

General Synod Votes on LLF: Narrative Account & Analysis

The publication of the [voting results](#) during the General Synod debate (on the afternoon of Wednesday 8th and then the morning of Thursday 9th February) helps give a clearer picture of the range and balance of views found among the 450 members of General Synod who recorded a vote or abstention on at least one of the 19 votes that were counted. Their publication simply as lists (with members appearing alphabetically by Houses under For-Against-Abstain) in a mixture of PDF and Word documents makes analysis difficult. However, gathering the data there into [an Airtable database format](#) (see the appendix at the end of the article for some guidance on how to work with it) enables more detailed scrutiny. **If you spot any errors either in the data itself or the account of it below please do notify me at goddardaj@gmail.com.**

The motion put to Synod was presented on behalf of the House of Bishops (and behind them the College which had apparently overwhelmingly supported its main elements) by the Bishop of London in her capacity as Chair of the Next Steps Group.

It read:

That this Synod, recognising the commitment to learning and deep listening to God and to each other of the Living in Love and Faith process, and desiring with God's help to journey together while acknowledging the different deeply held convictions within the Church:

- (a) lament and repent of the failure of the Church to be welcoming to LGBTQI+ people and the harm that LGBTQI+ people have experienced and continue to experience in the life of the Church;
- (b) recommit to our shared witness to God's love for and acceptance of every person by continuing to embed the Pastoral Principles in our life together locally and nationally;
- (c) commend the continued learning together enabled by the Living in Love and Faith process and resources in relation to identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage;
- (d) welcome the decision of the House of Bishops to replace Issues in Human Sexuality with new pastoral guidance;
- (e) welcome the response from the College of Bishops and look forward to the House of Bishops further refining, commending and issuing the Prayers of Love and Faith described in GS 2289 and its Annexes;
- (f) invite the House of Bishops to monitor the Church's use of and response to the Prayers of Love and Faith, once they have been commended and published, and to report back to Synod in five years' time

There followed a lengthy debate originally scheduled for Wednesday afternoon but running over into Thursday morning as numerous amendments were put leading to votes on 18 of them (13 moved by supporters of current teaching and 5 moved by those seeking change) covering a range of matters of substance and process. What follows offers an overview of the voting on these, only one of which was carried, and the final motion followed by an analysis of the voting patterns overall.

It is important to remember that on any individual vote a Synod member may vote as they do for a number and variety of reasons. Sometimes they will vote simply on the basis of whether or not they agree with the wording, sometimes on more procedural or tactical grounds. As a result, the voting figures do not give an infallible guide as to the substantive or settled views of those voting.

General Synod Votes on LLF: Narrative Account Amendment by Amendment ([table here](#))

Item 44 – Reaffirm definition of marriage and sex within marriage

The first amendment voted on ([Item 44](#)) sought to “welcome the reaffirmation by the College of Bishops of Canon B30 that “marriage is a union permanent and lifelong of one man with one woman”” and also reaffirm “that “sexual intercourse as an expression of faithful intimacy belongs within marriage exclusively”” (a statement taken from the bishop’s teaching document on marriage). It was proposed by Sam Margrave, a controversial lay member, and the Bishop of Leicester drew attention to this and said that although he agreed with the amendment he would be voting against it. This was an early sign of the varied and complex motivations for voting in particular ways and the difficulty of drawing definitive conclusions from votes. It received the support of only one bishop (Woolwich) with 28 opposing but also by far the highest recorded number of episcopal abstentions on any vote (11, the next highest was 8). The most notable of the abstentions was London joined by Carlisle, Chichester, Coventry, Guildford, Hereford, Rochester, Islington, Lancaster and Burnley and also, surprisingly, Dudley). There was also a high number of clergy abstaining (26, only item 60 having more) with 54 voting for and over twice that number (115) against. A similar pattern of voting was evident too among the laity with 17 abstentions, 67 for and 113 against.

Item 45 – Remove apology

[Item 45](#), the first of the 5 amendments from a revisionist member, (here Jayne Ozanne), sought to remove the apology from the motion. This led to the only unanimous episcopal vote during the proceedings (42 bishops against), the lowest number of clergy for (though many openly gay revisionist clergy) and highest number of clergy against (46-136 with 16 abstentions). It also saw the strongest rejection among the laity (56-131 with 14 abstentions). Interestingly, a number of conservative laity (including Ed Shaw, Sam Margrave and Luke Appleton) voted for it and a larger number of them (including Ben John, Ros Clarke, Prudence Dailey, Ros Clarke and Rebecca Hunt) abstained.

Item 51 – Consult the Communion

The next amendment voted on ([Item 51](#)) was moved by Busola Sodeinde, a Church Commissioner and lay member from HTB where she serves on the PCC. This sought personal consultation with “the Primate of each Province of the Anglican Communion about the potential impact of the proposals in GS 2289 on its relationship to the Church of England, the life of the Province and the effectiveness of their mission” in order to “report on the outcome of those consultations for consideration by this synod before the prayers are commended”. It was resisted by the Bishop of London on the technical ground that it requested “the Secretary General of the Synod to consult personally” and that he (William Nye) was not the person to do this, something that should have been pointed out on submission or been open to amendment if a serious flaw. In also resisting it, Archbishop Justin spoke emotionally about the experiences of Anglicans in other parts of the world:

This isn’t just about listening to the rest of the world. It’s caring. Let’s just be clear on that. It’s about people who’ll die; women who’ll be raped; children who’ll be tortured. So, when we vote, we need to think of that...We must also do right here as part of the church Catholic.

Although he then voted against the amendment he would the following week [tell the Anglican Consultative Council in Ghana](#):

When I speak of the impact that actions by the Church of England will have on those abroad in the Anglican Communion, those concerns are dismissed by many. Not all, but by many in the General Synod.

Only 2 bishops (Woolwich and Southwell & Nottingham) supported the amendment with 38 opposing and only 3 abstaining (Coventry, Leicester & Chichester). It was also clearly rejected by clergy (71-120-8) and laity (114-10-13) though strongly supported by the co-opted UKME/GMH members (4-1 among clergy, 3-1 among laity).

The next 5 amendments all focussed on section (d) of the bishops' motion that the Synod "welcome the decision of the House of Bishops to replace *Issues in Human Sexuality* with new pastoral guidance".

Item 52 – Remove welcome to replacing *Issues* with new pastoral guidance

The first vote was on Sam Margrave's attempt ([Item 52](#)) simply to remove this from the motion. Though supported by the bishops of Woolwich and Islington this was opposed by 37 bishops with only 3 (St Albans, Chichester and Southwell & Nottingham) abstaining. It lost by well over 2-1 among the clergy (on whom *Issues* has most significant impact) with only 60 supporting (the second lowest vote for a conservative amendment) and 136 opposing (the highest vote against, equal to that against the apology) and just 5 abstaining. Although not quite as decisive it was similarly poorly supported by the laity (69) and had more opponents than any other conservative amendment (120) with just 11 abstentions. Likely explanations here include once again the reactions of many to the proposer, the fact that *Issues* is 32 years old and most accept it needs replacing by something, and there were 3 further conservative amendments which enabled a more nuanced and qualified response to the bishops' wording.

Item 53 – Simply note not welcome plans re *Issues* and pastoral guidance

[Item 53](#) proposed by Christopher Townsend sought to replace "welcome" by "note" and it led to the first major crack in the bishops' resistance to amendments with 7 bishops (Chichester, Guildford, Leicester, Sheffield, Southwell & Nottingham, Lancaster and Warrington) supporting and a further 6 abstaining (Durham, Chester, Leeds, Rochester, Truro and Woolwich) leaving 30 opposing. This was also a much closer vote among the clergy (92-107-1) and the first time an amendment was supported by the laity (103-95-2) meaning it lost overall by only 7 votes in the combined non-episcopal houses. A key reason here was doubtless that the bishops have yet to begin work on what will replace *Issues* and have given no serious signals as to how it may be altered so "note" would appear a more reasonable response than "welcome".

Item 54 – Add conscience clause

The next amendment ([Item 54](#)) came from Christina Baron a revisionist who is on the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC). It addressed a key contentious issue in *Issues* - its granting of greater freedom of conscience to laity than clergy - and sought to require the bishops to "allow freedom of conscience for clergy and ordinands". This led to the first episcopal support for an amendment from 3 revisionist bishops (Oxford, Reading and Eds&lps) with no less than 7 abstaining and these being an interesting mix of more conservative (Hereford, Sheffield and Southwell & Nottingham) and more revisionist (Bristol, Liverpool, Worcester and Dudley). Among clergy it was lost 75 to 116 with 10 abstentions and, surprisingly, given it related to clergy conscience and the laity were generally more conservative, it fared better among the laity with 81 for and 118 against and only 2 abstentions.

Item 55 – Conform guidance to doctrine

Another lay member of CNC, this time an evangelical, Debbie Buggs, proposed [Item 55](#) which sought to ensure that the new guidance was “consonant with the doctrine of the Church of England and the responsibility of its ministers to order their lives according to the same”. Here again there was one of the highest cracks in the general episcopal resistance to amendments with 7 supporting (Carlisle, Hereford, Sheffield, Southwell & Nottingham, Truro, Woolwich and Lancaster) and 7 abstaining (Chester, Chichester, Coventry, Guildford, Leicester, St Albans and Islington) but still more than twice as many (29) voting against including some (such as Durham and Burnley) who might have been expected to abstain or vote for. Among the clergy a net 7 votes that had supported Item 53 shifted to oppose this amendment resulting in a vote of 85-114-1 and there was a similar drop (8 votes) among the laity leading to an exact mirror image of the positive vote for that earlier “note not welcome” amendment (95-103-3).

Item 56 – Request Synod approve draft Guidance

The next amendment – [Item 56](#) – moved from substance back to process as the Revd Patrick Richmond sought to “request a draft be brought to General Synod for approval prior to publication”. This received less episcopal support (perhaps not wishing to apparently grant Synod rights over what has traditionally been a solely episcopal process whether with the original *Issues* or subsequent Pastoral Statements). Only 4 bishops (Guildford, St Albans, Woolwich and Lancaster) supported it with Carlisle abstaining but 39 bishops opposing, the highest number apart from the unanimous refusal to remove the apology. Among clergy the vote switched back to be very similar to that on Item 53 (94-106-0) and the same shift among the laity led again to them supporting this amendment (104-96-2). As a result the vote in the combined houses of clergy and laity showed only a majority of 4 against this amendment, the smallest majority opposed to an amendment within this constituency.

Item 57 – Request further legal and theological work on prayers and guidance

Having completed and survived the 5 votes relating to the replacement of *Issues*, the bishops’ motion next faced in [Item 57](#) its most significant challenge to date both in terms of its effect and its supporters. It sought to remove the remaining two paragraphs which related to *Prayers of Love and Faith* that read

- (e) welcome the response from the College of Bishops and look forward to the House of Bishops further refining, commending and issuing the Prayers of Love and Faith described in GS 2289 and its Annexes;
- (f) invite the House of Bishops to monitor the Church’s use of and response to the Prayers of Love and Faith, once they have been commended and published, and to report back to Synod in five years’ time;

and replace them with a new agenda, process and more open timetable in relation to both the prayers and the pastoral guidance through a call to

request the House of Bishops to give further legal, theological, and practical consideration to the Prayers of Love and Faith, and to ensure that proper legal and theological consideration is given to the new pastoral guidance; and to provide the General Synod with the opportunity to assess the Prayers together with the new pastoral guidance at the earliest point reasonably possible.

The motion was proposed by Kate Wharton, the York Prolocutor (elected Chair of the House of Clergy) and supported by the Canterbury Prolocutor, Luke Miller, in one of the few substantively theological speeches of the debate. Among those seeking to speak in its support but unable to do so before Synod moved to a vote was Bishop Christopher Cocksworth who had chaired the *Living in Love and Faith* project. He has subsequently [written important reflections](#) highlighting what he sees as some of the “legal, theological and practical” issues that still need to be addressed. It was widely believed that the Bishop of London had signalled she would accept this amendment but instead she resisted it although 15 bishops – the largest minority vote among the bishops – then supported it. Most of these were more conservative bishops including all bar one of those in the House who had [published a theological defence of the church’s teaching on marriage](#) (Durham, Carlisle, Chichester, Coventry, Guildford, Leicester, Rochester, Sheffield, Southwell & Nottingham, Truro, Woolwich, Islington, Lancaster, Burnley) but Portsmouth also supported it. Two others – Chester and Hereford – abstained leaving 27 who voted against. There was, however, no such significant shift among the clergy (despite the lead of the two Prolocutors) or the laity with both of them rejecting the proposal (90-108-2 and 97-104-1 respectively).

[Item 58 – Request full theological rationale for prayers](#)

Although less radical, similar concerns were expressed in [Item 58](#) moved by Ian Paul which would have removed just (e) but also invited “the College and House of Bishops to offer a full theological rationale for the proposed Prayers of Love and Faith, grounded in the Scriptures and the formularies of the Church, and which engages with the previous statements made by the House on the nature of marriage”. He warned

We are deeply divided on this and I think in many parts of the church, trust and confidence in episcopal leadership is at a catastrophic low. We long to trust you, we long to follow your leadership, we long to be guided by you as our shepherds, but we cannot do that if you will not show us the theological working, how you are building on all the good work that’s been done in the past. If you do not do this I think we will find now and in July, we are more divided than ever.

This appeal had significant but also much less episcopal support with most of the 15 supporters of the previous amendment dividing between 8 voting for (Chichester, Coventry, Guildford, Southwell & Nottingham, Woolwich, Islington, Lancaster and Burnley) and 6, perhaps seeing the writing on the wall, abstaining (Hereford, Leicester, Rochester, St Albans, Sheffield and Truro) so those opposing rose to 29. Among clergy the voting figures almost exactly replicated those for the previous motion (89-108-3) but the laity only just defeated it by the narrowest of margins (98-99-1).

[Item 59 – Remove welcome prayers and their future commending](#)

The next amendment, [Item 59](#), was the third from Sam Margrave to be subjected to a vote by Houses. This sought simply to remove (e) with its welcome of the bishops’ response and anticipation of them commending and issuing the proposed prayers after refinement. Here the conservative episcopal support crumpled with only Islington supporting and Guildford and Burnley abstaining and 38 rejecting the proposed deletion. Similar but less dramatic drops appeared among the clergy (77-118-4) and laity (82-111-3).

[Item 60 – Remove welcome, require reflection on feedback on prayers](#)

Following a vote to extend the sitting, Wednesday ended with consideration of [Item 60](#), a second amendment from Jayne Ozanne which sought more careful surgery of (e), removing the “welcome” and requiring the bishops to reflect “on feedback from General Synod” before commending prayers.

This received the support of only 2 bishops (Bristol and Liverpool) with Derby abstaining but 38 again opposing. Among the clergy and laity this amendment was marked by a number of peculiar features and it is unclear whether this was due to exhaustion and confusion at the end of the day or some other factors. Most obvious was the enormous number of abstentions. These included both leading conservatives (like John Dunnett and Charlie Skrine, who presumably would approve of removing the “welcome” but could not bring themselves to vote for an amendment that still looked forward to the prayers being issued or one proposed by Jayne Ozanne) and also leading revisionists (like Simon Butler and Rachel Mann). There was also a much more mixed group voting for (revisionists as expected but also Tom Woolford, Vaughan Roberts, Sean Doherty, Paul Chamberlain, Ed Shaw) and against (conservatives like Andrew Cornes and Stephen Hofmeyr joining revisionists like Mandy Ford and Nikki Groarke). Among the clergy the vote was 66-81-49 while the laity gave its clearest support for any amendment 89-67 with 39 abstaining. This meant that this amendment was the only one apart from that which passed that had the support of most clergy and laity. It was, perhaps, the one amendment where both clergy and laity could have voted for it especially if more conservatives had joined their same-sex attracted leaders and not abstained but voted for.

[Item 61 – Bring prayers under Canon B2](#)

Returning on Thursday morning, Synod’s attention turned to two more technical procedural amendments relating to how the process for the proposed prayers might develop. Another CNC member, Clive Scowen, sought in [Item 61](#) to remove reference to commending and issuing prayers and to ensure that they returned to Synod “as liturgical business for approval pursuant to Canon B2”. This would remove some of the problems with proceeding by the bishops simply commending prayers (the potential for legal action against clergy using them and the uncertainty as to whether they conformed to the church’s doctrine) but also make it unlikely the prayers would proceed given the need for 2/3 majorities under B2 which the votes were clearly showing would not be achieved in the laity and perhaps in the clergy. Though 6 bishops abstained (Carlisle, Hereford, Sheffield, Truro, Islington, Burnley) only 3 voted for this (Guildford, Southwell & Nottingham, Lancaster) with 29 bishops opposing, presumably because they had made a conscious decision and followed legal advice to bring the prayers under Canon B5 not B2. The vote among the clergy was in a similar ballpark to others relating to amendments concerning the prayers (85-109-1) and the laity again proved more supportive but still with a clear majority opposed (90-101-1).

[Item 62 – Give PCCs a say in use of prayers](#)

[Item 62](#) was concerned not with Synodical procedures going forward but with parish processes should the prayers be issued. Tom Woolford sought to make explicit the non-obligatory nature of the prayers and also ensure (unlike the bishops’ proposals but in line with the Pilling recommendations) that the PCC had to agree: they would be “for use in those churches where both the incumbent so desires and the PCC votes in favour of their use.” Once again the bishops strongly resisted (27 voting against) with 5 bishops supporting (Woolford’s two bishops in Burnley and Lancaster and Carlisle, Chester and Guildford) and 6 abstaining including two unexpected diocesans (Leeds and Lichfield) alongside Durham, Hereford, Southwell & Nottingham and Islington. The clergy vote here was only 2 different from on the previous proposal (83-107-7) but, for the fourth time, by the narrowest of margins the laity (doubtless keen that lay people have a say at parish level through the PCC) supported the proposal (95-94-6).

[Item 64 – Request vote on equal marriage in July](#)

Jayne Ozanne proposed her third amendment as [Item 64](#). This would have removed (f) and replaced it with a request to the bishops “to end discrimination on the grounds of sexuality by bringing forward proposals to the July 2023 group of sessions that will provide for equal marriage in church”.

Only her own bishop (Oxford) supported this but 7 showed their sympathy by abstaining (Bristol, Liverpool, Norwich, Eds&Ips, Worcester, Dudley and Reading) leaving 33 opposed. The clergy gave its greatest support yet to a revisionist-inspired amendment but it was still clearly defeated (79-105-12) with again several prominent supporters of equal marriage abstaining (Mandy Ford, Andrew Nunn, Simon Butler). It was also though less decisively rejected by the laity (89-102-7).

Item 65 – Request vote on equal marriage within 2 years

One reason for these figures was that supporters of equal marriage were focussed on [Item 65](#), the final revisionist amendment, which seemed likely – as was proven – to get much more support. It sought to add to (f) rather than remove it by requiring the bishops to “provide for an opportunity to test the mind of Synod on the principle of equal marriage within the next two years”. 5 of the previously abstaining bishops (Bristol, Liverpool, Eds&Ips, Dudley and Reading) now joined with Oxford to support this while the 2 who still abstained (Norwich and Worcester) were joined by 2 more (Derby and Leeds). This left 30 bishops opposing (the smallest number for a revisionist amendment). Among clergy the vote was the closest of the whole debate and the nearest by some margin to the clergy supporting an amendment rejected by the bishops. 95 voted for, 97 against and 5 abstained. The laity were almost as close (96-100-2) and so across the non-episcopal houses the combined votes only had a majority of 6 against voting soon on equal marriage.

Item 67 – Endorse no change to doctrine and prayers conformed to it

The penultimate amendment voted on, [Item 67](#), was the most important as here for the first time the Bishop of London did not resist the proposal from Andrew Cornes (yet another CNC member). Rather than seeking to ask the bishops to do something they had shown no support for, it simply asked the Synod to “endorse the decision of the College and House of Bishops not to propose any change to the doctrine of marriage, and their intention that the final version of the Prayers of Love and Faith should not be contrary to or indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church of England”. This made it hard to be resisted (why stop Synod endorsing the bishops’ decision?) and also gave an opportunity for the Bishop of London to stop simply saying “No”. It led, however, to one of the most interesting of votes. Suddenly the revisionist-leaning bishops who had largely (unlike many of their conservative colleagues) rejected amendments with which they perhaps had some sympathy moved *en bloc* and as a result there was by far the smallest number of bishops on the winning side in the House – only 22 supporters (27 on item 57 was the next lowest and most had 30 or over) with 14 voting against (Bath and Wells, Bristol, Chelmsford, Derby, Ely, Liverpool, Manchester, Oxford, Portsmouth, Eds&Ips, Salisbury, Southwark, Force, Reading) and 4 abstaining (Leeds, Norwich, St Albans and Dudley). Also surprising was that the clergy, voting 100-94-3, were more supportive of this conservative amendment than the laity who were on a knife-edge (98-96-4). The 98 votes were, however, the highest for a conservative amendment (joint with Item 58) apart from the two which had significant support of 103 and 104 and overall majorities of 8 (Items 53 and 56). With echoes of Brexit the percentage of votes cast (not counting abstentions) was 52:48 among clergy and 51:49 among laity.

Item 68 – Clarify prayers not for sexually active relationships outside marriage

The final amendment, also from Cornes ([Item 68](#)), did seek to push the bishops into a more constrained space than they had already agreed to (although in line with previous legal advice). It did so by calling on them “when further refining Prayers of Love and Faith, to include instructions making it clear that they should not be used so as to indicate or imply affirmation of sexually active relationships outside Holy Matrimony or to invoke God’s blessing on such relationships”. Again 3 of the most consistent conservative dissenters (Guildford, Woolwich and Lancaster) voted for this with 8 others (Carlisle, Chester, Chichester, Hereford, St Albans, Sheffield, Truro and Islington) abstaining

but well over double their combined number (28) ensured this time Cornes was clearly defeated. Defeat was also clear in the clergy and by similar numbers to other more recent conservative amendments (82-111-6) with a lesser but still clear margin opposed among laity (90-107-2).

Item 11 – Final vote on motion as amended

And so, at last, the final vote on the amended motion (known as [Item 11](#)) was taken. All except 6 of the conservative bishops voted for it (some, as made clear by Truro, doubtless because of that successful Cornes amendment) with only 4 voting against (Guildford, Southwell & Nottingham, Lancaster and Islington) and 2 abstaining (Coventry and Burnley). The clergy were also strongly in favour (111-85-3) but the laity much less so (103-92-5), once again landing in the Brexit zone at 53% to 47%. In terms of the whole Synod membership this meant the vote was 250-181-10, a strong majority of 69 and a vote (excluding abstentions) of 58% to 42%. Excluding the bishops (whose proposals Synod were considering), the combined vote of clergy and laity was still clear: 214-177-8 (majority of 37) or 55:45.

One interesting feature of the final vote is that among the clergy and laity those who had amended the motion overwhelmingly then still voted against it as amended while those who fought against the amendment then overwhelmingly supported the final amended motion.

Where Cornes voters went:

Cornes Vote	For Final	Against Final	Abstain Final
Clergy For (100)	13	84	3
Clergy Against (94)	92	1	
Clergy Abstain (3)	3		
Laity For (98)	8	86	4
Laity Against (96)	90	3	1
Laity Abstain (4)	4		

Where final votes came from compared to Cornes:

Final Vote	For Cornes	Against Cornes	Abstain Cornes
Clergy For (111)	13	92	3
Clergy Against (85)	84	1	
Clergy Abstain (3)	3		
Laity For (103)	8	90	4
Laity Against (92)	86	3	
Laity Abstain (5)	4	1	

General Synod Votes on LLF: Analysis of Voting

Stepping back to look at the voting as a whole what follows offers an overview of the voting patterns by looking first at each of the 3 Houses in turn and how they voted across the various amendments and the final vote. Then it looks at the voting by diocese in relation to the Cornes amendment that was passed and the final vote on the motion as amended before briefly looking at the voting of the various members of Synod who are not elected by the clergy and laity of particular dioceses.

The House of Bishops

As the account of the votes makes clear, it soon became obvious that the Bishop of London would be resisting the multiple amendments and would consistently have the support of a majority of the bishops in so doing. This meant (with the one exception that she accepted, item 67 from Andrew Cornes) they would fall even if supported by clergy and laity as votes were by House with all 3 Houses required to agree. This understandably led to some significant frustration among many Synod members as evidenced by a contribution from Stephen Hofmeyr and the response to it. However, in their defence it needs to be noted that:

1. no vote was lost only in the House of Bishops as Clergy also rejected all defeated amendments and on only on three occasions did Laity support amendments which failed in the other two Houses,
2. the bishops themselves always had dissenters from the episcopal majority (ranging from a single vote, though supported in those cases by between 2 and 11 abstentions, to 15 votes) with the sole exception being the vote to remove the apology where they were unanimous with no votes against or abstentions
3. while the two Archbishops consistently rejected every amendment except Item 67, Gloucester and Newcastle were the only other bishops to replicate this pattern (London, interestingly, abstained on one vote as did Lichfield).

Across all the votes, [44 bishops recorded a vote](#) at least once and it needs to be noted that there were 5 diocesan vacancies where 4 of these (Winchester, Peterborough, Birmingham and Blackburn) had been previously filled by bishops who could be expected to be more conservative.

The amendments which had the largest minorities among bishops were those removing support for commending the prayers and calling for “further legal, theological, and practical consideration” before returning to Synod (Item 57, supported by 15 bishops) and the one amendment carried (where, significantly, 14 bishops voted against).

The [figures of support for the 12 failed conservative amendments](#) (ie excluding the Cornes amendment which also had the support of the Archbishops, London, Newcastle, Gloucester and Lichfield all of whom who otherwise did not support any conservative amendments) among the bishops shows that [there were 19 bishops](#) who voted for at least one of these. The number of these amendments supported by bishops (with the number they abstained on and number they opposed in brackets, some were not present or did not record a vote on one or more amendments) was:

Amendments supported	Bishops
8	Woolwich (1/3), Lancaster (1/3)
7	Guildford (3/2)
6	Southwell & Nottingham (2/1)
4	Islington (5/3)
3	Chichester (5/4), Burnley (3/6), Carlisle (4/3), Sheffield (3/6)
2	Truro (4/6), Leicester (3/6)

1	Hereford (6/3), Durham (2/9), Chester (4/6), Rochester (3/8), Warrington (0/11), Coventry (3/4), St Albans (5/4), Portsmouth (0/12)
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None of these 19 voted for any of the 5 revisionist-sponsored amendments and 4 of the 5 most supportive also voted against the final motion (Woolwich being the exception).

In addition to these 19 there were 4 other bishops who [abstained on one or more conservative amendments other than Cornes](#):

Amendments abstained on (other than Cornes)	Bishops
2	Leeds
1	Dudley, London, Lichfield

There was much less episcopal support for [the revisionist-sponsored amendments](#) (one of which – removing the apology – got no support from bishops) with only 6 bishops giving them support (again the number of these amendments they abstained on followed by those they voted against are in brackets showing both Bristol and Liverpool either supported or abstained on all except the anti-apology one):

Amendments supported	Bishops
3	Oxford (0/2)
2	Bristol (2/1), Liverpool (2/1), Reading (1/2), Eds&Ips (1/2)
1	Dudley (2/2)

None of these 6 bishops voted for any conservative amendments although Dudley abstained on 2 of them.

There were 12 bishops (ie an additional 7) [who abstained on 1 or more of the revisionist amendments](#) but 3 of these were conservatives who abstained on item 54 permitting freedom of conscience to clergy and ordinands in new pastoral guidance (2 of them having just voted for the conservative amendment seeking to “note” rather than “welcome” the decision to replace *Issues* and the other not registering a vote):

Amendments abstained on	Bishops
3	Worcester
2	Bristol, Liverpool, Dudley, Norwich, Derby
1	Eds&Ips, Leeds, Reading, Hereford, Sheffield, Southwell & Nottingham

What is significant, however, is that 18 bishops (2 of whom – Portsmouth & St Albans - supported a different conservative amendment) did not support the Cornes amendment despite the fact that this endorsed “the decision of the College and House of Bishops not to propose any change to the doctrine of marriage, and their intention that the final version of the Prayers of Love and Faith should not be contrary to or indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church of England”. This is probably the best sign of how many and which bishops are eager or at least willing to move away from the doctrine of marriage. They were:

Vote on Cornes	Bishops
Against (14 bishops)	Oxford, Bristol, Liverpool, Reading, Eds&Ips, Salisbury, Bath&Wells, Chelmsford, Derby, Southwark, Forces, Manchester, Ely, Portsmouth
Abstain (4 bishops)	Dudley, Norwich, Leeds, St Albans

There were also 3 bishops who did not record a vote. Two of these (Dover and Sodor & Man) did not vote at all on Thursday morning and presumably were absent, Worcester did vote later and is known to support a change to marriage doctrine.

Breaking down [how many bishops voted for conservative \(vertical\) and revisionist \(horizontal\) amendments](#) shows that just over half the bishops (25) voted for none or only one:

Votes For	0	1	2	3	4	5	TOT
0	13	1	4	1			19
1	8						8
2	6						6
3	2						2
4	4						4
5	1						1
6							
7	1						1
8	1						1
9	2						2
10							
11							
12							
13							
TOT	38	1	4	1			

Overall the voting of the 44 bishops could therefore be summarised as follows:

- 4 bishops voted for Cornes but against all other amendments (Canterbury, York, Newcastle, Gloucester)
- 2 bishops voted for Cornes and abstained on one of the other conservative amendments but opposed all others (London, Lichfield)
- 2 bishops voted against all amendments on which they voted but recorded no vote on Cornes or the final motion (Dover, Sodor & Man)
- 11 bishops voted for more than 1 conservative amendment and no revisionist amendments. 6 of these supported the final motion (Woolwich, Chichester, Carlisle, Sheffield, Truro, Leicester) and 4 of these voted against it (Lancaster, Islington, Guildford, Southwell & Nottingham) while 1 abstained (Burnley).
- 6 bishops supported 1 conservative amendment in addition to Cornes but no revisionist amendments with 5 of these voting for the final motion (Hereford, Durham, Chester, Rochester, Warrington) and 1 abstaining (Coventry).
- 2 bishops voted for just one conservative amendment but voted against (Portsmouth) or abstained (St Albans) on Cornes.
- 17 other bishops signalled by failing to vote for Cornes (13 against, 3 abstained, see table above plus Worcester) that they did not wish to support Synod endorsing the bishops'

decisions to keep marriage doctrine and conform the prayers to it and by not supporting any conservative amendment. Of these 9 supported or abstained on at least 1 revisionist amendment.

The House of Clergy

When attention is focused on the House of Clergy, 202 members recorded a vote in at least one division and all amendments were lost apart from Cornes. A similar breakdown of votes in relation to the conservative-sponsored and revisionist-sponsored amendments gives some sense of the spread of opinions among the elected clergy.

Of the [13 conservative amendments](#) including Cornes the following table shows how many clergy voted how many times for these amendments:

No. of Amendments supported	Number of clergy supporting this number (Brackets showing number of these voting for Cornes)	% of clergy who voted supporting this number
13	36 (36)	17.8
12	26 (26)	12.9
11	7 (7)	3.5
10	8 (8)	4.0
9	3 (3)	1.5
8	4 (4)	2.0
7	1 (1)	0.5
6	2 (2)	1.0
5	3 (3)	1.5
4	2 (1)	1.0
3	2 (1)	1.0
2	3 (3)	1.5
1	12 (5)	5.9
0	93 (0)	46.0

This suggests that about 52% of the clergy are solidly opposed to attempts to move to a more conservative stance than that proposed by the bishops, rejecting all or all but one of the conservative amendments. The polarisation is also clear – over a third of clergy were at the other extreme voting for 11, 12 or 13 of the conservative amendments. Those voting more selectively for the conservative amendments and doing so between 2 and 11 times totalled to only 35, fewer than those who voted for all 13 of the amendments.

Looking at the figures in relation to [the 5 revisionist amendments](#) shows more of a spread and suggests that revisionist clergy, while in a large block opposing conservative amendments, were much more varied in their level of support for revisionist proposals, perhaps following the lead of bishops and generally resisting changes to the original motion. Well over a third of the clergy rejected all these amendments and 56% rejected all or all but one.

No. of Amendments supported	Number of clergy supporting this number	% of clergy who voted supporting this number
5	27	13.4
4	21	10.4
3	23	11.4

2	17	8.4
1	39	19.3
0	75	37.1

Taking the two groups of amendments together [the table below](#) maps how many clergy voted how many times for the various combinations. The top left confirms that in contrast to the bishops there were relatively few clergy who simply resisted most or all amendments whether conservative or revisionist. It also shows that while few strong revisionists supported any conservative amendments, a number of votes for revisionist amendments came from strong conservatives, notably for Item 60 which removed welcoming the bishops' response and asked them to reflect on Synod's feedback in refining the prayers which gained significant support from conservatives.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	TOT
0	7	8	13	20	19	26	93
1	5	2	3	1		1	12
2	1	1	1				3
3					2		2
4		2					2
5	2			1			3
6	1	1					2
7	1						1
8	4						4
9	3						3
10	7	1					8
11	6	1					7
12	14	11		1			26
13	24	12					36
TOT	75	39	17	23	21	27	

The House of Laity

The 204 laity who registered a vote at least once, and who voted in favour of four of the conservative amendments including Cornes, were similarly polarised. In terms of [support for conservative amendments](#) there was a more solidly wholly conservative proportion than among the clergy with over 1/5th of lay people supporting all of them and nearly 1/3rd supporting all or all but one:

No. of Amendments supported	Number of clergy supporting this number (Brackets showing number of these voting for Cornes)	% of clergy who voted supporting this number
13	45 (45)	22.1
12	19 (19)	9.3
11	10 (10)	4.9
10	8 (7)	3.9
9	7 (4)	3.4
8	2 (2)	1.0
7	1 (1)	0.5
6	5 (3)	2.5
5	1 (1)	0.5

4	2 (0)	1.0
3	4 (2)	2.0
2	6 (3)	2.9
1	7 (1)	3.4
0	87 (0)	42.6

The laity were not quite as polarised as the clergy with 46 people voting for between 2 and 11 amendments although as with the clergy that was about the same number as voting for all 13 of them.

For [the 5 revisionist amendments](#), however, nearly 1/5th of lay members voted for all of them, about 50% higher than among the clergy. Whereas among the clergy 93 rejected all conservative amendments but only 27 supported all revisionists, among the laity 87 rejected all conservative but 40 voted for all revisionist amendments. However, just over a third rejected all revisionist proposed changes and over half either rejected them all or all but one of them (as with the clergy).

No. of Amendments supported	Number of clergy supporting this number	% of clergy who voted supporting this number
5	40	19.6
4	19	9.3
3	23	11.3
2	14	6.9
1	38	18.6
0	70	34.3

Repeating the analysis breaking down how many members voted for how many conservative and how many revisionist amendments yields [the following results for laity](#):

	0	1	2	3	4	5	TOT
0	4	3	7	21	16	36	87
1	1	3		1		2	7
2	1	3	2				6
3	1	2				1	4
4	1				1		2
5	1						1
6	3	1		1			5
7	1						1
8	1	1					2
9	4				2	1	7
10	4	3	1				8
11	4	3	3				11
12	14	5					19
13	30	14	1				45
TOT	70	38	14	23	19	40	204

Votes by Dioceses

In order to see the spread of votes across the church and how divided the church is across its 43 dioceses in Synod (Channel Islands are treated as a diocese here) it is helpful to look at how the

votes split among clergy and among laity in each diocese both in relation to the Cornes amendment (data [here](#)) and the final vote (data [here](#)).

Cornes

There were **8 dioceses where both houses supported Cornes** and interestingly the largest overall majority across both houses for it was in London (9) with Blackburn and Chichester (5) and Birmingham and Guildford (4) also having most Synod members supporting. It is also noteworthy – given the known views of its bishops – that both clergy and laity (albeit narrowly by 5-4 in both houses) supported it in Oxford and that Liverpool clergy and laity also gave it support as did all reps from Sodor and Man.

In contrast there were **5 dioceses where it was lost in both houses** with Newcastle having all its members opposing and Worcester (reflecting its bishops' views) also having a significant number opposed. St Albans was also against as were Carlisle and Derby.

In **2 dioceses both houses were tied** (Rochester and Salisbury).

In another **15 dioceses one of the houses was tied** (9 in clergy where 5 of these had laity supporting and 6 in laity where half of these had clergy supporting and half opposing).

There were **6 dioceses where the clergy supported Cornes but the laity opposed it** (Channel Islands, Chester, Hereford, Leeds, Lincoln, Portsmouth) and in all of these except Portsmouth most Synod members for the diocese were against.

In contrast there were **7 dioceses where clergy opposed but laity supported** and here most (Durham, Exeter, Sheffield and Truro) had an overall majority of just one supporting with 2 having an overall majority of one against (Bristol, Eds&Ips) and Southwark having a strong majority of 3 against due to only 2 of its 8 clergy supporting Cornes.

Stepping back to see the big picture this means that there were **15 dioceses where the clergy opposed the Cornes amendment and 15 where the laity were opposed.**

In contrast there were **17 dioceses where clergy supported it and 20 where the laity supported it.**

If we look at the total votes across both houses in each diocese, in **22 dioceses most members voted for** (but in 9 only by a majority of 1), **2 were tied** (Portsmouth and Rochester) while **20 had majorities against** (but in 8 only by a majority of 1).

Diocese	Clergy Maj	Lay Maj	C+L Maj	Bishop(s) Maj
Bath and Wells	0	1	1	-1
Birmingham	3	1	4	
Blackburn	3	2	5	2
Bristol	-2	1	-1	-1
Canterbury	0	-1	-1	1
Carlisle	-1	-1	-2	1
Channel Islands	1	-2	-1	
Chelmsford	-1	0	-1	-1
Chester	1	-4	-3	1
Chichester	1	4	5	1
Coventry	0	1	1	
Derby	-1	-1	-2	-1
Durham	-1	2	1	1
Ely	0	1	1	-1
Europe	0	-3	-3	
Exeter	-1	2	1	
Gloucester	-1	0	-1	1
Guildford	2	2	4	1
Hereford	1	-2	-1	1
Leeds	1	-5	-4	0
Leicester	0	-3	-3	1
Lichfield	3	0	3	1
Lincoln	1	-2	-1	
Liverpool	1	1	2	0 (1-1)
London	5	4	9	2
Manchester	-5	0	-5	-1
Newcastle	-3	-3	-6	1
Norwich	0	3	3	0
Oxford	1	1	2	-2
Peterborough	0	1	1	
Porstmouth	3	-1	2	-1
Rochester	0	0	0	1
Salisbury	0	0	0	-1
Sheffield	-1	2	1	1
Sodor and Man	1	1	2	
Southwark	-4	1	-3	0 (1-1)
Southwell & Nottingham	0	-2	-2	1
St Albans	-1	-2	-3	0
St Edmundsbury & Ipswich	-2	1	-1	-1
Truro	-1	2	1	1
Winchester	1	0	1	
Worcester	-1	-3	-4	0
York	2	0	2	1

Final Vote

What is interesting is that overwhelmingly those who voted for Cornes then opposed the final motion as amended whereas those who opposed Cornes then almost all voted for the final motion. The diocesan results are therefore more a mirror image of Cornes when it comes to the final vote.

On the final vote, there were **11 dioceses where both houses supported the motion** (Newcastle and the Channel Islands were unanimous as were the laity in Eds&lps and Worcester with Chester, Lincoln, St Albans, Worcester, Derby, Salisbury having overall majorities of 4 and Carlisle, Carlisle and Canterbury having 3 and 2 respectively).

However, there were **5 dioceses where both houses rejected the final motion** with London being the strongest (a majority of 3 against in both houses) and Chichester and Blackburn also quite emphatic but Guildford less so. Sodor and Man was the only diocese where all were opposed.

In no diocese were both houses tied.

In 10 dioceses the clergy were split down the middle. In 5 of these the laity were for (Europe where they were unanimous and Leeds which also had a lay majority of 3, joined by Hereford, Leicester and Southwell & Nottingham where the majority was only 1) and **in 5 laity were against** (Lichfield and Norwich by a majority of 3, Oxford by a majority of 2 and Peterborough and Bath & Wells only by 1).

There were also **9 dioceses where the laity were tied. In 6 of these the clergy were supportive** (Manchester and Southwark with majorities of 5, Bristol with 2 and Chelmsford, Gloucester where only one clergy member voted and Truro a clergy majority of 1) whereas in **3 the clergy were opposed** (York and Rochester by a margin of 2, Winchester by just 1).

In 6 dioceses the clergy supported the motion but the laity opposed it (Coventry, Durham, Ely, Exeter, Liverpool, Sheffield)

In 2 dioceses laity supported the final motion but clergy opposed it (Birmingham and Portsmouth in both of which clergy voted 2-1 against and laity 2-1 for).

Aggregating across these different divisions there were **10 dioceses where the clergy opposed the final motion and 16 where the laity were opposed**. In contrast there were **23 dioceses where clergy supported it but only 18 where the laity supported it**.

If we look at the total votes across both houses in each diocese, in **23 dioceses most members voted for** (but in 7 only by a majority of 1), **4 were tied** (Portsmouth, Coventry, Liverpool and Birmingham) while **16 had majorities against** (but in 6 only by a majority of 1).

Diocese	Clergy Maj	Lay Maj	C+L Maj	Bishop(s) Maj
Bath and Wells	0	-1	-1	1
Birmingham	-1	1	0	
Blackburn	-3	-2	-5	-1
Bristol	2	0	2	1
Canterbury	1	1	2	1
Carlisle	1	2	3	1
Channel Islands	1	2	3	
Chelmsford	1	0	1	1
Chester	1	4	5	1
Chichester	-1	-4	-5	1
Coventry	1	-1	0	0
Derby	1	3	4	1
Durham	1	-2	-1	1
Ely	2	-1	1	1
Europe	0	3	3	
Exeter	1	-2	-1	
Gloucester	1	0	1	1
Guildford	-2	-1	-3	-1
Hereford	0	1	1	1
Leeds	0	3	3	1
Leicester	0	1	1	1
Lichfield	0	-3	-3	1
Lincoln	2	2	4	
Liverpool	1	-1	0	2
London	-3	-3	-6	0 (1-1)
Manchester	5	0	5	1
Newcastle	3	3	6	1
Norwich	0	-3	-3	1
Oxford	0	-2	-2	2
Peterborough	0	-1	-1	
Porstmouth	-1	1	0	1
Rochester	-2	0	-2	1
Salisbury	2	2	4	1
Sheffield	1	-2	-1	1
Sodor and Man	-1	-1	-2	
Southwark	5	0	5	2
Southwell & Nottingham	0	1	1	-1
St Albans	1	3	4	1
St Edmundsbury & Ipswich	2	3	5	1
Truro	1	0	1	1
Winchester	-1	0	-1	
Worcester	1	3	4	1
York	-2	0	-2	1

Non-Diocesan Votes

There were 27 non-diocesan members who voted at some point during the votes. They are grouped into members of Archbishops' Council, other ex officio, armed forces, Universities and Theological Education Institutions, and Co-opted GMH/UKME.

Cornes

The amendment was won narrowly among clergy (8-7) and more decisively among laity (6-3-1).

Among the clergy, the one member on Archbishops' Council voted against Cornes as did the one representing religious communities. There was also a majority against (2-1) among armed forces but the ex officio clergy were split down the middle (1-1) and were the TEIs (2-2). All 4 voting UKME/GMH clergy voted for the amendment.

The laity on Archbishops' Council voted for (2 for and 1 abstaining) as did the one lay person for the Armed Forces but the one lay ex officio member voted against. The religious communities were tied (1-1) and UKME/GMH clergy in favour by 2-1.

Final Vote

The final vote was won among both clergy (10-5) and, more narrowly, laity (6-4).

It was supported by the sole clergy person from Archbishops' Council, all 3 armed forces, and both *ex officio* but no religious community clergy voted. As with Cornes, the TEIs were split down the middle. Clergy UKME/GMH voted against by 3-2.

Among laity it was lost among Archbishops' Council reps (by 2-1) but supported by the sole reps for the armed forces and ex officio and both religious community members. As among the clergy it was lost among UKME/GMH laity (by 2-1).

Appendix: Using Airtable database links

The links take you to a view of an Airtable database. At the top of this there are various options to enable presentation of the data in different ways:

1. Hide fields – if you wish to keep all the rows but focus on certain columns you can hide fields that are not of interest
2. Filter – you can use this to select certain rows based on conditions for particular columns
3. Group – you can group the rows under different headings and sub-headings based on the fields
4. Sort – this allows you to sort the rows based on conditions for particular columns eg to get them in an alphabetical or numerical order
5. Row height – this can be adjusted to make the rows a greater height than their default “short” form
6. Print – you can print the data using the option under the three dots
7. Search – at the far right there is a search function which works across every row and column.
8. In some tables, the name of some fields at the top of their column has an “i” which if clicked gives a short description of that field.