The Bill was proposed by the Bishop of St Asaph, who spoke from his personal convictions, firstly, that the Church in Wales should adopt the principle of the ordination of women as bishops; and secondly, that we need to remain respectful of difference and generous in accommodation.

Bishop Gregory stressed that women bishops are not a theory but a reality in the Anglican Communion, giving a leadership to the Church which is inspirational and compassionate, rooted in holiness and dynamic in vision. “When I consider the ministry of women bishops in other parts of the Anglican Communion, and the apostolic nature of their witness, I have to ask the question ‘why has the Church failed to do this for so long?’”

Bishop Gregory considered the arguments from tradition, scripture and ecumenism that have prevented the ordination of women, and concluded that they cannot be defended. “It looks to me like a prejudice looking for a theology.”

Bishop Gregory emphasised that he respected the integrity of those who disagreed with his convictions. “I do not want to corral the Church in Wales into one body of pure and politically correct believers. So the second part of the Bill flows naturally from the first. We must work hard as a Church to create as open and broad a space for co-existence as we can. The problems are formidable—there are questions of conscience, of not creating second class bishops, of not creating second class fellowships, of providing fruitful avenues of sacramental and pastoral care for all. But we can do it. The bishops have a year to write a code. We pledge ourselves to listen to all points of view and to work as hard as we can to make the best possible provision that all can agree with in the Code.”

A Bill to enable women to be consecrated as bishops was passed by a substantial majority of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales meeting at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David in Lampeter.

This followed the Bill as presented being amended, to become a one-stage vote to enable the consecration of women as bishops, with a “code of practice” to be written by the Bishops for those who in conscience cannot accept the authority of women bishops.
Bishop Gregory urged GB to send “a positive message today to our Church, to our Communion, to our society and to our nation that in the Church in Wales women are equal in the leadership of our Church, and that we are a Church who respects difference and know how to live with it.”

The motion was seconded by the Bishop of Bangor. He felt that the earlier debate on the amendment showed a determination to work together, but to do the right thing by the Church at this time. Bishop Andy reflected on the way the early Church grappled with issues. The apostles felt competent and duty bound to respond to what God was doing; it was so profoundly different to anything they thought or imagined, but they were obedient to what the Spirit was saying to them at that moment. “Consonant with scripture, but something new.” “Keep in step with the Spirit,” urges St Paul.

“What is it that stops us from keeping in step with the Spirit today?” asked Bishop Andy. In 1919, the Church in Wales was the first Communion to admit women into the Councils of the Church; in 1975 GB said there were no fundamental objections to ordaining women; the Church in Wales was the first to ordain women as deacons. “The Church is called to make decisions which reflect the mind of God at this time.”

“We express our obedience to Christ not in hierarchy, but on how women and men respect, care and honour, rather than require, compel or assert any notion of primacy.” “The motion allows the Church to be that much more faithful to God, that much more effective in its mission to the world.”

Twenty-one people spoke in the debate that followed. Mrs Helen Biggin (co-opted) said, “This is an opportunity to do the right thing by the Church and enable women to be consecrated bishops. It is inconceivable that we have a 2020 vision for the church without this.” The Revd Jan Gould (Llandaff) agreed, “It was in 1997 that the Church in Wales ordained women into the priesthood but decided to wait for their reception before deciding on the next step. I think that the reception time is now over, it’s been 16 years.” Dr Gill Todd (Swansea and Brecon) believed it inconceivable that the Church should not be able to consecrate women as bishops. Using the gifts of both men and women will enable the Church to move forward with new opportunities.

Some speakers were concerned about the provision for those who cannot accept women bishops. The Revd Haydn England-Simon (Llandaff) asked why the Church in Wales cannot make legislative provision when the Church of England has in its Provinces Episcopal Visitors. “What will the Church in Wales do to realise Jesus’ vision that no-one will be lost?”

Canon Stephen Kirk (Llandaff) stated that he was unable to accept the principle of the bill, and “we are being asked to vote without knowing what is going to happen. Let us find out what the provision is before we vote for it.”

Bishop David Wilbourne (ex-officio) said, “The wound will always be with us – the question is do we enter into the wound?”

A number of speakers were concerned about young people. The Revd Dr Trystan Owen Hughes (Llandaff), said “Voting against this bill will be extremely damaging for young people who come to our church. Saying no to women bishops is seen as nonsensical and backwards to young people. Any problems we face will get a whole lot worse if we keep saying no to women bishops.”

The amendment to the Bill

The Bill to enable women to be consecrated as bishops as presented to the GB proposed the establishing of a Working Party to draw up a scheme of provision for members of the Church in Wales who, for reasons of conscience, dissent from the consecration of women as bishops. This scheme would become part of the Constitution.

The amendment, as now contained within the Bill, was proposed by the Venerable Peggy Jackson (Llandaff) and Canon Jenny Wigley (Llandaff). It reflected the view that there should be recognition and provision allowed for those who in individual conscience dissent from the move to consecrate women as bishops; but that those provisions should not be included in the body of formal legislation. The concern was that there should not be another piece of discriminatory legislation.

The amendment removed the ‘two-tier’ process previously proposed, whereby the first part of the Bill could not come into operation until the provisions were agreed. This could have meant the consecration of women as bishops be delayed for ever if there was failure to agree the provisions.

The amendment allowed a one-year lead time to impart a sense of urgency to the Bench of Bishops that a Code of Practice be agreed without delay; and also that the bishops may reassess as wide a range of people as possible of their good faith and desire to give a sense of security in the future to those holding different views.

Following a lengthy and passionate debate, the amendment was put to the vote, and passed with 72 for, 46 against and 6 abstentions.

Archbishop Barry promised that the bishops would consult very widely on the code of practice, that they would talk with people from all sections of the Church. There will be a discussion about the Code of Practice at the April 2014 meeting of the Governing Body, and the bishops will listen very carefully to what is being said. They will then produce the Code by the September 2014 GB. “The hope is that no-one will be lost.”

The Vote

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>House of Laity:</th>
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<tr>
<td>House of Clergy:</td>
<td>for 37, against 10, abstentions 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>House of Bishops:</td>
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Bill to enable women to be consecrated as bishops (continued)
Women Bishops (Continued)

There was considerable media interest in the debate on Women Bishops, as witnessed by the number of TV satellite vans on the campus.

However the news of the outcome of the vote was broken to the world through the continuous Twitter feed @ChurchinWales by the Church in Wales Communications Department, as acknowledged on BBC Radio Wales.

Canon Patrick Thomas “I’m happy with Bishop Wyn but would be just as happy with Bishop Wynona”

Nigel King “Do we really care whether the Bishop has external or internal plumbing?!”

Geraint Hopkins—Christ will never be irrelevant, the Church is irrelevant. The BBC is here because they think we are peculiar!”

@llanelv “What we need is a Church that commits to an equal status in our standing before God. When do we want it? Now.”

Dr Elliott King tells #govbody that the Church shouldn’t feel it has to do what secular society says.

Archdeacon William Strange says this is like going through a turnstile and a minority are anxious about what’s on the other side.

Adrian Morgan says it’s a stumbling block for him as he tries to share his faith and people are fed up with petty squabbles.

Humorous comments made as BBC have brought as ‘Scrum V’ van to #govbody. What were they expecting?

Rev. David Brownridge “my wife and I engage with God in different ways...men and women are different...don’t dismiss scripture”

The qualities we look for in a bishop will not change, we look for godliness, not manliness says Canon Jenny Wigley

Huge cheers in the hall as the Bill was passed

REPRESENTATIVE BODY REPORT

The Representative Body continues to provide financial and professional support for the Church in Wales as the process of taking forward the recommendations of the Church in Wales Review begins. It has committed itself to maintaining annual funding to dioceses in spite of continuing economic recession and instability in investment markets, but any decisions about the way in which the Church’s work is funded in the future in the light of the Review’s recommendations will be taken in conjunction with dioceses and the Governing Body.

Highlights of 2012

Financial Outturn

After a period of considerable turbulence in world investment markets, the Representative Body achieved a total return of 10.6% in 2012. Income and capital values have been recovering slowly. Although by mid-2013 capital values were back to pre-recession levels, income in 2012 was still £2.8 million below 2008. Funding for dioceses via the Block Grant has however continued to rise, and as a result, the RB continues to have an annual deficit as it seeks to shield the wider Church from the full effects of the economic crisis.

The Church in Wales Review

The RB helped to advise the Church in Wales Review Group during 2011, and welcomed its report in 2012. It is committed to working with other groups within the Church to help take forward the recommendations of that report, particularly those with financial implications for the Church.

Support for Safeguarding

The RB is keen to support the wider Church in ensuring that Safeguarding standards are maintained. One of the recommendations of the Review was that the Church required full-time professional support in this critical area. The RB agreed that the part-time Provincial Safeguarding Officer post should be upgraded to a full-time post in 2012.

A Year of Changes in Membership

2012 marked the start of a new three-year term of membership for the RB. It was also a year in which a number of senior members retired. As a result, there has been a significant change in the membership of the RB during 2012, including the retirement of Lord Rowe-Beddoe as Chairman following 10 years’ service. The RB has elected its Deputy Chairman, Mr James Turner, to be chairman. Mr Paul Marshall, Llandaff Diocesan Board of Finance Chairman, has been elected Deputy Chairman.

The Report was presented by the Representative Body’s new chairman, Mr James Turner. He reminded the GB of the primary function of the Representative Body in supporting the mission and ministry of the Church in Wales, particularly through the annual increase of the block grant to dioceses, and that it was doing this despite the considerable impact of the economic collapse. “This is to ensure that the wider Church should be shielded as far as possible from the full effects of the down-turn.”

“We are now entering a new phase in the life of the Church in Wales. It is the Representative Body’s task to consider how to respond to the challenges of the Review, to participate in the Review process, and to provide the most appropriate support for the Church in the future. It must do this in the context of the economic crisis.”

The actuarial review of the Pension Scheme is due to take place again at the end of this year. “It is possible that the Representative Body will be required to allocate a higher proportion of its assets to pension provision. This will reduce the amount of income available for general purposes.”

“The theme running through all this work is one of working together. Provincial and Diocesan bodies are developing increasingly close and constructive relationships, and this is particularly appropriate in view of the Review’s focus on breaking down barriers where necessary to achieve a broad vision. We must consider where best to pool our resources to achieve the best value and the greatest impact.”

Mr Paul Marshall, the deputy chairman, assured GB that in the light of the concerns about pay-day loan companies, any investment in such companies was forbidden by the Church’s ethical investment policy.
Be inspired by two great Welsh clerics

2013 is the centenary of the birth of two important people in the history of the Church in Wales. Events have been held throughout Wales to mark that of the priest-poet R S Thomas—and his bishop, G O Williams, Bishop of Bangor from 1957 to 1982 and archbishop for 11 of those years, was also born in 1913. It was these two men who have left their imprint on the Church in Wales on whom Archbishop Barry reflected in his Presidential Address.

“G O Williams was born in Penisarwaun in the Diocese of Bangor and was a Presbyterian until he went to Oxford as a student. After a year at St Stephen’s House, he served in turn as Curate of Denbigh, lecturer at St David’s College Lampeter, Warden of the Church Hostel at Bangor, Headmaster of Llandovery and became Bishop of Bangor at the age of 44.

G O was prominent in the national life of Wales. He persuaded the then Home Secretary William Whitelaw that Wales needed an independent broadcasting channel, S4C. He was a doughty fighter for the rights of the Welsh language in a bilingual Church. He led from the front and was ahead of his diocese in its thinking and introduced new ideas about ministry and mission so that Bangor became a pioneering diocese in many ways.

“He was also ahead of his time as far as the province was concerned too. It was he who commissioned the Harris report into the boundaries and structures of the Church in Wales. He believed that Wales needed an Archepiscopal See and structures of the Church in Wales. He believed that Wales

“R S Thomas left his imprint on his parishes – many testify to the fact that he sat with the dying and took relatives to Bangor Hospital from Aberdaron because they had no other means of getting there. All that is the antidote to the rather grumpy, curmudgeonly image he sometimes projected. However, his poetry has had a worldwide impact – translated into many languages, narrowly missing the Nobel Prize for Literature. There is no doubt that he has helped thousands of people in their quest for a faith that can stand the rigour of intellectual scrutiny. Some of those aspects of faith raised in his poetry are very relevant for our present discussions as a Governing Body, as we wrestle with various issues, whatever our views on these issues. We all have a tendency to think that when we speak, God is bound to be on our side of the argument and approves of our particular viewpoint. Some of his poetry and his writings are a powerful antidote to that. ‘Poetry,’ he wrote, ‘is that which arrives at the intellect by way of the heart’.”

Archbishop Barry singled out some of R S Thomas’ thoughts about God and the Church.

“For R S Thomas, defining God was not possible and the major themes of his poetry are about the hiddenness of God, the illusiveness of God, the mystery of God, the silence of God, the darkness of God, even the absence of God. He reminds us that God is not an object among other objects to be explored, but a mystery in whose presence one can ultimately only rest in faith, hope and prayerful silence. Since God is beyond anything, which we can conceive or understand, it is only through using images, metaphors and analogies that we can begin to find a language for Him, and whatever language we do use about Him, it is always provisional, incomplete, inadequate. R S Thomas writes: ‘Genes and molecules have no more power to call him up than the incense of the Hebrews at their altars.’ ‘Silence’, says R S Thomas, ‘is God’s chosen medium of communication’. The silent God evokes our silence in turn in His presence, but the paradox is that in and through that silence, an encounter sometimes occurs.

“It is when one is not looking, that it comes.’

“For Thomas, this God has revealed Himself supremely in the person of Jesus and for him, in spite of what he said about the elusiveness of God, the heart of the Gospel was about God’s love for His world, made manifest in Jesus Christ.

‘He kneeled long, and saw love in a dark crown Of thorns blazing, and a winter tree Golden with fruit of a man’s body.’ In and through the crucifixion of Jesus, the love of God shines through.

“So although it is impossible, as he says, to fully understand and comprehend God, yet this God is not some kind of remote, inaccessible, impassable God, unaffected by what happens to His world. In Jesus, God draws near to His world, suffers with His world, and his nature is that of outflowing love towards that world. That is God’s response to the evil and tragedy of His world – becoming involved in it.”

“Thomas is, to my mind, a poet of hope. We, as a church, can sometimes be obsessed with statistics and attendance figures and worried that our influence is not as it once was. He reminds us for how long and how deeply the Christian faith has influenced this country’s life. We should not be discouraged so he says, and it is fitting that he should have the last word.

‘… These very seas are baptised. The parish has a saint’s name time cannot unfrock …’

“… people are becoming pilgrims again, if not to this place, then to the recreation of it in their own spirits. You must remain kneeling’.

The full text of Archbishop Barry’s speech can be found at www.churchinwales.org.uk/structure/bishops/
DEALING WITH DEBT

Pay-day loans, ethical investment, and credit unions have been much in the news recently, so Archbishop Barry drew GB’s attention to the need to help those who are in debt.

Ethical Investment

The Church in Wales invests in companies which promote everything that build up creative human communities, and in companies that trade fairly. We avoid companies in which exploit and demean people. This policy and our holdings are regularly screened.

We have no direct holdings in companies engaged in doorstep lending, pay day loans or pawn broking, and it is most unlikely that there is an indirect link with such things.

Credit Unions

Pay day loan companies charge horrendous interest rates—over 5000% -and lenders know that not all the original capital can be repaid because the compound interest is so high. Pay day companies make a lot of money because of these high interest rates. They lend money short term at high interest and they know that the people who borrow will default on other creditors. The fact is that people are often desperate for the basic necessities of life since wages are not increasing whilst the cost of everything increases.

The only way in which loan companies can be put out of business is if money is made available to lend to people at a reasonable interest rate, and this is where credit unions can play a vital part. Credit Unions are savings and loans co-operatives, authorised and regulated by the FSA and covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

“I would like us, as members of the Church in Wales who are not already doing so, to support their local credit unions by investing money in them,” said Archbishop Barry. “At the moment, I am also talking to various Credit Unions and to the Chief Executive of Wales Council for Voluntary Action, to see how else the members of the Church in Wales individually, and perhaps corporately, can become involved in this movement.”

- The Church in Wales, in partnership with others, is organising a conference on ethical investment at Cardiff University Business School on 26th October. 9.30a.m.-2.00p.m. Details on the website.

CHURCH IN WALES REVIEW

Transforming the Life and Ministry of the Church

The central vision of the Church in Wales Review, presented to the Governing Body a year ago, is the hope of a re-energised and reinvigorated Church; one in which the responsibility for the Church’s mission and ministry to the wider community is shared among all the baptised.

To achieve this vision, the Review sees it necessary for the Church to transform the culture of the Church in Wales; to re-imagine the local church as Ministry Areas; to broaden ministry to include all members, with Ministry Area Teams of lay and ordained ministers; and to equip lay and ordained ministers for new models of ministry through training, developing leadership skills and collaborative working practices.

At this meeting, GB was asked to discuss the concept of Ministry Areas and Ministry Area Teams.

Mrs Helen Biggin (co-opted), chair of the Review Implementation Group, in proposing the motion, said that “it is about the present and the future of the Church in Wales. As we approach the centenary of the Church, we are united in having a vision for 2020, a vision of a transformed Church, serving communities throughout the nation. A vision of a re-energised and re-invigorated Church in which its mission and ministry is shared among all the baptised. A vision of a Church where all members are encouraged, equipped and empowered to play a part. A vision of a Church which is at the prayerful heart of each community it serves. This is our 2020 vision.”

Mrs Biggin explained the concept of Ministry Areas as set out in the proposed framework. She stressed that this is not a new concept, and that this is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. It is asking for a change in mindset, to be creative and bold, with a Wales-wide approach, the framework allowing all dioceses to move together.

Key to this is partnership, lay and clergy working together, with everyone in congregations growing in faith. All are called to use their energies, time and talents to bring in the kingdom.

The Motion

That the Governing Body:

i. ask dioceses to embrace the vision commended by the Church in Wales Review of a re-energised Church and to develop and enhance its ministry by the development of Ministry Areas;

ii. adopt The Provincial Framework for Ministry Areas (August 2013) as an expression of Provincial endorsement for the concept of Ministry Areas;

iii. commend the development of specialised ministries, especially to young people, to reach those currently outside the regular worshipping community of the Church;

iv. request Provincial Bodies to provide all reasonable assistance to dioceses in this work;

v. ask dioceses to report to the Standing Committee annually on progress in developing Ministry Areas and Ministry Area Teams;

vi. ask the Standing Committee to bring forward proposals for any Constitutional changes necessary to enable the implementation by dioceses of plans to introduce Ministry Areas and Ministry Area Teams;

vii. remind all members of Governing Body to accept their responsibility to engage with, communicate and support this process.
Speakers gave examples of Ministry Areas that have already been formed and their experiences of working as part of a team. In Bangor Diocese, parishes have entered into new arrangements, enabling more people to become involved in mission and ministry. “An over-clericalised Church does not enable disciples to be ministers,” said Bishop Andy. Mission Areas make sharing of expertise and resources possible; struggling outer rural areas now are part of a Ministry Area, giving encouragement and excitement as they work together.

Bishop Andy said the motion offered new ways of being Church and helping the Church carry out the work of the Lord with faith and hope, with resources and structures redesigned in optimistic ways. The motion was passed nem con.

See the 2020 Vision pages on the Church in Wales website

Next Steps
In addition to continuing to take forward the Ministry Area developments, the Review Implementation Group will be:

• planning an event to enable Dioceses to share ideas and experiences about the development of Ministry Areas;
• bringing together people with specialist expertise and knowledge in church growth to explore the opportunities for growth that Ministry Areas might bring;
• exploring and expanding the use of communications tools to ensure everyone is kept fully up to date with all developments, both at a local and provincial level;
• reviewing progress in key areas of work by Provincial groups and Dioceses, and learning from good practice across the Church in Wales.

A Provincial Framework for Ministry Areas
The Governing Body of the Church in Wales welcomes the recommendations made by the Church in Wales Review (July 2012) for the establishment of Ministry Areas served by Ministry Area Teams.

The Governing Body encourages and supports dioceses in taking forward these recommendations, and gives permission to develop the concept of Ministry Areas creatively to best meet the needs of the local church and the wider communities it seeks to serve.

In doing so, the Governing Body provides the following framework within which dioceses should work.

Ministry Areas will:
• Give new energy and impetus to the Church’s ministry to all the people and communities of Wales, building on the strengths of the existing parish structure;
• Be a reflection of the communities in which they are set, and seek to meet the spiritual, liturgical and pastoral needs of those communities;
• Be identified and established in accordance with criteria set by each diocese, taking into account the views of the local church and wider community, including other denominations present in that community;
• Be established with the intention that they will in time meet the whole costs of their ministry;
• Be served by a Ministry Area team.

Ministry Area Teams will:
• Consist of lay and ordained ministers, who may be stipendiary or non-stipendiary;
• Provide ministry to local congregations using local leaders, who will be members of the Team;
• Be led by Team Leaders who receive appropriate leadership training. The Team Leaders will encourage discipleship among and nurture the ministry potential of all within the Ministry Area. Team Leaders are to understand their calling as being to work through other people as, for instance, a Bishop works through others to bring the message of Christ to the Diocese;
• Develop specialised ministries to reach young people and those currently outside the regular worshipping community of the local church;
• Be formed taking into account the presence of other denominations in the area.

Q If the first part of the Bill to enable women to be consecrated as bishops fails, then please could GB revisit the theological discussions of 15 years ago and confirm that the Church in Wales is content for women to be eligible for ordination as deacons and priests?
- The Revd Alison Jones (Swansea and Brecon)

A The Canons state unequivocally that women can be ordained deacons and priests; the bishops bill stands alone, so there is no need to revisit the discussions.
- Archbishop Barry

Q What kinds of personal/sexual relationship currently constitute a bar to the exercise of public ministry within the Church in Wales and to parochial office-holders?
- Mr Justin Davies (Swansea and Brecon)

A Those called to exercise ministry in the Church in Wales are also called to the highest standards of personal behaviour. To ensure that the reputation of its ministry isn’t compromised, the Church has a legitimate expectation that ministers, lay or ordained, should not behave in such a way that would give cause for scandal or offence in the communities in which they serve. This also applies to personal relationships, so those offering themselves for public ministry should not cohabit with a partner until they have taken appropriate steps to formalise such a relationship. In making decisions whether to grant licenses or authorisations, bishops have to determine whether the lifestyle of the person is consonant with the teaching and the discipline of the Church, or could rise to scandal. It is a reasonable expectation of the Church that the same standards of behaviour are expected of all the disciples of Jesus. The Bench has asked the Doctrinal Commission to prepare material to inform a general discussion on same-sex relationships at next April’s GB.
- Archbishop Barry

Q The Church in Wales Review mentions the need to encourage and train the whole Church to share our faith with others. Does the Implementation Group have a mind to help us meet the pressing call to change our ethos to that of an evangelising, missional Church?
- The Revd Richard Woods (St Davids)

A The vision passed us from the Review Group is indeed for an evangelising and missional Church. This vision was strongly implied by the brief the bishops gave to the Reviewers at the beginning, and is seen in the first pages of the Report. It is also seen in the proposals to transform the way ministry is provided, and for specialist ministries to those currently outside the Church community. The hope which underpins the recommendations for changes is that new ways of providing ministry will re-invigorate Church life by enthusing members to reach out to the communities we serve.
- Mr Nigel King
The annual Church in Wales Membership and Finances report gives an indication of the state of the Church, to be taken into account when making significant decisions about the Church’s future. The complete set of statistics for every parish, deanery and archdeaconry helps in planning and setting priorities for the future, and for targeting assistance to parishes and deaneries.

**Highlights**

- There are seasonal fluctuations in the number of communicants at key festivals.
- There is a decline in the average attendance and Electoral Roll year-on-year.
- There was a small rise in attendance at Pentecost in 2012.
- There was an 8% rise in average attendance of those under 18 in 2012.
- Confirmations rose by 12%.
- While the long-term trend (over 22 years) shows a 50% decrease in numbers attending, recent statistics show a growth in the Church’s work with young people and families, and in non-traditional forms of activity with people of all ages.
- Parish income across the Church in Wales exceeded expenditure by £1.3 million in 2012.
- Weekly direct giving per Sunday Attender has increased by 5% to £8.73.
- Legacy gifts totalled £3.1m—an increase of 117% on the 2011 figure.
- Giving per average Sunday attender has increased by 111% since 1990, compared with an RPI increase of 90%.

Introducing the Membership and Finances Report, the Bishop of Bangor pointed out that new data in relation to occasional services is now being included, such as worship that is intended to reach those in the community unused to traditional forms of worship - Café style worship, healing services, pet services, Messy Church, Taizé-inspired services etc. These figures provide evidence of good things happening in the Church in Wales, and a counterbalance to some of the less positive figures in the usual Sunday worship.

The Revd Beth Bailey (Bangor), a parish priest and Diocesan Children and Families Officer, reminded the Governing Body that one of the challenges in the Review Report was that the number of children, young people and young families with whom the Church is in contact is miniscule. “Yet a year later there are hopeful signs that that grim picture may already be changing with a small but significant up-turn in the number of young people involved in our Church life.” “There is a change happening, bubbling up from below, with a fresh commitment to mission, a new determination to engage with our schools, to reach out and meet people where they are, to offer truly all-age worship, to be inclusive and more family friendly generally.”

The Diocesan Children and Youth Officers report a variety of initiatives, with the most significant being Messy Church, which is experiencing phenomenal growth, attracting new people, both adults and children. Messy Church offers an idea and framework which can be adapted for the particular context. It is not intended to be another children’s club, nor a half-way house to regular Sunday worship, nor to replace it, but to reach out to people not attracted to regular Church.

A number of speakers described work in their parishes with children and young people, for example the music project run by the Church of the Resurrection on the Ely estate in Cardiff, which involves more than 85 children who otherwise would have no involvement with Church. The Revd Alison Jones (Swansea and Brecon) spoke about Messy Church in Gower. “For me, the encouraging thing about Messy Church is its values of creativity, hospitality and welcome, which is something for all our churches in every single service that’s ever held.”

The Bishop of Swansea and Brecon pointed out the decline in membership of those over 18 of 1600. “We have 1400 churches in use; if each one of those churches were to welcome one new worshipper a year, the downward trend would be wiped out.”

### IN BRIEF

**Criteria for lay membership of the Governing Body, Representative Body and Electoral College**

It had become apparent that eligibility for lay members to stand in diocesan elections for various provincial bodies did not require qualification by residence nor electoral roll membership in a parish in the diocese in which the election was being held.

GB endorsed the principles that eligibility for election to lay membership of the GB, RB and Electoral College be based on either:

- a) residence in a Parish in the Diocese which was considering that person’s election; or
- b) being on the electoral roll in such a Parish; or
- c) holding Diocesan Office in the Diocese concerned (excluding paid employees of the RB or the Diocesan Board of Finance).

**Welsh Language Committee**

The Committee has proposed a set of Good Practice Guidelines for holding bilingual services in the Church in Wales. These will be circulated.

**Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill**

The Government has amended the Bill to further strengthen the provisions made in Clause 8 about the position of the Church in Wales. This now provides that any future decision made by the GB to allow same sex marriages according to the rites of the Church in Wales would require the Lord Chancellor to amend the Act by Order to enable such a marriage to take place. The Bill already contained protection for the Church in Wales and its clergy so that they would not be required to conduct same sex marriages unless and until the GB had made a decision in that respect. The Bill received Royal Assent and became an Act on 17 July 2013.

**Alternative Ordinal**

In September 2004 the Governing Body authorised the experimental use of a new Alternative Ordinal (the order for the Ordination of Deacons and Priests, and the Consecration of Bishops).

Bishops have been using this on appropriate occasions, and now wish to bring forward a Bill to authorise the service on a permanent basis.

Following a discussion at the GB, the Bench of Bishops will consider the suggestions made, and any subsequently submitted, and then bring recommendations for the final text in a Bill next September to authorise the use of the Alternative Ordinal on a permanent basis.
Many of our Church primary schools in Wales owe their origins to the National Society, which was founded in 1811 with the vision of providing church schools in every parish. The Society continues to be active in providing support and development in education in Wales, particularly with school development and improvement issues in Church schools.

As the National Society’s relationship with the Church of England is changing, in order to give ongoing substance to the relationship between the Society and the Church in Wales, the Council of the National Society and the Bench of Bishops have approved a Memorandum which sets out the relationship between, and the expectations of, the two bodies.

Following a motion and debate in the GB, the memorandum was signed by the General Secretary of the National Society, the Revd Janina Ainsworth, and the Archbishop.

The Memorandum recognises that the National Society and the Church in Wales share a common vision of excellence in Christian education in:
- maintaining and developing school buildings;
- supporting schools to model excellence in staffing, support and governance;
- developing a vibrant curriculum, with RE as a building block of pupils’ learning;
- underpinning Church schools by a strong and distinctive Christian ethos;
- monitoring performance and inspection;
- influencing national policy;
- resourcing diocesan education teams.

Through the Memorandum, the National Society would continue to provide legal support for the Church in Wales in relation to Welsh Government legislation and regulations, and support and resource Welsh Diocesan Directors of Education and education teams.

The Revd Janina Ainsworth explained the need for a Memorandum. Since devolution, the education paths between England and Wales have diverged; therefore the National Society’s Council needs to restate and reaffirm the way the National Society works in Wales. Strategic decisions have to be made on the future of education, particularly through our Church Schools. The National Society part-funded the recent Church in Wales Review of Education, and commits itself to supporting the Church in Wales in legislative work, particularly in relation to the legal issues of the Welsh Education Bill.

Bishop Gregory sees education as one of the jewels in the mission and work of the Church in Wales. The value of the National Society in supporting the heads and staff of our Church schools was warmly affirmed and the Society thanked.

The Motion
That the Governing Body:
(i) celebrate the contribution of the National Society in assisting in the foundation of the network of Church in Wales schools across Wales over the last two hundred years;
(ii) express its gratitude for the ongoing support of the National Society in the educational and schools work of the Church in Wales;
(iii) welcome the signing of a memorandum setting out the commitment and co-operation of the Church in Wales and the National Society to support Christian education and schools in Wales in the future.