

pointed out,⁸ the problem is that in some parts of the Church there is little for an OLM to do that cannot already be done by an elder, a deacon or a reader; though some parish churches have very regular celebrations of Holy Communion, many still hold to the traditional Scots pattern of celebrations two or three times a year.

doi:10.1017/S0956618X11000809

Governing Body of the Church in Wales

April and September 2011

PHILIP MORRIS

Archdeacon of Margam

INTRODUCTION

As always, the Governing Body was engaged not only with the institutional life of the Church but also with the more general concerns of Welsh society. In his September Presidential Address, for example, the Archbishop concentrated on the Welsh Government's intention to legislate for opting out of organ donation rather than, as at present, opting in – a prospect that gave him some unease. He also announced that the Bench of Bishops, in partnership with the Standing Committee, had established a Working Party on the Welsh language to consider what good practice in bilingual provision of services and other ministry might mean.

HARRIES REVIEW GROUP

The Membership and Finances Report had revealed that, though total income to parishes had risen impressively, there had been a 5 per cent drop both in Easter communicants and in average attendance throughout the year, as well as further significant falls in attendance by young people and in baptisms and confirmations.

In his April Presidential Address the Archbishop announced the establishment of a Review Group consisting of Bishop Richard Harries, Professor

8 'Synod reports', (2009) 11 Ecc LJ 93.

Charles Handy and Professor Patricia Peattie to consider whether the Church in Wales was ‘fit for purpose as a channel of God’s grace for individuals, for our communities and for our nation’ – a decision driven by the triple challenges of falling clergy numbers, financial pressures and parishes that faced ageing congregations and declining resources. The Group would ask fundamental questions about the life of the Church and make recommendations as to how its organisation should be adapted to enable it to live more fully a life that was theologically and missionally coherent and sustainable. Key issues would be selection, training and support for ministry, effective deployment of human and financial resources and whether or not the current structures of deaneries, archdeaonries and dioceses met the Church’s needs and supported its work.

At the Governing Body meetings in 2010 members had worked in groups to initiate a consultation process about the direction of the Church over the next ten years. The Governing Body reviewed five priorities arising out of those discussions: the need to demonstrate the relevance of the Church to the Welsh nation, a review of ministry to provide effective local leadership for congregations using clergy and laypeople as appropriate, an organisational review to ensure proper local management, a concerted effort to lessen the emphasis on church buildings and a willingness to invest in new ways of doing things. It was decided that group discussions should continue at future meetings and that a report of the outcomes would be fed into the Harries Review.

ACCOUNTING REGULATIONS

It was noted that parish accounts now had to comply both with statutory requirements and the current recommended practices of the Charity Commission and with the *Church in Wales Parochial Administration Handbook*. Each PCC’s Annual Report and Accounts had to detail any liabilities to its Diocesan Board of Finance for arrears of parish quota and explain in what way the activities of the parish were for the public benefit.

THE ANGLICAN COVENANT

In April the Governing Body held an initial discussion on the Covenant; it would be asked to consider and make a decision on the Covenant at a later stage.

BANNS OF MARRIAGE

HHJ Philip Price QC, chairman of the Standing Committee, reported that banns of marriage had to be published using the words in the *Church in Wales Prayer Book 1984* because of a very small risk of a legal challenge to a marriage based on

the use of the form of words for calling the banns that was contained in the additional *Church in Wales Forms of Marriage Service* authorised in April 2010.

CLERGY TERMS OF SERVICE

Since 2004 the Governing Body had been considering proposals for new Clergy Terms of Service, following Government pressure on Churches either to produce their own modernised schemes or to have them imposed by statute.

At its September 2010 meeting Governing Body had passed the Clergy Terms of Service Canon; and a Statement of Terms of Service for Common Tenure was duly published and approved at the April 2011 meeting. The Terms of Service include such matters as work/life balance and hours of work, holiday entitlement, training and retreats, expenses, ministerial development and clergy discipline. The Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and Grievance Procedure are laid down in the Terms of Service; notwithstanding their status as office-holders, clergy will have similar protection to those in secular employment. All future clergy appointments will be made under Common Tenure and existing post-holders will be invited to opt in to it.

SAFEGUARDING

Clergy files dating back for decades had been checked for allegations of child abuse as part of a major review by Elaine Cloke, an independent specialist seconded by the Children's Commissioner for Wales, to ensure that any concerns previously raised had been properly dealt with in the light of current best practice. Of the 1,381 files examined, five had been referred to police and social services and two of the five to the Independent Safeguarding Authority; in no case was it decided to take any action.

Ms Cloke's Review Report to Governing Body made 36 recommendations for improving safeguarding policies, including updating CRB checks every three years instead of every five and appointing a Provincial Safeguarding Officer to provide professional advice, support and training.

ST MICHAEL'S COLLEGE, LLANDAFF

The £1.1 million refurbishment had massively enhanced the accommodation and facilities at St Michael's: all bedrooms were now en suite, disabled access was considerably improved and the public rooms had been upgraded. An agreement in principle between the Representative Body, the College's Managing Trustees and the Bench of Bishops for St Michael's to become part of the Representative Body was approved at the Governing Body's September meeting. The College would be administered and managed as part of the

property of the Representative Body, and its work and the employment of its staff would become the responsibility of a St Michael's College Committee of the Representative Body.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

In September the Governing Body considered the report of a Working Group on Representation of Women, which revealed a faster rate of improvement than expected. A number of senior clerical post-holders were now women, they made up 41 per cent of the Governing Body, there was an equitable gender balance of churchwardens and treasurers at parish level, all posts were advertised as equally suitable for men and for women and significant efforts had been made to ensure fairness and equality in appointments. Governing Body had approved an Equal Opportunities Statement and some dioceses included equal opportunities training in their continuing ministerial development programmes.

doi:10.1017/S0956618X11000810

General Synod of the Church of Ireland

May 2011

MICHAEL DAVEY
Solicitor

INTRODUCTION

Having met in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin in 2010, in 2011 Synod returned to the less spiritual but rather plusher surroundings of the City Hotel, Armagh. It was comforting to note from the attendance figures that the level of luxury seems to have little effect on the willingness of delegates to attend.

The first piece of legislation was to provide for the inclusion in the *Book of Common Prayer* of a prayer for the Northern Ireland Assembly and its Executive. Anyone who has followed the workings of the Assembly would support a move to improve it and the necessary majorities to carry the Bill into effect were easily achieved.