

Questions to candidates for General Synod House of Laity

Q1. Do you fully support the equality of women at all levels of ministry, including ordained and episcopal ministry?

Yes, I fully support the equality of women at every level of ministry in the Church of England, including ordained and episcopal ministry. I believe women should be able to exercise their vocation and gifts fully and without discrimination, and that the Church is enriched when women are represented and heard at every level of its life and leadership.

Q2. In July the General Synod was asked to "affirm that all baptised, believing and faithful persons regardless of sexual orientation are full members of the Body of Christ" and that "recognise a legitimate range of theological perspectives, held in good conscience, across the Church of England, on the right ordering of committed, faithful, intimate same-sex relationships". If you were on Synod, did you vote in favour of this. If you were not on Synod, how would you have voted?

I was not a member of General Synod in July, but **I would have voted in favour.**

I strongly believe that all baptised, believing and faithful people, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ. For me, this is both a matter of theology and a matter of lived reality. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I know that these debates are not abstract—they affect people's lives, relationships, vocations and sense of belonging in the Church.

I believe we can hold theological disagreement without allowing it to become exclusion, and that we must create a Church where LGBTQ+ people are not simply tolerated but genuinely welcomed, valued and able to flourish.

If elected, I would seek to be a voice for **compassion, inclusion and honest theological dialogue**, while being clear about my own conviction that faithful, committed same-sex relationships can be entirely compatible with Christian discipleship.

Q3. Parish share is intended to support all churches across the diocese. Has your church ever applied restrictions on who can benefit from receiving parish share, for example through making use of the Ephesians Fund to prevent your contribution supporting the majority of clergy in the diocese?

No. My church has not restricted who can benefit from our Parish Share, nor have we used the Ephesians Fund to prevent our contribution supporting particular clergy or churches.

We may have genuine theological disagreements, but I do not believe those disagreements should determine who is worthy of our financial support. **If we are one Church, we should share our resources as one Church.**

I would therefore support a Parish Share system that strengthens ministry across the diocese and enables all our churches to flourish, particularly those in rural, coastal and economically disadvantaged communities.

Q4. To what extent do you consider the decreasing number of stipendiary clergy and increasing lay-led congregations to be an issue that needs addressing across the Church of England?

I consider this a **significant issue that needs addressing**. I strongly value lay-led ministry and, as a Licensed Lay Minister. However, lay ministry should complement, not replace, properly resourced ordained ministry.

We need to invest in **vocations, clergy wellbeing and sustainable stipendiary ministry**, while also equipping and empowering lay people to use their gifts. For me, the answer is not **“clergy or laity”** but **“clergy and laity.”** We need creative patterns of ministry that enable both to flourish and ensure every community has access to sustainable, meaningful Christian ministry.

Q5. Do you agree that the Church should commit fully to training and ordaining local leaders as self supporting priests?

I support the Church identifying, encouraging, training and ordaining local people who feel called to serve their communities as self-supporting priests. Local vocations are a huge gift to the Church, particularly in rural communities. However, I do not believe self-supporting ministry should be used simply to fill gaps created by a decline in stipendiary clergy. **We need to invest more, not less, in stipendiary vocations, clergy wellbeing and sustainable parish ministry.** Self-supporting priests should complement stipendiary clergy, not replace them.

Q6. What do you consider to be the Church of England's priorities for the next 5 years?

1. **We need to grow the Church and share the hope of Christ.** Church growth should not simply be about numbers, but about helping more people encounter Jesus, discover faith and find a community where they can belong.
2. **We must become a Church where everyone genuinely belongs.** Inclusion cannot be an optional extra. LGBTQ+ people, women, disabled and

neurodivergent people, people from every background, and people of every age should know that they are welcomed, valued and able to flourish in the life and ministry of the Church.

3. **Revitalise parish ministry.** Our parish system remains one of the Church of England's greatest strengths, particularly in rural and coastal communities such as those across Cumbria. We should invest in sustainable stipendiary clergy, support clergy wellbeing and encourage local vocations to support and grow in mission and ministry.
4. **Be courageous about the future while valuing what already works.** We should support new forms of church, fresh expressions, chaplaincy and digital ministry alongside our existing parishes and traditions. I don't believe in change for change's sake, but I do believe we need the courage to ask what is working, what isn't, listen to those closest to the challenges and turn good ideas into practical action.
5. **Our responsibility to the wider world.** Tackling poverty and inequality, caring for creation and responding to the climate crisis should be central to our Christian witness.

Q7. Do you feel that the Bible's teaching on sexuality and marriage is still relevant for the Church in 2026?

For me, the central biblical themes of love, faithfulness, commitment, dignity, justice and the welcome of all people into the Body of Christ remain profoundly relevant. I believe faithful, committed same-sex relationships can embody those Christian virtues and that LGBTQ+ Christians should not be required to choose between living authentically and living faithfully.

I also recognise that Christians sincerely disagree about the interpretation and application of Scripture on sexuality and marriage. The Church of England's Living in Love and Faith process has demonstrated just how deeply held those convictions are. I believe we must be able to disagree honestly while refusing to turn disagreement into exclusion or diminish the dignity of those with whom we disagree.

The Bible remains central. The question is how faithfully we hear it, interpret it and live it out in the world God has placed us in today.

Q8. What are views in taking forward the Living in Love & Faith (LLF) process, which appears to have come to a natural ending?

I recognise that Living in Love and Faith has reached its natural conclusion, but the questions—and the people at its heart—have not gone away.

I support taking the work forward, but not simply creating LLF 2.0. We need to learn from the process, acknowledge the hurt experienced by many LGBTQ+ people, and move from process to progress.

There should be honest theological dialogue, but also clear timescales and accountability, so that this does not become another open-ended process. We cannot keep asking people to wait indefinitely to know whether they truly belong.

Q9. What personal qualities do you have that you feel are suitable for serving on General Synod for the next 5 years?

I believe I would bring **hope, courage, humility and a willingness to listen** to General Synod.

I am someone who listens carefully, values different perspectives and is not afraid to ask difficult questions when something isn't working. My professional experience in Continuous Improvement has taught me to challenge assumptions constructively, bring people together and turn ideas into practical action. I would bring that same approach to Synod.

My faith also gives me a strong sense of hope and resilience. I know the Church faces difficult and sometimes deeply painful challenges, but I believe we should face them with courage rather than fear. I am willing to speak up for what I believe, while also listening respectfully to those with whom I disagree.

As a Licensed Lay Minister, I understand the reality of parish life and the vital contribution of lay people. As someone from Cumbria, I would bring a perspective shaped by rural and coastal communities, where resilience and community matter enormously.

Above all, I care deeply about people and about the Church we are called to be. I would seek to be a **thoughtful, constructive and compassionate voice** on Synod—someone who listens, challenges when needed and works with others to make a positive difference.