



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Andrew Selous  
Second Church Estates Commissioner

23 October 2023

Dear Andrew,

You will no doubt have read the latest paper from the Bishops on LLF and the reporting of it in the Church press.

It is extremely disappointing.

It backtracks on what was agreed at Synod in February and on the repeated promises you made on behalf of the Church of England to the House. What it doesn't backtrack on completely, it kicks further down the road, meaning, in effect, we are still no further on than when the LLF process started seven years ago.

The language in the document is also dreadful, which also takes us backwards.

We hope very much that when Synod meets in November, you will make quite clear to it and to the Bishops in private before then, that this is not acceptable and that Parliament expects the decisions already taken, promises made and the timetable previously outlined to be kept.

I would also be grateful if you could provide answers to the following questions. (I am also tabling these as written PQs, but given the expectation of prorogation this week I am writing to you so that you can provide responses in good time for Synod).

1. Which resolutions were debated during the meeting of the House of Bishops on 9<sup>th</sup> October and in the preceding College of Bishops meeting, and what were the voting figures on those resolutions?
2. Can you confirm that there were clear recorded majorities in both the House and College of Bishops to allow clergy to enter into same-sex civil marriage and to remove the stipulation that currently requires celibacy for clergy in same-sex relationships?
3. Can you confirm that a further letter from evangelical groups threatening legal action was sent to the House or College of Bishops between the end of the meeting of the College and the House meeting in October?
4. Can you confirm that a draft form of Pastoral Guidance for Ministry has already been prepared, but that this draft was not shared with the House or College of Bishops?
5. Were all of the General Synod papers on LLF circulated on Friday 20th October shared with members of the House and College? If not, who was responsible for drawing each of them up and for signing each of them off?
6. Do all the General Synod papers on LLF circulated on Friday 20th October accurately reflect the current position of both the House and College of Bishops?
7. When the church teaches that sexual intimacy outside of marriage is forbidden, what physical act(s) does it specifically have in mind?

As ever, I am grateful for your diligent responses in these matters, which have caused grave concern among many Anglicans.

With very best wishes,

**Ben Bradshaw MP and Peter Gibson MP**