



GUIDE TO SYNOD

Diocese of Nelson

The Official Rules and Regulations governing the life of the Diocese and Synod are called “The Statutes and Standing Orders of the Diocese of Nelson”.

The “Statutes” are legislative Acts that govern the life of the Diocese, and “Standing Orders” are rules for the conduct of Synod business.

This booklet is a simple unofficial guide for Synod members and does not supersede the Statutes and Standing Orders.

SYNOD

Some notes for the guidance of Synod Members

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Chancellor	The official legal adviser to the Bishop of the Diocese
Commission	A body of persons with Synod's authority to act or report on a certain matter.
Division	The physical division of those who vote 'ayes' from 'noes'.
"Doors are closed"	For purposes of voting after one minute warning no-one may enter or leave.
Intituled	Given the title of - used of a Bill to identify it among other legislation.
General Synod	The Synod of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.
"Leave in possession"	When Synod adjourns, the member speaking may continue when Synod resumes.
"Leave of Synod"	Permission given by Synod for any member to take a particular procedural step.
"Leave the Chair"	To hand over the control of proceedings, from Synod to Conference and vice versa.
Licence	A Bishop's legal authority given for any ecclesiastical office or function.
Motion	A matter presented for consideration by Synod prior to its being dealt with.

Notice of Motion	Prior written notice of a motion to be considered or, in exceptional circumstances [pursuant to SO 22.2], the prior reading, usually on a previous day, of a motion to be considered
Order of the Day	Any matter which has been given priority for the business of a certain day.
Permission to Officiate	A Bishop's legal authority given to part-time or retired clergy.
Point of Order	A calling of the Chairperson's attention to the rules of Synod's procedures.
"Possession of Synod"	A matter when introduced to Synod is then under control of the whole Synod.
Procedural Motion	A motion that affects the method of dealing with the business of Synod
Resolution	A motion after it has been agreed to by a vote in Synod.
Select Committee	A committee of Synod members appointed to examine a particular matter.
Session of Synod	A convening of Synod for business usually annually and usually for several days.
Sessional Committee	A committee of Synod members appointed to function during a single session.
Standing Committee	The "Executive" of Synod elected to act for a Diocese between annual sessions.
Standing Order	A rule legislated by Synod for control of its own procedure.

Statute	Legislation when it has been agreed to by Synod.
Synod (synodical)	The official Diocesan legislative body appointed for a three year term.
Table (lay on the Table)	To officially present reports and accounts. etc for consideration by Synod.
Title - Canon -	Acts of General Synod classified under various Title (eg ABC etc) and each Title subdivided into "Canons" (Canon I, II, III, IV, etc)

SYNOD - ITS ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

The Church of the Province of New Zealand agreed to a constitution in Auckland on June 13th 1857 (replaced by the current constitution in 1992). The constitution embodies the principle of synodical government by our Church today.

The importance of our Synod today is that it emphasizes this fact: that the Church is the whole people of God: and that, although the spiritual authority of the Church comes from Christ Himself through His Apostles and their successors, this authority is not autocratic, and can be administered only through and with the consent and the support of the whole Church.

Synod is directly responsible to and representative of each parish and vestry; and, through the latter, every congregation of the Diocese. Either directly or through its Standing Committee, Synod in its turn is responsible for the appointment of almost every Diocesan board or committee, and also for Anglican representation on many inter-church bodies.

Through each Diocesan Synod, representation is sent forward to the General Synod. However, even the fundamental decision of the latter require the approval of the Diocesan Synods before they can be finally accepted. Then, in addition, there are matters which affect the world-wide Anglican Communion which are brought before each and every Synod.

The unit of the Christian Church within the catholic and apostolic tradition has always been the Diocese centred round its Bishop. The Diocesan Bishop, with his/her clergy and representative laity, gathered together in Synod, is the official outward expression of the mind of the people of God in any particular place. By this means the Church orders its own life; and speaks, both to its own members, and also the world within which it works.

SYNOD - ITS COMPOSITION AND PROCEDURE

Once every three years the lay members of Synod are elected. The Synod is composed of the Bishop, all clergy (including Deacons) who hold the licence of the Bishop, the Diocesan Chancellor and Lay Representatives of the Parishes and Mission Units.

The following are also entitled to a seat in Synod with a right to speak but without right to vote - Clergy who have "Permission to Officiate" in the Diocese and if not otherwise a member of Synod, the Diocesan Secretary, ie the Registrar.

The procedure of a Synod is governed by its own set of rules, namely its Standing Orders. Some more important points from these Standing Orders are dealt within the following pages.

The business of Synod is to consider the reports and accounts of the many Diocesan bodies; elect the members of Diocesan committees; decide the policy for the Church, through the enactment of Statutes or the passing of resolutions; and also to express the mind of the Church. The procedure of Synod is designed to enable this to be carried out efficiently and thoughtfully.

Although when acting as Synod all meet together, Synod is legally composed of three "Houses". Every act of Synod, or Standing Committee, must be assented to by the Bishop, and by the majority of both clergy and lay persons present.

Synod may also function flexibly. When in "conference" each "conference" makes its own rules; and when Synod itself is "in session" the Diocesan Bishop is President, ie Chairperson. He/she may delegate the chairing of any part of Synod.

Any one of the three "Houses" of Synod may meet separately for the purpose of deliberation; on the request of any three members of that house.

GENERAL POINTS OF PROCEDURE

It is customary to acknowledge the President with a slight bow, if it is necessary to pass in front of him.

It is the duty of members to sign their names once each day in the attendance book when attending Synod. (Standing Order [SO] No 20)

No members of Synod shall pass between the President and any member who is speaking (SO 41).

NOTE: The abbreviation "SO" refers to "Standing Orders" 2003.

MATTERS AFFECTING SPEAKING RIGHTS

Every Synod member when speaking shall stand and address the President (SO 38).

A member may speak only once to any particular motion, except that the mover has the liberty of right of reply; and the seconder, but only if (s)he specifically states this, may reserve their right to speak to any later point in the debate. If the mover of a motion speaks to an amendment (s)he loses his right of reply (SO 49).

This ruling, that a member may speak only once to a particular motion does not apply to Synod in Conference (SO 55) or when Synod is considering a statute (SO 98).

No member who has already spoken to any particular motion may move or second an amendment to it. A member may also move or second only one amendment to any particular motion (SO 72).

A member may also speak once to an amendment; and doing so does not affect their right to speak later to the main point (SO 74).

Questions may be asked of the President after Notice, and answers are given in writing. No comment or discussion is permitted. Such questions and answers are recorded in the minute only by order of Synod on motion without Notice (S O 108).

Members may rise at any time and speak to points of order (SO 42).

THE SUBMISSION OF A MOTION

For a motion to be considered by Synod (with certain exceptions of a procedural nature) notice of motion must be given to the Diocesan Secretary, in writing, at least 60 days before the Session of Synod begins. (SO 1).

This enables them to be included in the initial Order Paper, and allows others to think about them beforehand.

The exceptions to this rule are set out in SO 22.2. All notices of motion during the session of Synod must be given in writing (SO 23).

The same applies to amendments, which unless of purely verbal nature must be in writing (SO 62).

Normally the wording of motions will begin with the phrase: “*That this Synod ...*” and where action is desired to follow the acceptance of the motion, it should include reference to the body, or the persons or person, that is to be asked to carry out or consider action.

Amendments to motions should be worded in the following ways:

“*That the word(s) be omitted*”

“*That the word(s) ... be omitted in order to insert the word(s)*”

“*That the word(s) be inserted/added/before/after the word(s)*”

(SO 61-65).

Note that: an amendment is not possible during the discussion of an amendment. However, an alternative amendment may be read to Synod during such discussion by way of notice, and moved when the prior amendment has been dealt with (SO 68).

A motion which contains more than one matter is divided; and each part is voted upon separately. On the request of any member, the part or parts, which are agreed to, are again voted upon a single motion. (SO 59).

Any member, when speaking, must confine him/her self to the subject of the debate, and when speaking to an amendment must confine him/her self to the amendment (SO 48).

THE WITHDRAWAL OF A MOTION

The following important point is often overlooked: a motion which is in the possession of Synod (ie one that has been moved and seconded, and then proposed by the President for debate) may be withdrawn only by leave of Synod and without any negative voice.

It is NOT sufficient for the mover to withdraw his/her motion with the consent of his/her seconder (SO 57).

If, on second thoughts, the mover of a motion feels the matter requires rewording, his/her proper course is to *request leave of Synod to withdraw this motion*. In order to move his/her substitute motion, he/she must give notice in the usual way, or else move *that Standing Order Number 22 be suspended, in order to move without notice an alternative motion to the one withdrawn* (SO 58 and 111).

VOTING AND DIVISIONS

Voting is usually carried out on the sound of voices alone.

Every member is entitled vote, and those present at the time of a division or an election shall be required to vote (SO 78).

After the doors have been closed for a division or an election, no member shall enter or leave the Synod until after the results have been declared (SO 77).

For Synod to proceed to an actual division, the request for such a division must be made a second time, after a second vote on the sound of voices (SO 77).

COMMITTEE AND COMMISSIONS

In appointing a Select Committee the motion must contain the names of the members of Synod to serve on such a committee. The mover shall be a member of the committee, and the convenor of its first meeting. The motion shall also name the date by which its report shall be made. (SO 84-88).

When appointing Commissions the members need not be Synod members, but one of them shall be named as its convenor. A Commission should report to the next session of Synod (SO 105-107).

REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

These are normally considered in 'Conference'.

THE SUSPENSION OF A STANDING ORDER

A motion to suspend a Standing Order may be made without notice of motion, but shall state why the suspension is desired, and will require the consent of all members present (SO 110-111).

ELECTIONS

Various board and committees are elected by Synod.

Note that valid vote must be one which votes for the *full number of required candidates*. For a person to be elected by the whole of synod a majority vote both of the clergy and of the laity is necessary. Position in the poll is determined by the aggregate number of votes he/she receives from both the clergy and the laity (SO 102).

THE PRESENTATION OF A STATUTE

The procedural outline for enacting a statute is:

- the motion to be considered by Synod is “*That the (named statute) do now pass.*” (SO 95)
- the Statute is considered clause or part at a time as the President of Synod decides. (SO 96)
- the order of consideration is clauses or parts, schedules, preamble and title followed by the substantive motion.(SO 97)
- a member may speak more than once, and propose more than one amendment, to the same matter (SO 98).

During the consideration of a Statute, the proposer of the Statute may take their place alongside the President, and guides the consideration given to the Statute in detail and any desired amendments made.

Once passed, a Statute is then certified by the President, and Chancellor and becomes enacted (ie in effect).(SO 99)

SYNOD CONFERENCE

In the planning for any particular session of Synod it may be considered desirable that the official business be adjourned for a period to allow members to meet “in conference”. The conference may divide into “clerical” and “lay” conferences, or meet as a whole. It may be to discuss one particular matter, or be a time when any member can raise any matter of concern - whether or not that matter relates to a question before Synod. The conference may divide into small groups to facilitate discussion with each group then reporting to the whole.

Decisions made at conference do not have the same binding effect as a decision made by Synod but may give rise to a motion being brought before Synod for debate and decision.

“OPEN FORUM”

An open forum is an opportunity provided in the context of Synod for any member to speak on any topic. The “rules of debate” governing speaking time, permissible topics etc are set by Synod.