 27 October 2001 when it is proposed to allow votes to be cast between 9.30 am and 5 pm.

Ordinances

16. There are 3 issues which arise in respect of ordinances.

17. First, under the current Standing Orders, an ordinance cannot be considered before 4.30 pm. This provision of the Standing Orders is inappropriate so far as the meetings on a Saturday are concerned. It is proposed to allow motions in respect of ordinances to be taken at any time the motion arises for consideration in the course of business.

18. Secondly, under the Standing Orders, the third reading of a proposed ordinance cannot take place on the same day as the committee stage. Given that much of the business of day 4 is likely to be ordinances, it is proposed that this Standing Order not apply on day 4. This will be without prejudice to the right of a member to move, either as a procedural motion or as an amendment, that further consideration of a bill be referred to the 1st session of the 46th Synod.

19. Thirdly, it is likely that there will be a number of proposed ordinances which will not be reached at the session. It has been suggested that the most efficient use of the Synod's time would be to consider matters of principle concerning specific ordinances, and refer detailed drafting issues to the Standing Committee for it to settle and then legislate. It is proposed that a provision be adopted enabling the Synod to consider matters of principle and then refer proposed ordinances to the Standing Committee for it to finalise the specific terms of the proposed ordinance.

Bible Readings/Prayers/Missionary Hour

20. These matters are generally considered to be within the discretion of the Archbishop. So far as the Bible readings and prayers are concerned, it is expected that a similar format to the current format will be adopted. The Standing Orders do not need to be amended to provide for a Missionary Hour.

Recommendations

21. The Standing Committee recommends the proposed meeting times for Friday 26 and Saturday 27 October 2001 and Friday 2 and Saturday 3 November 2001 as set out in item 4 of this report, and also recommends that the Synod meet in the Wesley Centre.

22. The Standing Committee recommends that the Synod pass the Synod 2001 Procedure Ordinance 2000 to amend the rules of procedure so that -

- (a) on Saturday 27 October 2001 votes may be cast in elections between 9.30 am and 5 pm; and
- (b) motions about ordinances may be taken at any time;
- (c) on day 4 of the session, the 3rd reading of a bill may take place even if the 2nd reading or committee stage occurred on that day; and
- (d) the Synod may determine matters of principle in relation to proposed ordinances and refer the proposed ordinances to the Standing Committee for it to settle drafting issues and then legislate.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

MARK PAYNE
Diocesan Secretary

1 August 2000