

Richard Carter : Retired civil servant
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Parish – St Peter’s Eaton Square

Nominated by:

David Richards,
Lay Chair, Westminster (St Margaret) Deanery
Synod, Member, Diocesan Synod, Vice-Chair,
London Diocesan Board for Schools

Seconded by:

Zi Ken Toh,
Member of Westminster (St Margaret) Deanery Synod and of Diocesan Synod



What would I bring as a member of General Synod?

(i) Experience as a member of my parish and of church governance

As a life-long Anglican I have always been a committed member of my parish church, initially in the North East of England, and since the 1980s in various London churches; since 2008 for I have been worshipping at St Peter’s Eaton Square, an inclusive church in the liberal Catholic tradition near Victoria Station. Currently churchwarden, previously PCC Secretary. Currently in my third term as an elected member of Westminster (St Margaret) Deanery Synod, and of its Standing Committee. Also an elected lay member of the Two Cities Area Council.

(ii) Experience of life outside the Church

I am a retired senior civil servant. During my career in the Department of Health, I frequently worked on policymaking and legislation, and gained a keen appreciation of the importance of getting both right – you need to know what you are trying to achieve and why, and then ensure any legislation needed is going to deliver that. There have been examples in the recent past where Synod has passed legislation which has not worked as intended (the Clergy Discipline Measure, for example). Both before and since my retirement, I have volunteered as a trustee of organisations in the areas of health and social care, social lending, and poverty relief. This has helped reinforce my conviction that one of the most important tools of evangelism available to us is to carry the values of the Kingdom of God into the world around us, and to be seen to be acting, as well as preaching.

(iii) A readiness to engage with those who elected me, to ask questions and, where necessary, to speak out

As a member of General Synod I believe one of my duties would be try and make the governance of the Church come alive to local churches. I would be happy, if elected, to engage with DS members individually and collectively about General Synod business if there were issues they wished me to raise, or matters they wanted to

discuss. I recognize that this would need to reflect more than simply my own concerns.

Why am I standing?

I have been involved in church governance for long enough to know the importance of active lay involvement in the partnership between lay and clerical elements that constitutes synodical government in the Church of England. Prayerful reflection has led me now to put myself forward. I also believe that some turnover of membership is good for the health of any representative body.

What are my views on some key current issues?

The future of the Church of England - I believe that the future of the Church of England lies in faithfulness to God in Christ; and I feel strongly that the best way we can ensure this faithfulness is carried into the future in a distinctively Anglican way is to preserve what is best about the existing parish system, rather than to treat it as a fading relic of the past. Where central initiatives complement or build on the essential strengths of the parish, I am willing to support them.

Living in Love and Faith - Human sexuality and sexual ethics have received a disproportionate amount of attention in recent years, and are often the only things that are visible to the unchurched public. It seems unlikely that any concrete legislative or policy changes will meet with consensus. I am a church officer of a parish which is affiliated to the Inclusive Church movement. But I believe that what the Archbishop of Canterbury has called 'good disagreement' (which I understand to mean that ultimate truth is God's alone and that we need to act in the recognition that our own convictions, however strongly held, may be wrong) should not be dismissed out of hand. Somehow we need, through God's grace, to find a way to live and worship together despite the knowledge that we have deeply felt differences of opinion with others within the Church.

Redressing the balance of racial injustice - I accept that the Church of England continues to fall short in this regard. We need to be more active in combatting racism and racial injustice. We must all play our part in achieving equality of opportunity, more leaders of diverse ethnicity, and proper representation of minorities in our governance structures and processes. I believe that this should take the form of taking practical steps rather than simply saying the right things (for example where possible ensuring that selection processes correct for any possibility of unconscious bias, and, in governance, using the opportunity presented by term limits for synods to ensure representation is more in line with the composition of congregations).

If you would like to ask anything else about me or my views in more detail before making your decision about whether to support me, I, or my proposer and seconder, would be happy to be contacted directly.