

First Report of the Diocesan Standing Orders Review Group

The Group was established by the Bishop's Council in response to a request to review Standing Order 82 for the Diocesan Synod which deals with who can answer questions. Bob White, Chair of the House of Clergy, was appointed Chair of the Group and it is currently supported by Jenny Hollingsworth, Acting Diocesan Secretary. The membership of the group in addition to Bob is:

Susie Collingridge, Area Dean of Petersfield
 Vanda Leary, Lay Chair of Petersfield
 Debbie Sutton, Chair of House of Laity
 Mike Terry, Clergy member of Diocesan Synod

The Group has met once to map out its work and identify some immediate amendments. It plans to present a review of the Diocesan Synod SO in November 22. Then to present a review of the Deanery Synod SO in June 23 and finally to present a review of Bishop's Council SO in Nov 23. This final presentation will include a 'tidying up' of the complete set of SOs.

In its meeting the Group has proposed the review of the current Standing Orders for the Diocese and any proposed changes will ensure that they are clear and transparent in assisting the relationship between the various parts of the Diocese and its governance structures. The Group believes that the Standing Orders should reflect the core values of the Diocese and our particular culture and context. They should also enhance the relational nature of our Synods, while ensuring that there is accountability and a structure within which there can be debate, open dialogue and questioning, which should be done in a spirit of trust and mutual respect. It is hoped that revised Standing Orders will increase participation and enable all voices to be heard.

This formed a key part of the Terms of Reference for the Group which was approved by the Bishop's Council in September.

Since then the Group has met electronically and is proposing to the November 2022 Diocesan Synod

1. **SO 82** (*this was the item that a review was asked for*)

Remove	'provided that the person asked may, without reason given, refuse to answer that question'
Insert	'If the Officer or Chair to whom the question is addressed is not available to answer the question the President shall nominate a suitable person to give a response'

2. **Insert after SO 54** (with a final renumbering of SO once work complete in Nov 23)

General Discussions (page 38 in Deanery Synod SO 37)

The chairman presiding shall determine the procedure for any part of a meeting during which the item under consideration is not a motion or amendment but is :-

- (i) an address or the presentation of a paper by a member or a visiting speaker**
- (ii) a general discussion permitted by the chairman in the belief that such would more usefully serve the purposes of the synod. During such discussion no motion or amendment shall be moved or put to the vote, and the number of speeches made by any member while it continues shall be disregarded for the purpose of rule 36 (no member may speak more than once in a debate) when that rule is declared by the chairman to be again in force.**

It was also noted for future consideration that the Group needs to consider use of Email/Electronic notices etc for notice of meeting etc (SO 22 & 29) and timings for agendas and papers being issued.

Bob White
October 2022