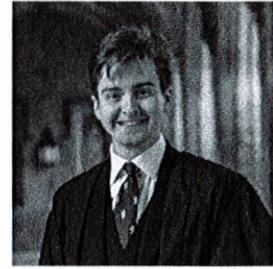




General Synod Election Address

Owen Alexander Sparkes



About me

I am Owen, a trainee Barrister, former cathedral chorister and passionate member of our Church. After the pandemic bolted shut the doors of our places of worship, while mourning for our communities, I came to realise just how important the Church of England is to both my life and the life of our nation. I am standing for General Synod because I want to give back to the institution that has given me so very much, and ensure that its spirit and opportunities will be available to the generations that follow us.

My policies

As a young Christian, I know the value of finding a spiritual home during a formative time of life. Too often graduates who, having spent some years worshipping in a university church or chapel, leave without any direction as to where they should go next. Many times they find themselves spiritually at sea in a new place and career. The Church must do better to retain these Christians. I pledge **to form a national network of churches** for university and college graduates to know where they are welcome and will feel at home once their education has finished.

I am standing for Synod as part of the Save the Parish campaign. The past few years have made clear the extent to which parishes are the lifeblood of our Church and nation. If elected, I will vehemently defend the parochial system at General Synod. As part of this network, I pledge:

- **To support the archbishops** in keeping their pledge to support the parish as the best means of evangelism.
- **To put the frontline first**, ensuring that resources that properly belong to and are generated by the parishes remain at parish level, freeing up laity and clergy for mission.
- **To ensure that law and projects which initiate from the centre all support and enhance the parochial system** by integrating the Strategic Development Fund into the parish and opposing the revision to the Mission & Pastoral Measure.
- **To encourage the prioritisation of spending on good theological education** as a crucial investment for effective mission.
- **To call for a Church-State commission** to agree a national plan to protect and preserve historic parish buildings.

Owen Alexander Sparkes
Monday, 6 September 2021