Greater equality in the C of E – some goals.

As the LLF document progresses, it is important that specific goals are articulated and that we communicate what we are asking for.

Stating the current position.

There are situations where the current rules are being ignored or applied in discriminatory ways. Therefore some things need to be explicitly articulated so that they have authority through the House of Bishops and General Synod.

1. LLF should issue a statement that it is not, and never has been, the official Church of England position that being homosexual is a sin. Nor is it the position of any major Christian denomination.
2. There should be a further statement that being bisexual, trans, queer, non-binary or any other gender or sexual minority identity is not a sin.
3. It should be restated that those who are in civil partnerships can be ordained to the diaconate, priesthood and episcopacy. There should be an explicit statement that this also applies to all lay ministries, including reader ministry.

Changes which are possible within the current rules.

4. At a Bishop’s Advisory Panel, potential ordinands should not have to be assessed by selectors who will not recommend LGBT+ people on principle. All selectors should be asked to state, as a matter of record, whether they would be willing to recommend LGBT+ candidates for ordination. Either the candidate or the selector would be moved to a different panel, if necessary. This prevents the waste of time, money and resources that the rejection of a suitable candidate would cause.
5. Each diocese should appoint someone to be responsible for LGBT+ matters within the diocese. This person should have an automatic place on the Bishop’s Council and be a member of the Diocesan Synod.
6. Services of blessing should be allowed for those in a civil partnership or civil marriage. Authorised liturgy should be provided. No priest or church should be forced to do this, if they have theological objections. The default position should be that all churches and clergy would do so. Those who do not want to, would have to opt out. The opt out needing a majority of the PCC and to be reviewed at a specified time. Any church or clergy who opts out must make alternative provision. It is the responsibility of the Diocese to ensure that this alternative provision is in place.
Changes which require a change in the rules.

7. A policy that allows those who are in civil marriages to be ordained to the diaconate, priesthood and episcopacy. There should be an explicit statement that this also applies to all lay ministries, including reader ministry. Those clergy currently in civil marriages should be able to minister with a full licence. This can be achieved in several ways, as set out in the legal advice in GS2055.\(^1\) In the shorter term, 13d can be achieved quickly through LLF. 13b would be a better long-term goal, but would take time to achieve and would have a cost.

8. The expectation that partnered clergy should be celibate should be explicitly repudiated. This marks a change from the position of *Issues in Human Sexuality*. This should be done on the stated reason that ‘it is unbiblical to expect lifelong imposed celibacy from those who are not called to it.’

9. A longer-term goal should be for the quadruple lock to be removed, so that the Church of England, as the established church, is able to offer marriage services to all the people of England. No priest or church should be forced to do this, if they have theological objections. The default position should be that all churches and clergy are licensed to do this and would do so. Those who do not want to, would have to opt out. The opt out needing a majority of the PCC and to be reviewed at a specified time. Any church or clergy who opts out must make alternative provision for any one who would otherwise have a right to marry there. It is the responsibility of the Diocese to ensure that this alternative provision is in place. This is a goal that would best be pursued through parliament, rather than expecting General Synod to ask parliament to make the change.

\(^1\) 13. The applicable canonical provisions accordingly limit the possibility for tolerating the contracting of marriages by members of the clergy with a person of the same sex. The options are as follows:

- **a.** Amend, or provide an exception to, Canon C 26 so that being married to a person of the same sex is not of itself a breach of Canon C 26.2
- OR
- **b.** Amend Canon B 30 so that the Church of England no longer “affirms, according to Our Lord’s teaching, that marriage is in its nature a union … of one man with one woman”.
- OR
- **c.** Amend Canon B 30 to state that [civil marriage] [marriage to a person of the same sex] is a different institution from holy matrimony and that entering into a civil marriage with a person of the same sex does not of itself amount to an act contrary to the doctrine set out in the Canon.
- OR
- **d.** Leave Canon B 30 as it is but issue a teaching document which explains that [civil marriage is no longer the same institution as holy matrimony] [civil marriage with a person of the same sex is a different institution from holy matrimony] and that a person who enters into such a civil marriage should not, merely by doing so, be considered as acting in a way contrary to the doctrine set out in Canon B 30.