



## AIDEN HARGREAVES-SMITH

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- Please feel free to contact me -

**Parish:** All Saints, Margaret Street  
**Deanery:** Westminster (St Marylebone)

### ❖ Why am I standing for re-election?

I am deeply committed to the Church of England – to its missional life, its work for the advancement of God's Kingdom, and its Christian witness as part of the worldwide church. It has been a privilege to serve since 2000 as an elected representative of the Diocese in the General Synod. I take that responsibility seriously and believe I have made a positive contribution at the national level. I offer myself for re-election in order to provide a degree of continuity and to make my varied background, professional legal expertise and synodical experience available for the wider work of the Church. I believe I still have a distinctive contribution to make, and so seek your support to allow me to continue this work on your behalf.

### ❖ Church and community

My professional life, as a charity and church lawyer, has brought me into daily contact with a wide range of community groups, and with parishes from every part of the Diocese and of every tradition. In trying to help them, I remain convinced of the importance of maintaining that lively diversity which characterises our Diocese. I would not wish the Church, especially in London, to become a less comprehensive community, or to narrow the limits of its membership. Like many members of Synod, I am a member of a Synodical group (in my case, the Catholic Group), but have never worked in a partisan way: I firmly believe that our common identity in Christ calls us to have a genuine care for every member of the Body. I have worked with others to try to encourage those from groups which are under-represented on General Synod (including younger people and those from minority ethnic backgrounds) to consider becoming more involved in the synodical life of the Church. I am a member of the Anglican Minority Ethnic Network; and have a record of advocating for others.

### ❖ General Synod experience

In the 21 years I have served on the General Synod, I have attended every group of sessions except February 2007, when I was ill. I have served on a number of legislative and other committees, and I have spoken in debates and tabled questions on a wide range of issues, including:

- Mission and evangelism
- Higher Education
- The Assisted Dying Bill
- Hospital chaplaincy
- Fostering diversity in church appointments
- The Children's Society's *Safe and Sound* campaign
- Church investments policy
- The impact of tax changes on parishes and dioceses

### ❖ National responsibilities have included:

- 2005-07 Member of the **Senior Appointments Review** (appointed by the Archbishops' Council)
- 2005-11 Member, **Fees Advisory Commission** (appointed by the President of the Law Society)
- 2005-15 Elected member of the **Appointments Committee of the Church of England** – *I sought to broaden the range of people appointed, proposing non-General Synod members where possible*
- 2005-15 Member of the **Standing Committee of the House of Laity** of the General Synod
- 2007-17 Elected representative of the House of Laity on the **Crown Nominations Commission**
- 2011 to date Legally qualified member of the **Legal Aid Commission**
- 2012-20 **A Chair of the General Synod** (appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York)
- 2018-21 Chair, **Crown Nominations Commission Elections Review Group** – *seeking to ensure broad representation and engagement in the process of choosing diocesan bishops*

### ❖ **Mission – our urgent priority**

*Living and proclaiming the Gospel together must be our priority.* If it is not, I believe we shall be failing our broken world. Like many, I am concerned that the Church is so often perceived as doing little more than engaging in self-destructive in-fighting over a small number of issues. This does nothing to advance the Kingdom. We must be clear and confident about our fundamental purpose: to love God and our neighbour; and we must nurture vocations, equipping the people of God through a proper formation for all our lay and ordained ministers. The focus should be on parishes and local communities as the primary vehicles for mission.

### ❖ **Christian witness – ethical issues**

We live in a society where Christianity is often misunderstood, marginalised or attacked. It is crucial that the Church witnesses sensitively *but boldly* to the Faith once received by the Saints, and to the presence of Our Lord with us in Word and Sacrament. I have happily declared in public “my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness.” The Church must not be afraid to be distinctive or to take a lead on important ethical and moral issues. I believe we should resist dangerous moves on matters such as assisted dying, whilst working to promote a compassionate understanding of the dignity and sanctity of all human life. I’ve supported efforts to work for ethical investment policies and to encourage responsible stewardship of the earth’s resources.

### ❖ **Vision and Strategy – ‘Simpler, Humbler, Bolder’**

Developing and implementing the Church’s vision and strategy programme will be a major theme in the next General Synod, and it will be vital that all members are engaged with it. I support the simplification of church law and procedure, though it needs to be handled with care not to backfire and place unintended burdens on dioceses and parishes. I have concerns about aspects of the proposals relating to the pastoral reorganisation of parishes, where the ministry needs of local communities must be paramount. I have argued for more flexible patterns of synodical working to make it more accessible and to facilitate wider participation and engagement. Revision of the Clergy Discipline Measure will be a significant matter to which I could bring over a decade of practical experience and understanding.

### ❖ **The Five Guiding Principles**

I wholeheartedly support the House of Bishops’ *Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests* and the Five Guiding Principles. I believe that it is incumbent upon all of us to work hard to promote mutual flourishing, and to ensure that our relationships with those with whom we may fundamentally disagree are characterised by prayerful generosity and charity.

### ❖ **Sexuality**

I was invited by the Archbishops to take part in the very first ‘facilitated conversations’ concerning women in the episcopate, trying to find a positive way forward. I remain fully committed to engaging constructively and sensitively with Synodical colleagues in the LLF (Living in Love and Faith) conversations and debates relating to human sexuality. I accept the Canonical understanding of marriage as a sacrament. This risks being a deeply divisive issue for the Church: we shall need to listen with careful humility and sincere commitment to dialogue.

### ❖ **Young People and Education**

I have a long-established commitment to the Church’s role in education and working with young people. Before moving into legal practice, I was a university tutor in an Anglican foundation. I maintain an active involvement with university institutions, and am a Governor of Pusey House, Oxford. My maiden speech in the General Synod was in a Youth Strategy debate, and I tabled a successful amendment in a Higher Education debate, calling on HM Government and Higher Education institutions to recognise the importance of the spiritual, moral and personal – not just academic – development of young people. I have called for teaching to be valued more highly and recognised as a Christian vocation.

### ❖ **Open and Accountable**

I have accepted invitations from a range of groups to talk about the work of the General Synod and the various bodies on which I have served. I am always happy to discuss synodical business and related issues. Some questions I have tabled for answer at General Synod have arisen from such conversations. I think that is part of the ‘good governance’ to which I am committed. My voting record is open to all.

***However you vote, thank you for playing your part in this election.***