

J STRUCTURES 7 Synod Standing Orders

The Agenda of Synod

- 1 At its meeting the Synod shall consider reports and draft resolutions prepared by its committees, resolutions submitted by District Councils, and resolutions and amendment of which due notice has been given submitted by local churches and individual members of Synod.
- 2 The Synod Executive shall prepare, before each meeting of the Synod, an Order of Business.
- 3 The Resolutions arising from any report or section thereof shall be taken in the following order:
 - i) resolutions of the Committee of which due notice has been given;
 - ii) any relevant District or Local Church resolutions;
 - iii) duly seconded resolutions submitted by individual members of the Synod.
- 4 If notice has been given of two or more resolutions on the same subject, or two or more amendments to the same resolution, these shall be taken in the order decided by the Moderator.

Presentation of Business

- 5 All reports of **Committees**, together with the draft resolutions arising therefrom, shall be delivered to the Clerk by a date to be determined, so that they may be printed and circulated to members at least 7 days before the date of the Synod meeting.
- 6 A **District Council** may deliver to the Clerk not less than 4 weeks before the commencement of the meeting of the Synod notice in writing for consideration at the Synod. This notice should include the names of those appointed to propose and second the motion at the Synod.
- 7 A **local church** wishing to put forward a motion for consideration by the General Assembly shall first submit the motion to its District Council for consideration and, if thought fit, transmission to the Synod, at such time as will enable the District Council to comply with Standing Order 6 above.
- 8 A **member of Synod** may deliver to the Clerk not less than 7 days before the date of the meeting of the Synod a notice in writing of a motion (which notice must include the name of a seconder) to be included in the Synod agenda. If the subject matter of such a notice of motion appears to the Clerk to be an infringement of the rights of a District Council through which the matter should properly have been raised, the Clerk shall inform the member accordingly and bring the matter before the Synod Executive who shall advise the Synod as to the procedure to be followed.

Resolutions

- 9 When a report has been presented to the Synod the first motion on the report shall be '***That this report be received for debate***'. On this being passed, and before any consequent recommendations are proposed, any member may speak to a matter arising from the report which is not the subject of a motion. It shall not be in order to move an amendment or

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a reference back to this motion. The passing of this motion shall not be deemed to commit the Synod to the acceptance of any matter contained in the report.

- 10 During a meeting of the Synod and on the report of a Committee, notice (including the names of proposer and seconder) shall be given to the Clerk of **any new resolutions** which arise from the material of the report, and of any amendments which affect the substance of resolutions already presented. During the course of a debate a new motion or amendment may be stated orally without supporting speech in order to ascertain whether as member is willing to second it.
- 11 No motion or amendment shall be spoken to by its proposer, debated, or put to the Synod unless it is known that there is a seconder, except that resolutions presented on behalf of a Standing Committee, of which printed notice has been given, do not need to be seconded.
- 12 A **seconder** may, if he or she then declares the intention of doing so, reserve his or her speech until a later period in the debate.
- 13 **It shall not be in order** to move a resolution which:
 - i) contravenes any part of the Basis of Union; or
 - ii) involves the Synod in expenditure without prior consideration by the appropriate committees; or
 - iii) pre-empts discussion of a matter to be considered later in the agenda; or
 - iv) infringes a decision reached by the Synod within the preceding two years.The decision of the Moderator on the application of this Standing Order shall be final.
- 14 An **amendment** shall be either to omit words or to insert words or to do both, but no amendment shall be in order which has the effect of introducing an irrelevant proposal or of negating the motion.
- 15 **If an amendment is carried**, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved. If an amendment is rejected a further amendment not to the like effect may be moved.
- 16 **An amendment which has been moved and seconded** shall be disposed of before any further amendment may be moved, but notice may be given of intention to move a further amendment should the one before the Synod be rejected.
- 17 **The mover** may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Synod, **alter a motion** or amendment he or she has proposed.
- 18 **A motion or amendment may be withdrawn** by the proposer with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Synod. Any such consent shall be signified without discussion. It shall not be competent for any member to speak upon it after the proposer has asked permission to withdraw unless such permission shall have been refused.

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Speeches

- 19 **Time allowed for speeches in presentation of the report and resolutions** of any committee shall be determined by the Moderator in consultation with the Synod Executive. The proposers of any other motion of which due notice has been given shall be allowed an aggregate of 10 minutes, unless a longer period be recommended by the Synod Executive or determined by the Moderator. Each subsequent speaker in the debate shall be allowed three minutes unless the Moderator shall determine otherwise.
- 20 **When a speech is made on behalf of a Committee**, it shall be so stated. Otherwise a speaker shall begin by stating his or her name and accreditation to the Synod.
- 21 **In each debate**, whether on a motion or on an amendment, **no-one shall address the Synod more than once**, except that at the close of each debate the proposer of the motion or the amendment, as the case may be, shall have the right to reply, but must strictly confine himself or herself to answering previous speakers and not introduce new matter.
- 22 In the case of an amendment, the **proposer of the amendment shall have the right of reply** as defined in Standing Order 21. However, the proposer of the motion under amendment shall have the right to address Synod immediately after this right to reply.
- 23 Standing Order 21 shall not prevent the asking or answering of a question which arises from the matter before the Synod or from a speech made in the debate upon it.

Closure of Debate

- 24 In the course of the business any member may move ***“That the Question under consideration be not put”***. Sometimes described as “the previous question” or “next business”, this resolution takes precedence of every motion before the Synod and as soon as the member has explained his or her reasons for proposing it, and it has been seconded, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that such a motion is an unfair use of the rules of the Synod. Should the motion be carried the business shall immediately end and the Synod proceed to the next business.
- 25 In the course of any discussion, it is competent for any member to move “the question be now put”. This is sometimes described as “the closure motion”. Unless it appears to the Moderator that such a motion is an abuse of the rules of the Synod, the vote shall be taken upon it immediately it has been seconded. When an amendment is under discussion, this motion shall apply only to that amendment. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. The mover of the original motion or amendment as the case may be retained the right of reply before the vote is taken on the motion or amendment notwithstanding that in the case of an amendment Standing Order 22 shall apply.

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- 26 The resolutions described in Standing Orders 24 and 25 above are exceptions to Standing Order 11, in that they may be moved and spoken to without the proposer having first obtained and announced the consent of a seconder. They must, however, be seconded before being put to the vote.

Voting

- 27 Unless the Synod decides that there shall be a ballot, every other question shall be determined by a **majority of votes of members of the Synod present and voting as indicated by a show of hands.**
- 28 **To provide for voting in the case of a paper ballot,** and to assist in taking a count of votes when the Moderator decides that it is necessary, the Area Secretaries shall normally act as Tellers for each Synod.

Questions

- 29 A member may, if two days notice in writing is given to the Clerk, ask the Moderator or the Convener of any Committee any question on any matter relating to the business of the Synod to which no reference is made in any report before the Synod
- 30 A member may, when given the opportunity by the Moderator, ask the presenter of any report before the Synod a question seeking additional information or explanation relating to matters contained within the report.
- 31 Questions asked under Standing Orders 29 and 30 shall be put and answered without discussion.

Points of Order, Personal Explanations, Dissent

- 32 A member shall have the right to rise and call attention to a point of order, and immediately on this being done any other member addressing the Synod shall cease speaking until the Moderator has determined the question of order. The decision on any point of order rests entirely with the Moderator.
- 33 A member feeling that some material part of a former speech by such member at the same meeting has been misunderstood or is being grossly misinterpreted by a later speaker may rise and request the Moderator's permission to make a personal explanation. If the Moderator so permits, a member so rising shall be entitled to be heard forthwith.
- 34 The right to record in the minutes a dissent from any decision of the Synod shall only be granted to a member by the Moderator if the reason stated, either verbally at the time or later in writing, appears to the Moderator to fall within the provisions of paragraph 10 of the Basis of Union.
- 35 The decision of the Moderator on a point of order, or on the admissibility of a personal explanation, or on the right to have a dissent recorded, shall not be open to discussion.

Records of the Synod

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- 36 **A record of the attendance** at the meetings of the Synod shall be kept in such a manner as the Synod Executive may determine.
- 37 **A signed copy of the minutes** shall be preserved in the custody of the Clerk as the official record of the Synod's proceedings.
- 38 The minutes together with any other relevant papers shall be **published** and a copy sent to every member of the Synod

Suspension and Amendment of Standing Orders

- 39 In any case of urgency or upon motion made on a notice duly given, any one or more of the **Standing Orders may be suspended** at any meeting so far as regards any business at such a meeting, **provided that three-fourths of the members of the Synod present and voting shall so decide.**
- 40 Resolutions to amend the Standing Orders shall be referred to the Synod Executive for report before being voted on by the Synod. The Synod Executive may itself from time to time suggest amendments to the Standing orders, which shall be subject to decision by the Synod.