

THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CHURCH IN WALES: RECENT LEGISLATION

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At the September 1994 meeting of the Governing Body, only one actual amendment to the Constitution was enacted; this being to the *Regulations for the Administration of Churchyards* consequent upon the recent changes made to Faculty Procedure within the province. Regulation 13 was amended, making it necessary to obtain a faculty to permit a portion of a churchyard to be set apart for the interment of cremated remains. A faculty had not previously been required for this in Wales.

Also as a consequence of the recent changes to Faculty Procedure in Wales, a Bill to Amend Chapter XI of the Constitution had its first reading, title only without a debate or vote. The provisions of this bill will be discussed fully when it has its second reading, on its principles, at the April 1995 meeting of the Governing Body. The need for the bill arises from the resolution of the Governing Body at its September 1993 meeting, when receiving the Report of the Commission on Faculties, that fuller provision should be made for the appointment of Deputy Chancellors and that diocesan bishops should be given the power to designate unconsecrated churches and land as falling under Faculty Procedure. The bill aims to effect both of these recommendations.

The Governing Body also resolved, on the motion of the Representative Body, that in future, stipendiary clerics and non-stipendiary clerics under seventy years of age should not receive fees for taking services in vacant incumbencies, but that retired clerics, readers and non-stipendiaries over the age of seventy should receive such fees. All should receive travelling expenses. The Governing Body also accepted the recommendation of the Representative Body that the rule requiring a widow to have been married to a cleric for at least five years to be entitled to a clergy widows' pension should be abolished and a new rule introduced requiring that she should have been married to the deceased cleric at the date of his retirement. Again on the motion of the Representative Body, the Governing Body agreed that a maximum of two lay persons per diocese should be included in the *Maintenance of Ministry Scheme*, which provides for the payment of ministers, provided that these were accredited lay Ministers licensed by the diocesan bishop to engage in the work of mission and ministry in a parochial or diocesan capacity. Hitherto, with the exception of deaconesses, lay persons have not received stipends under the scheme. In this case, the lay persons concerned will be counted as serving clerics for the purposes of allocating monies among the dioceses.

All of the above Representative Body motions were passed under the provisions of chapter II, section 35(2) of the Constitution, which allows the

motions to take effect forthwith without formal constitutional amendments having been prepared and passed. These will now be prepared by the Drafting Sub-Committee of the Governing Body's Standing Committee and presented to the next meeting of the Governing Body.

Mention should also be made of another motion passed by the Governing Body which anticipates the introduction of legislation in the future. The Governing Body resolved on the motion of the Bishop of Bangor, seconded by the Bishop of Monmouth, that: 'the Governing Body would welcome a review of existing discipline concerning divorce and remarriage as it affects both Clergy and Laity'. The motion was passed by show of hands by a very large majority. There was no formal count, but the press later reported that there had been only 27 votes against and three abstentions. The matter is now left in the hands of the bishops to consider bringing forward legislation.

It was also reported that the Bench of Bishops was planning to bring a new bill concerning the ordination of women to the priesthood before the Governing Body, following the failure of the previous bill last April.