

Elected Representatives of the House of Laity to Diocesan and Provincial Committees

Chairmen of the House of Laity

The Diocesan Constitution calls for the House of Laity to elect two Chairmen from among its members, at an annual meeting of Synod. Those elected may continue, as long as they continue to be elected members of Synod, for an initial period of three years. Chairmen may be elected for one further successive term only.

Should Chaplaincies decide on alternative representation at Synod, the position of Chair must be vacated. The normal payment rules for elected representatives apply to the House of Laity chairs. It is therefore essential that the chaplaincy council endorses any candidate for election to this position.

Two alternate Chairs are also elected, to serve in place of an elected member unable to serve a full term. Alternates will only serve the outstanding portion of that term, after which a fresh election will be held. Any candidate for election to the position of alternate must be endorsed by his/her Chaplaincy.

As mandated by the Constitution, the House of Laity elects one chairman from among Synod representatives normally resident in the Gulf and one from among Synod representatives normally resident in Cyprus. However, each represents the laity not only of their Archdeaconry but of the Diocese as a whole.

The two Chairmen are responsible for overseeing meetings of the House of Laity at Synod. Chairmen may also be invited, in their capacity as Chair, to be involved in other diocesan or archidiaconal activities or discussions, outside Synod. In addition, it has been customary for Chairmen to assume responsibility for new lay members of Synod, ensuring they are fully informed to enable them to participate in Synod business.

Lay Representatives to the Diocesan Standing and Finance Committee

The Diocesan Constitution calls for two members of the House of Laity to be elected to serve on the Diocesan Standing and Finance Committee, which also functions as the Bishop's Council.

Individuals are elected to a three-year term and may be re-elected. Two alternates are also elected, to serve in place of an elected member unable to serve a full term. An alternate may only serve the outstanding portion of that term, after which elections must be held.

It has been usual to stagger terms in such a way as to ensure that only one Lay representative to the Diocesan Standing and Finance Committee is elected at any single meeting of Synod, providing for continuity/overlap on the Committee.

As well as carrying on the work of Synod when Synod is not in session (as reflected in the Diocesan Constitution, sections 7(b)i&ii), the Committee meets two or three times a year to consider matters of importance to the work of the Diocese and to advise the Bishop, when requested. Members' travel and accommodation expenses are met from the Diocesan budget.

Lay members of the Standing and Finance Committee are not representatives of their Chaplaincy at Synod but are voting members of Synod *ex officio* (by right of office). Their travel and accommodation costs for Synod are met from the Diocesan budget.

Members of the Diocesan Standing and Finance Committee serve the interests of the Diocese as a whole, rather than those of one particular geographical area or demographic group. Committee members are responsible to attend scheduled meetings of the Committee, maintain communication with the Diocesan Office, and generally share responsibility for making sure that the decisions of Synod are carried out according to the Constitution.

Lay Representatives to the Provincial Synod

The Provincial Constitution calls for two members of the House of Laity to be elected as delegates of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf to the Provincial Synod. Delegates are elected for a five-year term and may be elected for only one further successive term. Delegates' travel and accommodation expenses for Provincial meetings are met from the Provincial budget.

Although not mandated by the Constitution, the House of Laity has customarily elected one delegate to Provincial Synod from among Synod representatives normally resident in the Gulf, and one from among Synod representatives normally resident in Cyprus. Two alternates are also elected, to serve in place of a delegate unable to serve a full term. An alternate may only serve the remainder of that term, after which elections must be held.

The Provincial Synod elects from among its (eight) lay members two to serve on the Provincial Standing Committee, which meets annually. The Provincial Synod must meet at least twice during the five-year period for which a delegate is elected. Meetings are usually one to two days in duration.

The Provincial Synod is the final authority on matters of Church polity, discipline and doctrine in the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East. Members are expected to maintain communication with the Provincial Secretary, participating in the decisions which affect the life of the Church in our province, its relationship with the rest of the Anglican Communion and the rest of the Body of Christ. It is therefore preferable that candidates for election to this position are people with experience of the region, beyond their own Chaplaincy.

Elected members of the Provincial Synod who are not representatives of a congregation shall attend the Diocesan Synod but shall have the right to speak and vote only on motions relating to references by the Provincial Synod (Diocesan Standing Order 7).

Vacancy-in-See Committee

The Diocesan Constitution calls for the election of a Vacancy-in-See Committee at each annual meeting of the Diocesan Synod. The House of Laity must elect six representatives (and two alternates) to this committee from among its members. Of the six members elected, at least two members must be elected from among Synod representatives normally resident in the Gulf and at least two from among representatives normally resident in Cyprus.

The Committee meets only in the event that it becomes necessary to select a new bishop for the Diocese. In such a case, it is likely that four to five meetings would be held over a period of around five to eight months. Meetings normally last no more than a day but a high volume of reading material requires considerable preparation time. Committee members are corporately responsible to determine criteria for the selection of a candidate, request nominations and evaluate responses, before presenting a candidate to Synod for approval. Members' travel and accommodation expenses for Committee meetings are met from the Diocesan budget.