

Candidates for the House of Clergy for General Synod Election 2026

Please find in this document the names of the Candidates, the names of the two people who nominated them and their Election addresses ahead of the voting period.

The Candidates are listed in alphabetical order (surname).

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Revd Keith Addenbrooke

Vicar of Birkenhead St James with St Bede

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Who am I?

I'm married to the wonderful Revd Jane Addenbrooke, we have four amazing daughters, two of whom are married, and three delightful grandchildren. I was Ordained in Chester in 2007 after a career in Industry and Local Government, working in Finance and Management.

I've served in Parishes and Benefices large and small, with new fellowships and with established congregations, on both sides of the Diocese and across the social spectrum. Much of my ministry has been in small Churches in areas of Urban deprivation on the Wirral. I've been at St James in the North End of Birkenhead since 2018, where I am also a Trustee of our local Community Centre. I'm involved in the Feeding Britain movement set up by Frank Field MP and support a community regeneration programme focusing on young people and families. I'm the Associate Rural Dean for Birkenhead Deanery and at Diocesan level serve on the Diocesan Synod and the Committee for Ministry. I am a Vocations Explorer and have supported several Curates through training, working across the traditions.

Why am I standing for General Synod?

1. As a voice for small Churches where resources are scarce, volunteers well-hidden and ends generally don't meet, yet where God may do incredible things and there can be much to celebrate. Small churches are too often under-represented and undervalued.
2. As an experienced minister committed to *being* Anglican, not simply being *an* Anglican. What do I mean? I have served and rejoiced in Parishes from the Anglo-Catholic to the Evangelical, and from the Central to the Charismatic (my own tradition). I believe Christ's prayer in John 17 is a first order call to unity - for the glory of God and for the mission and witness of the whole Church to our communities. On difficult subjects I commit to listen carefully and vote compassionately. I aim to serve our whole Diocese in this way.
3. As someone who knows life isn't always easy. My wife Jane lives with Multiple Sclerosis, and as a family we have experienced the challenges of neurodiversity and seasons of poor physical and mental health. I bring my own experiences and insights here to the table too, at a time in our society where increasing understanding is front and centre.

Should you vote for me?

I would ask us all to consider prayerfully how to vote, using our preferences to ensure the richness and diversity of our Diocese and the communities we serve are well represented. I would hope to play my part in representing us all on General Synod. Thank you, Keith.

The Revd Dr Janine Arnott

Rector of Malpas, Threapwood and Bickerton

A Christian presence in every community

Who I am and what I stand for

Rector of a rural multi-parish benefice in South Cheshire. Mum to one son and two lively spaniels. Ordained for seven years and standing for General Synod for the first time.



Proposer: The Revd Laura Rhodes

Seconder: The Revd Canon Christine Broad

My two key priorities are clergy welfare and the parish system

What I bring

- **Professional experience:** Twenty years in the voluntary sector supporting children with additional needs and their families, followed by fifteen years in health and social policy research, contributing to local and national policy.
- **Lay ministry:** Experience of Faith in the Workplace and the diocesan Consultancy for Mission and Ministry, strengthening my commitment to shared lay and licensed ministry.
- **Ordained ministry:** Seven years of ordained ministry in suburban and rural contexts.
- **Education:** Current member of the Diocesan Board of Education and a local school governor.

I bring experience of listening and responding to competing perspectives, delivering and implementing policy, combining evidence with pastoral care, and working with people across diverse social groups.

Faith, training and ministry

My adult journey to faith was shaped by a large suburban evangelical church, Liverpool Cathedral, and independent study at St Mellitus College (North West). Together, these experiences nurtured my faith and helped me discern a call to ordained ministry.



I trained at Ridley Hall and Trinity Hall, Cambridge with placements in Vienna, Jerusalem, and hospital chaplaincy. My curacy was in a large, traditional, suburban church and I am currently rector of a rural multi-parish benefice. These experiences have given me a deep appreciation and love of the breadth of Anglican life, theology, and worship.

My two key priorities

1. Clergy welfare and wellbeing

Clergy flourish in ministry when they receive effective care alongside fair, transparent, and appropriate accountability. I would work to ensure that the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing is effectively implemented and explore how it could be strengthened. I would also take a particular interest in the new Clergy Conduct Measure. Clear standards of conduct are crucial, and disciplinary processes must be robust, proportionate and fit for purpose for both clergy and lay office-holders.

2. Parish ministry

The parish system is one of the Church of England's greatest strengths, and I share Save the Parish's commitment to sustaining and renewing properly resourced parish ministry.



Collaboration across parish boundaries can help us share resources and develop lay and licensed ministry, but it needs a strong, properly resourced parish base. I would advocate for frontline ministry that sustains a Christian presence in every community, honours the cure of souls, and values relationships between parish priests and the people they serve.



The bigger picture

Healthy parish ministry depends on good relationships, trust between parish, diocese and the national Church, and listening and responding well to the communities we serve.

Communicating and connecting

Good communication builds trust. I will support meaningful consultation and communication with clergy, laity, and our wider communities, especially when decisions affect pastoral reorganisation, finance, buildings or land.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding must be at the forefront of our ministry and informed by lessons from the past. I support continued scrutiny and improvement so that our safeguarding responsibilities are consistently met at every level.

I will support proposals and policies that seek to **rekindle the parish church** as the heartbeat of our communities; **connect with parishes**; and **build trust and confidence** in the Church.

Listening across the Church

My faith and ministry have taught me to value the breadth of traditions, convictions and perspectives within our wonderfully diverse Church and to celebrate how we serve and seek God together. I recognise that questions concerning identity, relationships, gender and sexuality matter deeply and deserve prayerful, open and compassionate engagement. I remain open to that engagement, while my particular focus in standing for Synod is clergy welfare and the support of parish ministry.

Why vote for me?

As a first-time candidate, I would bring a fresh perspective and breadth of experience to the issues facing the Church today. I am not afraid to challenge, scrutinise and test proposals on the issues that matter to you. If elected, I would listen carefully, remain accessible to clergy across the diocese, communicate clearly, and exercise my vote thoughtfully and prayerfully.



Contact: Rev.Janinearnott@outlook.com

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Rev Janine

Candidate for General Synod

Revd. Chris Blunt

I'd like to offer myself to serve the Diocese of Chester and the wider church in standing for election to General Synod. Please have a read of my pitch below and, if you like what you read about advocating for more deprived parishes, representing the concerns of our diocese and graceful faith, then please consider voting for me, ideally as your first choice candidate (but if not that then as your second or third choice candidate). Thank you!

In part, I'm standing again because I feel called to complete some unfinished business relating to Chester's deprived parishes. You may recall in November 2025 our Diocesan Synod passed a motion that I introduced relating to Lowest Income Communities Funding (LiNC - a massive distribution from the Church Commissioners that completely bypasses Chester Diocese). That motion was elevated to General Synod, and I introduced the debate at the February 2026 group of sessions. An amended version of the motion was passed that means the distribution formula will be reviewed - a good first step! That review is now taking place and I have been invited onto the National Diocesan Funding Review Reference Group, to give direct input. **It would be great to be re-elected to continue that work on behalf of the diocese.**



Feb. 2026 - Introducing the LiNC debate.
Photo: Geoff Crawford/ Church Times used with permission

I now have 5 years' experience on General Synod. So, as and when other issues come up that affect us as a diocese and that can be changed by synod, I would be very happy to engage with you to see if we can't bring those issues onto the agenda as well - just let me know! You know that I'm sometimes a bit like the clergy shop steward at Diocesan Synod - I'd be happy to do that for you at General Synod too where there are issues that we can all get behind (as I have often done for the retired clergy association and others).

Here's a snapshot of some of the main issues that will be coming up over the next 5 years and how I have voted on them to date and will vote in the future if you elect me:

Safeguarding: I will always vote for what I understand to be best safeguarding practice (which includes ensuring that it is proportionate so that we can all implement it!). The Gospel demands it as Jesus tells us not to hinder the little children coming to him. In the past I voted for partial independence of diocesan safeguarding, in the future I'd vote for full independence - the public (and politicians and media) demand it, it is practicable, it should raise standards and the objection that we shouldn't be farming it out doesn't hold up as we are always responsible for it at the grassroots.

National Church Governance: we all know that the C of E centrally can be opaque! I voted for the simplifications that were presented to synod. These have now been rejected by parliament because a) they want to see safeguarding independence addressed first; and b) they felt the changes centralised too much power. Jesus elevates "the church" as a final arbiter (e.g. Matt. 18) so I will vote for changes that require as much decision-making as possible to be subject to synod's scrutiny and veto.

Church Commissioner's Funding: as opposed to large competitive grants for specific projects, I'm far more in favour of channelling Church Commissioner's funding to the widespread grassroots. This requires funding formulae that I will be advocating should be calculated at parish rather than diocesan level. I have already made suggestions along these lines to the National Diocesan Funding Review. It's more like the equality of blessing that the Apostle seems to be advocating for in 2 Cor. 8.

Gender and Sexuality: throughout the extended debates on these issues I have consistently voted for what is often referred to as the traditional/ biblical/ orthodox position. I will continue to do so. Wherever there is an opportunity, I will also always vote in favour of the traditional/ biblical/ orthodox position on the doctrine of grace - that nothing about anyone's gender or sexuality changes God's love for them... so it shouldn't change the church's either.

Net zero: I recognise the climate crisis (who doesn't after this summer?!). I love the drive and ambition behind the push for net zero. I become concerned when synod makes decisions that rightly belong in the parishes - think about boiler replacements (synod has mandated that renewable alternatives be considered before allowing like-for-like). Whilst advocating strongly for net zero I would still vote for these decisions to be owned by the parishes.

Racial Justice: err... yes please! The controversy is about the much misunderstood £100m of Church Commissioner's money. It is not earmarked to be given away to a randomly selected group of organisations working amongst historically enslaved communities. It is a new way of investing 1% of the Church Commissioner's £10b assets in businesses that create opportunity within those communities. Only the return on those investments are grant-funded. I think we can enthusiastically support this - given the total endowment, it's actually quite a small gesture that speaks volumes to our belief in a church for every tribe, language, people and nation.

Hopefully this gives you an idea of what positions you would be getting if you vote for me. There are serious theological differences, but there's also too much "them-and-us". I would seek to promote as much "us-and-us" as possible. Finally, what follows is a brief idea of what experience and qualifications I bring:

- 13 years of mixed urban (Stockport) and suburban (Chester) parish ministry including, in the last few years, leading a deprived parish into significant growth and securing major funding for its historic building;
- The last 5 years serving on General Synod and 11 years on Diocesan Synod;
- 7 years serving in cross-cultural mission;
- 6 years working as a consultant civil engineer in the water/ environment sector;
- MTh from Chester (through St John's Nottingham) and MA MEng from Cambridge.

Many of us may be feeling that the Church of England is increasingly looking like our surrounding culture rather than constructively and lovingly critiquing it by modelling our Christ-like faith. In voting for me you will get a generous orthodoxy alongside constructively critical cultural awareness.

Thanks for taking time to read my election statement,



Nominators: Revd. Hennie Johnston (St. Mark's, Lache-cum-Saltney and Chester Rural Dean)

Revd. Andy Bull (St. Mark's, Bredbury and Chadkirk Rural Dean)

If elected or if you have questions before the election I'm very happy to hear from clergy in the diocese and can be contacted as follows: c.blunt@stockportparish.net / 0161 4771938

Revd Jenny Bridgman

Candidate for the House of Clergy, General Synod 2026

Director of Ministry and Bishop's Adviser for IME 2 and Clergy Transitions
SSOM priest, Parish of Tarporley



Proposers **Revd Lucy Brewster**, Director of Foxhill
House and Woodlands

Revd Dr Andrew Knight, Vicar of Bowdon Parish
Rural Dean, Bowdon Deanery

Why I am standing again

When I stood in 2024, I asked you to trust that my experience of parish ministry, ministerial formation, safeguarding and diocesan life would enable me to make a substantive contribution to General Synod. Two years on, I know much more clearly both what Synod can achieve and what I can bring to it. I have greatly valued the privilege of representing Chester, and I would be grateful for the opportunity to continue that work through a full term.

I love Jesus and the Church of England, and I want our shared life to be increasingly shaped by God's grace, justice and generous welcome. As a "Together" supported candidate, **I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the Church, regardless of disability, economic power, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity or sexuality.**

I have also learned that effective Synodical work rarely happens simply by taking up a position and defending it. It depends on careful judgement, listening well, understanding how ideas will work in practice, and being willing to work across theological and ecclesial differences. I am deeply rooted in the Diocese of Chester and in the ministries I serve here across our theological breadth. General Synod is one place from which I can help shape better policy and practice: taking the realities of local and diocesan ministry into national conversations, and bringing national learning and influence back into the life of this diocese.

What I have done with your vote

Since being elected, I have served in a number of national roles, including:

- the **Dioceses Commission**, with particular interest in inter-diocesan partnership;
- the **Advisory Group for the Terms and Wellbeing of Ministers**;
- the **Lay Conduct Working Group**;
- work revising the **Reader Regulations**;
- national work on **safeguarding in ordination discernment and spiritual accompaniment**, drawing on work developed in Chester and following recommendations from the Makin Review;
- **appointed assessor** to the Prolocutor of the Lower House of the Convocation of York.

One of the things I have most valued is connecting local, diocesan and national work. National work on clergy terms and wellbeing has informed my work in Chester, while our diocesan experience has contributed to national work on safeguarding and discernment. My SSOM ministry in Tarporley keeps all of this grounded in the day-to-day realities of parish life and ministry.

Working across difference

In July 2025, during debate on the Private Member's Motion concerning *Issues in Human Sexuality*, I worked with Together and across the chamber to bring an amendment which replaced the continued use of *Issues in Human Sexuality* with the interim use of the *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy*. This was an important step for justice and inclusion: *Issues in Human Sexuality* had caused deep hurt to LGBT+ people and was not fit for purpose. The amendment helped Synod find a way forward with exceptionally broad support across very different theological positions. That experience confirmed something I already believed: we do not need to choose between conviction and collaboration. We can work for substantive change while listening seriously across difference, without retreating into fixed camps.

The Work Ahead

These are areas in which I particularly hope to contribute in the next quinquennium.

A safer Church

The next Synod must continue safeguarding reform, with clearer accountability and processes that are workable and respond better to those who have been harmed. I also want to see the Church become more consistently trauma-responsive in the way it exercises power and handles vulnerability.

An inclusive Church

I want the next Synod's work on Relationships, Sexuality and Gender to move forward with courage and clarity, alongside sustained commitment to racial justice, disability inclusion and socio-economic equality. In Chester, I have worked on *From Lament to Action*, working-class vocations and removing barriers to participation.

Clergy and lay wellbeing

The next Synod should return to the commitments of the Clergy Covenant and ask whether our structures genuinely enable clergy and lay ministers to flourish. I want to bring experience from our local work in Chester, including support for part-time and SSOM clergy, into that national conversation.

Structures that serve mission

The next Synod must rebuild trust in the Church's structures and governance, with clearer accountability, better decision-making and systems that support rather than burden mission. Building transparency and honest engagement when we disagree will be vital if we are to strengthen confidence and further God's mission.

Children, young people and the future of faith

As a member of the *Flourish* Project Board, I want the next Synod to strengthen younger voices in decision-making and help churches, households and schools nurture faith more confidently together, building on what initiatives such as *Flourish* are already achieving in Chester.

Climate and the care of creation

I remain committed to Net Zero and the wider care of creation, while wanting dioceses and parishes to have realistic, properly resourced ways of turning those commitments into practice. Earlier this year I led an initiative to draw Synod representatives into conversation with the Diocesan Eco Church Network, in a model of consultation I hope to build on in the years ahead.

What I hope to bring

If re-elected, I will continue to bring careful judgement, clear inclusive convictions, strong safeguarding and wellbeing expertise, and an ability to work constructively across difference. Above all, I want to keep connecting local, diocesan and national work in ways that improve policy, strengthen ministry and help the Church's structures serve mission more effectively.

I am grateful for the trust you placed in me in 2024. I feel that I am only just getting started, and I would value the opportunity to continue this work through a full term.

I want to use the opportunities Synod gives me to help make the Church safer, fairer, more effective in its mission and more able to share the abundant life of Christ.

"I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly" – John 10:10

I would be very grateful for your first or highest possible preference vote.

Please don't hesitate to be in touch if you'd like a further conversation before casting your vote:

jenny.bridgman@chester.anglican.org • 07546 304644

George Crowder – Election Address

Motivation

I feel called to stand for election to General Synod with the same vision that I have for ministry in the Church of England: that is for a renewal of biblical faith and faithfulness. I am rejoicing in the signs of spiritual awakening – the continuing openness of people seeking God for the first time and the deepening prayerfulness of regular church members. But I long for growing rooted disciples, raising up deployable vocations, improving accessibility for all and enabling revitalisation of parishes.

Background and ministry

Apart from the four years I spent at theological college, I have always lived within the Diocese of Chester. I was born in Seacombe and stayed living in the Wallasey area until I left my career as a Civil Engineer. By then I had become immersed in church life, especially in youth and children's ministry, and was encouraged to pursue ordination by many discerning voices.

I have been Rector of Cheadle for just over two years, and I consider it a privilege to be placed at the helm in such a remarkable parish. As we have seen the Lord at work and sought his leading, we have discovered a vision that defines how we live rather than sets goals for us to achieve. We are committed to pray, rest and grow, abiding in Christ. We think this is the best advert for the gospel and find that newcomers are drawn into our church as we live for Jesus and welcome them.

I love to get alongside people, to reflect on how God is at work in their lives and to explore what God is calling them to next. For many years, I have committed time and energy to helping men and women grow in biblical understanding and deepen their theological foundations. This has proved to be a springboard for discerning new ministries and full-time vocations.

Before Cheadle, I was vicar of St John's Over in Winsford for thirteen years. This was a very different setting – a small struggling church in an Urban Priority Area. During my time there I learned a lot about partnerships with community organisations, schools and local government. I learned about the trials of managing a large, unwieldy church building with a meagre budget. But, more importantly, I learned how a normal, ordinary parish could be revitalised through teaching the Bible clearly and caring for individual church members attentively.

I have been a member of Diocesan Synod for around 15 years. I was part of the Committee for Social Responsibility, when it existed, and then the Committee for Ministry. More recently I have been involved in the strategy stream on discipleship, and I currently sit on Bishop's Council. I have taught theology on the Curate training programme (IME) as well as in non-Anglican settings and I mentor a number of younger incumbents. I have also been working with the Larger Churches Network to be more proactive and supportive in the Diocese.

Values and objectives

Being an evangelical, I hold a traditional view on marriage, but I think some of the actions on both sides of the current controversy have been unwarranted and the polarisation of the debate has been damaging. I can't see how the Bible can be interpreted any other way than the current doctrine of the Church of England, and so I don't believe it can be changed. Nevertheless, I recognise that those who come to a different viewpoint do so out of Christian convictions and compassion for the marginalised, and so I think we need to proceed with care for one another.

Though it is both divisive and momentous, I am not convinced that the debate over human sexuality is the most immediate threat to parish ministry. There continues to be a troubling shortfall in vocations compared to retirements, and vacancies are taking a long time to fill or are not being filled at all. If there are not enough ordained ministers to lead churches, the current clergy will become progressively more stretched, our presence in communities will be reduced, and our witness to Christ in this nation will be diminished.

In the short-term, clergy find they are more occupied with the crushing inevitability of deficit budgets, the unrelenting pressure of safeguarding and the increasing pastoral burden of mental health problems.

For these reasons, there needs to be a high priority for supporting and developing ministry to meet the demands and opportunities of the future. Many more young vocations need raising up, which means both seeking God in prayer and inspiring faithfulness in following his call. Ordained ministry requires servant-hearted leaders with spiritual discernment and emotional resilience. They need to be equipped for discipling the unchurched, revitalising parishes and perpetuating ministries. Yet, in the meantime we need to bolster our current clergy with the coaching and administrative support they need to sustain them in the current challenges of pastoral leadership.

Despite the apparent perils besetting the denomination, I believe that discipleship remains the most pressing matter for the church. Developing biblical literacy and strengthening doctrinal foundations inspires Christians in their personal faith and commitment to Jesus. This is the most effective way for brothers and sisters in Christ to be energised in personal evangelism and opened up to God's calling on their lives, whatever tradition they come from. Discipleship is the bedrock for mission and vocations.

In seeking to make disciples we need to remove barriers and build connections, making church accessible to people with diverse cultural backgrounds and needs. We aim to be present in our communities and invested in the welfare of the people around us in order to commend the rule of Christ and the kingdom of God.

This is nothing less than faithful parish ministry, in accordance with historic formularies of the Church of England. I am seeking to be elected to General Synod because I think this is worth standing for.

I'm Fr. Stephen Dunton. I'm Vicar of Timperley in Altrincham and have been ordained for thirteen years. I am married to Hannah and have 5 children and 3 grandchildren. I have been in Timperley for over 4 years and am loving it. I spent most of my life in the Midlands, but my mother was from Cheshire, so coming to the diocese has been a homecoming. I recently discovered that i am descended from a 17th century priest from this diocese.

I was a Head of Department and taught RE for 25 years. My final role in schools was as a pastoral manager and safeguarding lead. I served in both state and church schools and loved my role. I came to faith as a teenager at school and became involved in my parish church. I was ordained 15 years as a deacon in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. After returning to the church of my youth, I spent a year at Cuddesdon before being priested and serving a curacy at Pershore Abbey in Worcestershire.

I have a heart for Christ and reaching people with the gospel. I stand in the Catholic tradition and value the power of the sacramental life to mediate God's grace and encounter the risen Christ. I am theologically orthodox and seek to welcome all with compassion and without distinction, whilst being committed to the traditional doctrine of Christian marriage as received by the church catholic.

I firmly believe parish ministry remains the way for the Church of England to fulfil its historic calling to be a Christian presence in every community and believe that traditional Anglican and eucharistic worship, both Common Worship and BCP is at the heart of this. I believe in the principle of subsidiarity, that local decisions are best made by parishes and I would seek to promote the maintenance of the parish system.

I am present in both parish and community; in schools and visits. I work well with people across the whole breadth of modern Anglicanism and place great emphasis on maintaining the unity of the church. In a society where there is a clamour of disparate voices clamouring for attention, there is a need for people to listen well and engage graciously even amidst profound disagreements. I am privileged to I have experience of serving in non-stipendiary and stipendiary ministry and the challenges faced in both.

In the deanery I work well with other parishes, particularly on Mission, where I have taken part in street witness. I am a committed ecumenist and

work well with other churches in other denominations. If elected to General Synod, I will seek to be a constructive presence.

I enjoy visiting National Trust properties, going swimming and the arts in my free time. I attempt to remain grounded and with the help of my family, friends and parishioners maintain a sense of humour.

Reverend Liz England

I am standing for election to the General Synod to work towards a church that is supportive for everyone, safe and inclusive. **My focus is on four key areas: safeguarding; clergy well-being; inclusion and mission within rural churches.** These areas I believe are vital for a healthy, growing church.

I am standing because I care deeply about the mission and future direction of the Church of England. As a committed member of our Deanery Synod, I want to help ensure that the national voice of our church remains grounded in local realities, faithful to the life and words of Jesus and missional in service particularly to our rural communities.



Experience and Background

Christian Life and Church: I became a Christian at the age of seven, served as a youth representative for my PCC, my grandpa was a priest, my mum was one of the first women priests, and I have been ordained for 11 years. I was the Team Rector in Buxton for 5 years and the Assistant Area Dean, before moving to a part-time post in the Peak District after a cancer diagnosis. This experience has given me a practical understanding of both the joys and the missional challenges facing our parishes today, particularly in rural areas. I am the author and illustrator of the Teddy and Dolly series and Teddy and Dolly Church which is a new initiative to share Ignatian Spirituality with children and adults and works particularly well in small churches where the pews don't move. Other roles in the diocese include Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel member, Mental Health Forum member and Vocations Officer

Skills and Perspective: Professionally I am a trained Chartered Manager; I ran my own limited company before ordination, creating databases to enhance Children's Centres work with Ofsted. I was also a manager for Children's Centres in Birmingham; therefore, it is important to me that we ensure all children and adults can safely attend our churches, thrive and become leaders. Currently, I run a charity called PrayGo which encourages the use of AR (augmented reality) in prayer apps. I love to play netball, dance and read detective stories.

1. Safeguarding: Creating Safe Spaces

Safeguarding is a vital part of our Christian duty. We must make our churches safe places for children, young people, and vulnerable adults. The experience I have running Children Centre's in Birmingham and working with autistic adults means I know the importance of a robust safeguarding structure. This will ensure everyone within the church can thrive and share their gifts. I will aim to:

- Listen closely to victims and survivors and champion robust structures and reliable oversight of safeguarding.
- Ensure safeguarding training is practical, clear, and easy to complete at the parish level.
- Work to build a transparent culture where everyone feels safe to speak up.

2. Clergy Well-Being: Supporting Our Leaders

Clergy face high levels of stress, burnout, and isolation with increased hours, churches and populations. Healthy leaders are essential for healthy churches. I have been through cancer treatment, so understand some of the exhaustion and pressures being called to ministry brings. I will aim to:

- Champion all positive steps to support ministers and endorse the Covenant for Care and Well-Being for Clergy for the wider church to care for ministers and their families.
- Secure better pastoral support, realistic workloads, and mental health resources for clergy.
- Push for clear structures that protect our leaders' work-life balance.

3. Inclusion: A Church for All

The Church must reflect the diverse world it serves. We need to remove barriers that keep people from fully participating in church life. As a woman I have faced prejudice throughout pre-ordination, training and as an incumbent so understand a little of the prejudice others experience. I have also worked professionally with adults and children with additional needs in the West Midlands so know the necessity for accessible churches and services. I will aim to:

- Support policies that welcome people of all backgrounds, abilities, ages, ethnicities, and identities fostering a culture of respectful listening, grace, holy curiosity and unity across diverse church traditions and theological perspectives.
- Ensure every person feels valued and belongs in our church communities so they can thrive and share their gifts.
- Encourage diverse leadership that represents the whole church.

4. Rural Church Mission, a place to thrive

The rural church is often forgotten, but there is much we can learn from the traditions, farming routines and quirks that make up our beautiful countryside. Within our benefice we have a Teddy and Dolly Church that attracts 35 children and adults, a third of the village population. I will aim to:

- Advocate for rural churches to be heard and seen, championing farming communities and mission to our isolated and dispersed countryside communities.
- Ensure every person in each parish is seen as important and cherished, that we go out to the community rather than expecting people to come to the church. Church in a field can work!
- Encourage rural communities and churches to thrive and grow.

**I am nominated by Reverend Simon Gowler (Rural Dean of Macclesfield)
and Reverend Lynn Caudwell (Vicar of Pott Shrigley Church, Macclesfield)**

I would be honoured to represent our diocese at national level, bringing a faithful, wise and compassionate voice to the work of General Synod, focusing on well-being, safety and inclusion- we can build a stronger, healthier church for the future.

I am a part-time vicar looking after three rural churches in the Peak Parishes Benefice, Chester Diocese. You can contact me with any questions at reverendlizengland@gmail.com. I'd love to hear from you.

Rev'd Hannah Harvey

"learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow." Isaiah 1:17

Who am I?

- Follower of Jesus
- Curate across 4 Churches in Runcorn in a pioneering Curacy, after training at the Queens Foundation
- Youth, Children & Families Minister for 8 years prior to Ordination
- Lived & worked in the Diocese of Guildford, York & Norwich prior to moving to Chester Diocese for my Curacy
- Queer member of Clergy, and chaplain to local HIV & Pride Charity organisations.



I believe in working towards a Church that:

 **Seeks** the presence of God and encourages encounter & experience in ways that are rooted in the anglican faith whilst contextually appropriate & where local voices are amplified & celebrated.

 **Models** loving others through, & beyond, disagreement, holding difference with grace & integrity.

 **Believes** no one should be made to feel less-than no matter their;

- Tradition,
- Affluence,
- Gender,
- Sexuality,
- Age,
- Mental Health,
- Neurodiversity
- Disability
- or any other barrier to full inclusion.

 **Values** the parish system which continues to champion redemption & fullness of life for both place & people.

My faith has been an anchor in my life since I was a teenager and the role of the Church within that faith is inextricable. I believe the Church remains a powerful and relevant vehicle for the Missio Dei and the role of Synod is captured in these words of Gustav Mahler:

"Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire."

**Rev'd Karen M Andrews, Vicar of All Saints with Holy Trinity, Runcorn
Priest in Charge of St John the Evangelist, Weston**

"I am happy to nominate Hannah for this role. She is a compassionate, inclusive and capable Priest. She listens thoughtfully to discussions and can articulate her own thoughts clearly and confidently making useful contributions to decision making. Hannah shows a deep commitment to her priestly role and lives her faith in her everyday life. She is reflective and prayerful and willing to encourage others with prayer. I have every confidence that she will make an exceptional Synod member."

“We are committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of disability, economic power, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.”



Why do I feel called to stand?

I have a long history of experience within the Church of England that has led me to participate in committees and councils that are synod adjacent. I was the secretary, and subsequently Chair, of the Church of England Youth Council which included supporting and accompanying youth synod reps to Synod, leading Fringe meetings and manning CEYC stalls in York. As I grew more invested in raising the profile of youth participation and Anglo-Catholic perspectives, I joined the SGPF advisory group and then later LMAG. I have worked exclusively for the CofE since 2016 and have experience at Parish, Diocesan and National levels of Church.

What skills do I bring?

I have both a BA and a MA in Theology, Ministry and Mission which has equipped me with a passion for continued theological learning and an ability to see the beauty, and scriptural authority, of the breadth of CofE tradition.

I was raised within a traditional village church that had both charismatic worship and high mass. I experienced leading worship bands alongside singing in the choir and being thurifer. This has led me to have a deep appreciation of the ability of the CofE to hold the diversity of faith expression and a passion to ensure that this diversity can accommodate **all** of God's Children. I believe whole heartedly that the role of the Church is captured by the words of Isaiah 1:17 & that the basis of all we do should be bearing together with and in love.

I am passionate about nurturing a church that has space for all to find their home in because I have experienced the exclusion and abandonment that can be perpetuated in our Churches. I know first hand how terrifying it can be to speak out about exclusion, or be authentic within unsafe spaces, therefore I am determined to be a voice for the voices that feel unable to speak out. As an openly queer priest I feel this gives me the opportunity to represent those who cannot offer their own stories and remain safe.

“

“Hannah is an articulate, sensitive and passionate member of the Inclusive Church movement who would bring integrity and insight to synod conversations”

**Rev'd Karen Gardiner, Vicar at Hallwood
Ecumenical Parish**

”

Please vote for me, 1st place would be an honour, if I don't float your boat then please consider Rev'd Emma Speake. However you feel about my statement can I encourage you to use your vote and rank your candidates according to their

values, priorities, and vision for the future

to make sure your vote mirrors the kind of Church you long to see.



THE VENERABLE JANE PROUDFOOT

Candidate for election to General Synod

PROFILE

I was a member of the last General Synod for a year following the departure of Rev'd Simon Drew. I am a member of the senior team in the Diocese, sit on Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod, DAC and Houses and Glebe. I chair the Eco Diocese Group and sit on the Outreach and Diversity forums for the Diocese. I work closely with churches in vacancy and with the Vacancy Resource Group. I have been a training incumbent and a Deanery Vocations Advisor. I was a member of the Diocesan Advisory Group for Living in Love and Faith, and in 2019 chaired the triennial Chester Clergy Conference. I took the lead in involving our parish as a pilot for the Everyday Faith initiative from the Renewal and Reform Group. I have taught on the Reader and Pastoral Workers Training courses and undertook research into funeral ministry which fed into the National Church's Life Events initiative. I initiated the 'We are The Church' mission to the Creamfields Festival which started in 2017. I am the joint author of a resource pack entitled *Wellbeing in the Parish: Helping PCCs THRIVE*, part of the Church of England's resources for wellbeing, to be published by CHP next year.

jane.proudfoot@chester.anglican.org

PROPOSED BY

The Venerable Dr Michael Gilbertson

michael.gilbertson@chester.anglican.org

SECONDED BY

Rev'd Bee Boyde

revbeeboyde@gmail.com

Dear Colleagues,

I am standing for election to the Church of England General Synod out of a deep commitment to the future of our clergy and the flourishing of our parishes. In my daily ministry as an Archdeacon, I work closely with communities across the theological spectrum. This role constantly reminds me that our greatest strength lies in our ability to hold diverse perspectives together in Christ.

Importantly, my current role is firmly rooted in fifteen years of front-line parish ministry. I know firsthand the joy, isolation, administrative weight, and daily realities of clergy life because I, like you, have lived them. As your representative, I am committed to holding a broad, central line that actively respects, serves, and protects all traditions. In a national assembly that can often feel polarized, I will bring a perspective that is practical, collaborative, and fiercely defensive of our frontline ministries.

"I have worked closely with Archdeacon Jane over the last few years, first in my capacity as assistant rural dean and then rural dean. She is inspirational, not only as she navigated her illness, but perhaps more pertinently by her ability to develop the leadership skills of others. She has a deep understanding of ministry on the frontline and clearly sees what is needed to promote and grow God's Kingdom.

She holds the tension of driving this passion forward whilst working within the complex dynamics of the Church of England.

I trust her to be a voice for me because she so clearly carries God's love and grace into all parts of life.

Jane articulates clearly and with care when things need to change. She is careful to listen and hear everyone 'in the room' before discerning the words or next steps required. At a time when I see a lot of change is coming and still more is needed - I want her wisdom and integrity to be part of the conversations.

I encourage you to use your vote for a gentle steel in a loud and fractured landscape."

Rev'd Bee Boyd, Rector of St Mary, Sandbach and Rural Dean of Nantwich

"Jane has served in this diocese for many years as a parish priest and rural dean, and more recently an archdeacon. She is very effective, approachable, and highly respected by her colleagues and the community. She would bring energy and wisdom to General Synod, and I am delighted to commend her to you".

Venerable Dr Michael Gilbertson, Archdeacon of Chester

I believe our common framework is best expressed through the Five Marks of Mission -Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform and Treasure - which must guide our national and diocesan priorities over the next five years:

1. Mission, Church Growth, and Intentional Discipleship

Our core purpose must always be the Great Commission. Mission is not an optional extra; it is the vital center from which everything else flows. We are called to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom and to teach, baptize and nurture new believers. Having spent fifteen years leading in local churches, I know that true sustainability will not be achieved through administrative cuts or clever finance, but through spiritual renewal, intentional discipleship, and local church growth. I will champion national policies that invest heavily in parish-level evangelism, believing that revitalized mission is ultimately the only sustainable path to funding our shared ministry. Growth in the church is the product of good leadership, both lay and ordained. As there is no 'one size fits all' solution to the decline in church numbers, the solutions are as broad as the church itself. A recognition of the power of the local, contextual ministry, and the value of place and belonging is essential.

2. Comprehensive Christian Inclusion, Justice, and Pastoral Unity

Our calling is to reflect the full, diverse beauty of the body of Christ as we seek to transform unjust structures of society. I am fully committed to building an inclusive Church that actively dismantles all forms of discrimination. We must continue to root out systemic racism by implementing the *From Lament to Action* recommendations, remove barriers for disabled clergy and laity, promote gender equality at all levels of leadership, and ensure a generous pastoral welcome for LGBTQI+ Christians. Crucially, as an Archdeacon who serves the whole diocese, I will concurrently advocate for robust, structural safeguards that protect consciences on all sides, so every tradition has the space to "walk and work together" with absolute integrity.

3. Robust and Independent Safeguarding

Rebuilding systemic trust across our dioceses requires transparency and a commitment to challenge violence of every kind. I fully support General Synod's ongoing steps toward establishing an Independent Safeguarding Authority and standardized complaints processes. A safe church culture is a fundamental Gospel requirement. I will vote to ensure survivors receive independent redress and that our safeguarding structures are completely transparent and legally robust.

4. Clergy Well-being, Resilience, and Mental Health Provision

Parishes and clergy are under immense strain from society's widespread mental health crisis and the pressures of modern ministry. Our Gospel calling commands us to respond to human need by loving service. Drawing directly on my experience of working with the homeless and in schools prior to ordination, and of parish ministry alongside my current archdeaconry experience, I will champion better structural care, realistic workloads, and enhanced mental health support for overstretched clergy. I will advocate for practical national funding and training tools so our local leadership can safely support the most vulnerable in our wider communities.

5. Climate Action, Creation Care, and Net Zero Infrastructure

Caring for God's creation is a non-negotiable tenet of our faith as we strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and respond responsibly to the climate crisis. While I support our national Net Zero carbon targets, my practical experience tells me that parishes need realistic support, not just legislative demands. I will advocate for dedicated national funding streams, subsidized energy audits, and simplified faculty paths that empower clergy and churchwardens to adapt historic buildings realistically and responsibly. Furthermore, I will push for the Church Commissioners to manage our national assets and agricultural land with high ethical and ecological standards, modeling true environmental justice.

Our calling is to be a generous, welcoming church at the heart of every community. I offer you a voice that is moderate, deeply collaborative, and fully informed by both the daily realities of diocesan leadership and the lived experiences of parish life.

I would be deeply grateful for your first-preference vote.

Candidate for General Synod

Rev Peter Selby

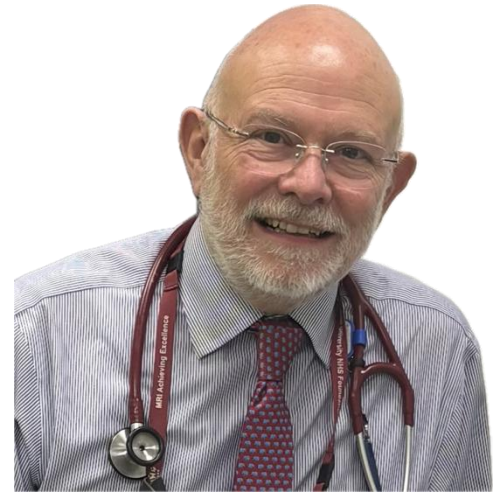
Minister in Secular Employment and Consultant Physician

Associate Minister, St Andrew, Cheadle Hulme

peter.selby@standrewscheadlehulme.org.uk

Proposed: Rev Densie Noble – MSE and curate,
Christ Church, Chester

Seconded: Rev Mark Pickles, Vicar, St Andrews, Cheadle
Hulme



About me:

- I was ordained in 2018
 - As a self-supporting minister
 - A minister in secular employment (MSE)
- Seek to bring Kingdom values to my workplace
 - A busy teaching hospital in Manchester where I am consultant physician and associate medical director
- Also serve as associate minister in St Andrew's, Cheadle Hulme, a medium sized evangelical church in the suburbs of Manchester where I have worshipped with my wife and family since moving to Manchester over 30 years ago.

What can I bring to synod:

- **Speaking for Self-Supporting Ministers**
 - More than a quarter of ordained ministers licensed in the Church of England are self-supporting
 - However, they are much less frequently to be found in any of its representative bodies
 - Although many issues facing clergy are common to stipendiary and self-supporting ministers
 - There are issues specific to self-supporting ministers which specifically affect their well being
 - It is important that there is a voice for these issues in General Synod
 - If elected, I would offer such a voice, **speaking on behalf of all self-supporting ministers, regardless of role or theological tradition.**
- **Sharing experience as Minister in Secular Employment**
 - In particular, I have wide exposure to different aspects of MSE
 - Since before ordination I have been an active member of CHRISM (the organisation for ministers called to MSE – www.chrism.or.uk)
 - Up to 2024 I was presiding moderator of CHRISM and remain part of its moderatorial team
 - This has given me the opportunity to work with a wide variety of different MSEs in different settings and of different theological traditions.

Candidate for General Synod

- Most report a greater difficulty getting the Church to understand their ministry than their employers, this means that the church is missing out on an important opportunity for mission into the increasingly secular workplaces of our country.
- Furthermore, they also report that the Church fails to recognise their expertise in their field of work and does not utilise them to plan the Church's response to important questions of faith and life: for instance, my own observations suggest that much of its response to important issues of medical ethics has not been well informed by input from practitioners, ordained or lay.
- If elected, I would **speak strongly against this perpetuation of a sacred-secular divide**
- I would also be a strong advocate for the Church to take full advantage of the expertise already available within her walls
- **Sharing experience from my secular employment**
 - My clinical experience means that I could offer an informed view on many matters of **medical ethics**. This is particularly the case for:
 - **Issues at beginning and end of life** where I have had to make difficult decisions as well as travelling alongside others (patients and colleagues) in the throes of such difficult decision making
 - **Issues of healthcare justice** – I spent over ten years serving on a NICE technology appraisal committee, latterly as its vice chair. From this I have a very clear understanding of the issues around the equitable allocation of limited resources
 - I have had experience of oversight of large charitable organisations having been trustee of both National Osteoporosis Society, including as treasurer, and Paget's Association, as chair. So, I already have some of the understanding of finance and organisational issues which will need to be addressed by Synod

Other issues:

- I do believe that the properties which I can bring to Synod are defined by the issues which have proved so divisive in the Church of England in recent years
- However, to provide complete clarity I make it clear that
 - I support a traditional view of marriage and family life
 - I support the role of women in ministry

I trust that you can see that, as a result of my MSE experience, I offer a different perspective on some of the big issues facing the Church of England over the next five years and can bring valuable experience to Synod which is important given the increasing reliance of self-supporting ministers in the Church.

Rev. Mike Smith, Vicar of Hartford: Candidate for General Synod

It has been a privilege to serve on General Synod at the tail end of this last session, having come on through a by-election. I would be grateful for your highest possible preference vote in order to return to Synod for the next quinquennium.

Grace and Truth: my theological core

The Lord Jesus finally drew me to himself in the Students' Union launderette at Warwick University in early 1989, as I gave up trying to escape his unique claim to be "the way, the truth and the life", and the only one through whom we come to the Father (John 14.6). Ever since, John's writings have had a particular resonance for me personally, and throughout my ministry. Our parish motto in Hartford reflects John's classic pairing: we are committed to walking in truth, and living in love.

Jesus famously said authentic discipleship is found in our love for each other (John 13.35), but he also said that if we love him, we will obey his teaching (John 14.23-24). When love grows cold, we become odious Pharisees. When we neglect "God's word written", we weakly echo the unbelieving world. Just as Jesus comes from his Father, "full of grace and truth", so the church – in parish, diocese and nationally – needs to aspire always to be full of both.

What does that look like in General Synod?

Even in my short time, I have found myself in the happy position of collaborating across the entire theological spectrum of the Church of England on issues as diverse as the Chester-led move to refocus the allocation of LInC funding from dioceses to parishes, and the safeguarding implications of the Seal of the Confessional. I believe that is grace at work, not just politics.

It has also meant rediscovering precious unity amongst those who are committed to "our Lord's teaching that marriage is in its nature a union ... of one man with one woman" (Canon B30). As a practical expression of our unity under Jesus' teaching, I am grateful that Hennie and Tina have agreed to nominate me to re-stand for Synod. We stand together in the orthodox faith once for all delivered to the saints.

What about issues currently before Synod?

Let me just address three: I would welcome direct questions about any others.

1. Strong parishes

As a general rule, people are not converted to Christ in deaneries or dioceses – and not through hierarchs or experts – but in local churches where believers bear witness to the grace and truth of Jesus, and are led by able pastors who preach "the pure Word of God" and duly minister the Sacraments (Article XIX). If making disciples is our most important work, then supporting local parishes, their people and pastors must be our most important priority. As such, I am standing in support of [Save the Parish](#).

2. Safe churches

The safeguarding scandals of recent decades – of which I am a survivor – have caused untold damage: most importantly to precious souls, but also to the credibility of the church. Our work in this area is unfinished. I have a particular concern about the so-called Seal of the Confessional where the duty of absolute secrecy contradicts the most basic safeguarding principle of prioritising the vulnerable. This cannot continue, and if re-elected, I hope to start the process seeking to bring a motion to our Diocesan Synod and then to General Synod to reform this.



3. Faithful clergy

In the new Synod, LLF will be reborn under a new acronym. In my [debut speech](#) in February, I argued in favour of a motion to stop this happening. It is inevitable that this will include moves to allow clergy to be in same-sex marriages. In this last Synod, we have agreed that the Church of England will not change its doctrine of marriage: it is, after all, Jesus' own teaching. It would introduce an impossible contradiction if those charged to teach the church's doctrine can choose to live in committed, deliberate, public denial of that same doctrine. I am therefore also standing in support of [The Alliance](#).

What should Synod be addressing?

When we were ordained, and every time we take up a new post, we are reminded of our fundamental calling, namely "bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to those in your care". In my view, two focal points of mission – traditionally Anglican strengths – require radical renewal; each is a personal passion.

1. Reaching the young

Figures released at the last meeting of Synod revealed that less than 4% of parishes nationally have more than 25 young people attending weekly. Over the last 20 years, the churches in our diocese have lost two thirds of our young people. Unless we radically and effectively prioritise the engagement of young people with the full biblical gospel, the Church of England will largely cease to exist in the next few decades. How do we enable thriving children's and youth ministry to flourish in every parish?

2. Serving our communities

We have all seen the number of weddings and funerals in church, or taken by clergy, drop dramatically in recent decades. Why do we persist with a fee-based model that belonged to a departed Christendom, annually increasing fees as engagement dwindles? If we want to be both ministers and models of the gospel of grace in the great turning points of life, it is time to learn from the NHS and offer all our services free at the point of delivery.

In particular, with all the benefits marriage brings, it is outrageous that the wealthy are four times more likely to marry than the poorest in our nation. Promoting, defending and sustaining God's gift of marriage is a biblical, evangelistic and social justice imperative. One couple's story shows the difference a local church can make – our then curate was briefly [famous on the One Show](#) through our Grand Wedding initiative.

Why should you vote for me?

I have been in full-time parish ministry for over 30 years and committed to the wider life of the Church of England throughout that time. I have been on Diocesan Synod since 2006, Bishops' Council since 2009 and the Central Services Committee (and its predecessor) since 2013. That's a cumulative total of 50 years' experience in our diocesan structures!

One recent positive example of my engagement has been the creation of the Complementary Parish Share Scheme. In a real sense, no-one actually wants it! But it's an attempt, in a divided church, to maintain maximum possible unity while recognising deep conscientious difference.

In short, if you want someone who is passionate to make disciples of all ages, longs to see parishes renewed and strengthened as the missional centre of the Church of England and who loves our church's reformed, biblical doctrine, vote for me! Thank you for taking the time to read.

Nominators: Rev. Hennie Johnston (St. Mark's, Lache Saltney and Rural Dean of Chester)
Rev. Canon Tina Upton (Holy Trinity, Blacon and Chair of the House of Clergy)

If you have any questions, please get in touch via mike@stjohnshartford.org or on 01606 77557.



REV'D EMMA SPEAKE

For General Synod

**'I have come
that they might
have life—life
in all its
fullness'.**

JOHN 10:10



PRIORITIES

1

A CHURCH FOR EVERYONE

Where everyone is welcomed, celebrated, affirmed and able to participate at every level.

2

AN ACCESSIBLE CHURCH

A church which seeks to remove barriers to belonging, believing & participating.

3

A SAFER CHURCH

A church that takes safeguarding seriously; that speaks truth in humility and in openness to being changed.

4

A CHURCH THAT CARES

For people, place & planet.

Where Kingdom values & justice are priorities.

WHO AM I?

- Vicar at Grange St. Andrew. A small estate church in Runcorn.
- Experience - ordained 10 years, Vicar 8 years.
- Chester Diocesan Disability Advisor.
- Assistant Rural Dean in Frodsham.
- Member of the pioneering 'Runcorn Revs' team - a collaborative team of clergy working together to build the Kingdom across our town.
- Chaplain to a local HIV, LGBTQIA+ Support & Pride group.
- Member of the disability forum & Outreach Committee.
- Previous joint 'Estates Ministry' lead & school chaplain.
- Pre-ordination: Parish Children & Families Worker, & Detached Youth Worker.
- Best of all: Follower of Jesus.

I've been Vicar in one of the most 'deprived' parishes in the country for 8 years. I've experienced just how tough and lonely it can be... but I also appreciate the beauty & generosity of parishes like mine, which is why I will always be an advocate for estates & lower income areas who are often marginalised in different ways.

First & foremost, I feel called to stand for general synod as an important way of standing with those who feel this marginalisation - just as Jesus did - through advocating, affirming, challenging & bringing the concerns & voices of those in our parishes and communities into the room.

I'm already doing this in my parish work: as disability advisor and in the different committees & groups I'm involved with. For 2.5 years I've led a small worshipping community for families with SEN, I've worked closely for 6 years with a HIV & LGBTQIA+ organisation to whom I offer chaplaincy & friendship, and I seek to create inclusive & welcoming spaces where all are welcome & able to participate (which is why I recently undertook training in Makaton and BSL).

I'm incredibly proud to lead a church who have an 'Autism Affirming Place of Worship' award & are part of the 'Inclusive Church' network. I aspire to be a pioneer in inclusive & accessible ministry - at least, I work hard at it, I listen & I act.

Through my varied ministry, I hear story upon story of pain, exclusion & hopelessness - emotions I know well. I have lived experienced of exclusion through my neurodivergency & various life experiences (growing up on a social housing estate, homelessness, mental health & in other ways too). But I've also experienced how faith in Jesus can change & transform us, and the beauty of Christian community when it works well and works together; I believe inclusion is missional, as is disagreeing well and collaborating.

Coming to faith in my 20's totally transformed me & gave me new things: hope, peace, belonging, something to cling onto - fullness of life you might say. I want that so desperately for others which is a huge part of my calling to ministry & ultimately to standing for Synod. I believe in the church & parish, & value the opportunity to help shape & transform it, so every generation can also know the fullness of life that faith in Jesus brings.

Helping people belong is important to me as I understand this is often how folk come to believe - as I did. But I recognise there are barriers that prevent some from accessing church & so coming to faith. I've spent my ministry, lay & ordained, working to change that.

I promise if I'm elected, I will continue to work so all voices are heard, barriers removed, & all are equally able to participate in the life of the church at all levels. Kingdom stuff!

WHY AM I STANDING?

I'd appreciate your vote as first preference if my priorities are yours. If not, please consider voting for our Curate, **Rev'd Hannah Harvey**, who is also standing and is a wonderfully passionate & experienced candidate.



Revd Josh Tomalin

Curate – St.Marks, Bredbury

Contact: joshuatomalin@gmail.com

Proposer: Revd David Brewster

Seconder: Revd Andy Bull



Dear Chester clergy colleagues,

I am offering myself to serve on General Synod for the first time. I'm passionate about the work of the church in bringing the Gospel of Jesus to all people, of all ages and in all places. I hope for governance that seeks to build a church that grows not just for the next few years, but decades and beyond. I want to be able to represent all clergy, to work across differences of tradition to serve our church together.

About Me:

I am 27, married to Francesca, and was ordained in Chester Diocese in 2025.

I grew up in East Sussex, and came to faith throughout my childhood, moved to this diocese when I was 17 with my family and started to serve the church in various roles, mainly in children and youth work. Through this time, I felt a strong call to church leadership, and I started training for ordination when I was 23.

If elected I would look to:

Strengthen Vocations:

I was fortunate to be encouraged by my church and the diocese as I explored my calling, the changes to the discernment process have been hugely positive – but many people who may be called to ministry feel discouraged from engaging with it and exploring what God might be calling them to do. I want all who feel that call, whether it comes earlier in life or later to feel confident in exploring it, and for the church to resource ways of investing in developing and training leaders, right through the ages that we have in our church.



Support Parishes

For our church to flourish in decades and centuries to come, we need our parishes to be supported and invested in. The model of having a minister for a church, who knows and is known by their people has been the bedrock of the Church of England since its foundation. The church has very real and significant financial restraints at parish and diocese level which I know I do not have to tell you all! But we also have great resources as a national church and I would seek to release as much for mission as possible, whilst stewarding what we have wisely for future generations!

Improve Accessibility

As a disabled (profoundly deaf) person, I am passionate about people hearing the gospel – literally! On a basic practical level, I want to make sure that people can access church, that they feel empowered to use the gifts God has given them, and can belong as a full part of their community. Whether its hearing, sight, language difficulties, or neurodiversity – I want all churches to be equipped to love and serve everyone.

Grow Mission to Children and Young people

As a church, we know that we need to reach more younger people. Having worked in youth work before training for ordination, I know there is no silver bullet for sudden growth. We need a range of approaches, from resourcing parishes in their children and youth work, to improving the offering of the wider church's digital communication. My hope is that one day the Church of England would be known nationally for being truly multi-generational, where people of all ages share their faith and lives together.

Foster Co-operation across Traditions

We are a diverse church, with a breadth of traditions and theologies. I would describe myself as a conservative evangelical, and I know that conservatives have not always done a very good job working across theological differences, and I'd quite like to change that image! If elected I would want to represent all clergy, to build spaces where we can work alongside one another without seeking to hide significant disagreements or pretending they don't exist.

Thanks for taking the time to read this! If you have any questions at all – please do get in touch.

I hope you feel able to support me with the highest preference vote you feel able to give.

Revd Marc Wolverson

Candidate for General Synod — Diocese of Chester

Proposed by: Revd Deborah Michelle Wilkinson, Associate Minister, Birkenhead Priory & Wirral Waters Mission Lead

Seconded by: Revd Natalie Maxwell, Assistant Curate, Oxton, St Saviour

Dear Fellow Clergy,

I am standing for election to General Synod as a Proctor in Convocation for the Diocese of Chester, and I would be honoured to have your first-preference vote.

I am Vicar of Oxton, St Saviour, a former Area Dean of Leyland and former Vice-Chair of the Blackburn House of Clergy. I previously served on General Synod for Chester (2005–2009) and Sodor and Man (2011–2013), and currently serve as Rector of the Chester Chapter of the Society of Catholic Priests.

I am a Catholic Anglican with an evangelical heart. I have been an incumbent of four growing churches, a Training Incumbent for three curates, and for five years served as Diocesan Spiritual Director for Cursillo Chester, working with a dedicated team in evangelism and renewal. My Anglo-Iranian heritage and experience of the Anglican Church both in Britain and overseas have also given me a particular commitment to diversity, mission and engagement with other faith communities.

If elected, I would seek to be a constructive, independent and listening voice for the clergy of Chester. My priorities would include:

A Church united in mission, despite our differences

The Church of England is at its best when different traditions can learn from one another. I am deeply concerned that our ability to disagree respectfully is being lost. Catholic, evangelical, liberal and charismatic traditions all have gifts to offer the Church.

I will listen carefully to those with whom I disagree and seek to ensure that every voice is heard. We do not have to agree about everything in order to worship together, pray together and proclaim Christ together. At a time when our society is increasingly uncertain about faith, we need to spend less energy fighting one another and more energy sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

Living in Love and Faith: truth, compassion and communion

I welcome the progress that has been made in making the Church more welcoming to people in same-sex relationships, while recognising that deeply held theological convictions remain on all sides. The Church must find a way of remaining doctrinally coherent while making genuine provision for same-sex couples and for clergy and congregations who cannot conscientiously participate in such provision.

The Prayers of Love and Faith and the question of their future now require careful and honest consideration. I will seek a settlement that allows people of different convictions to remain within the Church of England with integrity, dignity and mutual respect.

My own position has developed over many years of prayer, study and pastoral ministry. I understand the traditional Christian teaching on sexuality and marriage, having first encountered the Christian faith within that tradition. Yet my friendships and pastoral relationships with same-sex couples have convinced me that we need greater provision to support, care for and bless people in faithful, lifelong relationships. I do not believe it is reasonable or realistic to expect people in such relationships to abandon them in order to remain in good standing with the Church or with God.

I am not a “card-carrying” progressive. I am an ordinary Christian and priest who has thought, prayed and listened carefully on these matters. I will defend the position I have reached while respecting the integrity of those who have reached a different conclusion.

Safeguarding: putting survivors and safety first

The Makin Review and the wider safeguarding failures of recent years have demonstrated the urgent need to rebuild trust. The Church must put the welfare of children, vulnerable adults, victims and survivors before

institutional reputation or convenience. The Church of England has rightly committed itself to implementing the Makin recommendations, but important work remains, including the development of genuinely independent safeguarding arrangements.

I will support safeguarding structures that are as independent as humanly possible, with clear accountability and proper support for survivors. Safeguarding should never become a matter of party politics or theological tribalism. It is a fundamental Christian responsibility.

Parish ministry, mission and our clergy

I strongly support the parish church as the **primary focus of mission and ministry**. I welcome fresh expressions, church plants and new initiatives, but these should strengthen rather than displace the parish church. Our parish churches are embedded in their communities and are uniquely placed to offer a continuing Christian presence.

I want to see more national resources reaching ordinary parishes, enabling them to grow in confidence and capacity for evangelism, discipleship and community engagement. We should invest not only in new initiatives, but in the churches already serving their communities faithfully every week.

I am equally committed to the wellbeing and proper support of our clergy. The expectations placed upon clergy have never been greater, and this is a particular concern in our own Diocese. I would support a more genuinely pastoral approach to clergy review, including regular annual conversations focused not simply on performance but on wellbeing, vocation, workload and the support needed to flourish in ministry.

Diversity and inclusion

As a half-Iranian priest, diversity is not an abstract issue for me. I served for five years on the national Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns, including visiting dioceses to encourage greater engagement with diversity.

I want to see a Church in which people from every ethnic and cultural background can flourish in leadership and worship. I also bring experience of Christian-Muslim dialogue, including through the Christian-Muslim Encounters initiative in Blackburn Diocese, the Light Foundation in Preston, and I have a strong working relationship with the Wirral-Dean Centre in Birkenhead. We need a Church confident enough in the uniqueness of Christ to engage generously and respectfully with people of other faiths.

A voice for Chester

I have the experience of having served on General Synod before, but I do not take for granted what it means to represent you. I would seek to be accessible, independent-minded and willing to listen, while bringing the experience of parish ministry and the concerns of clergy directly to Synod.

The Church of England faces significant challenges. But I remain hopeful. I believe passionately in the Church, in the ministry of its clergy, in the vocation of our parish churches, and above all in the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Please allow me the privilege of serving as your Synod Representative by giving me your First Preference vote.

If you have questions about any of the issues raised in this address, or about any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at marc.wolverson@oxtonstsaviour.co.uk.

With every blessing,

Marc Wolverson

Vicar, Oxton, St Saviour

Candidate for General Synod