

# Sophie Clarke



**Deanery:** Marylebone  
**Parish:** All Souls Langham Place  
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*Dear Elector,*

*I am delighted to have this opportunity to write to you as a candidate to represent our Diocese of London in the House of Laity on General Synod. I decided to put my name forward after much thought, prayer and seeking advice from other Christian friends and Church family. I hope by the end of reading this statement you will conclude I have the care, commitment and experience which will enable me to serve the whole Diocese faithfully as I seek to represent all laity within it.*

*Your vote in these elections is important and I would very much value your first preference vote or, failing that, the highest preference you are able to give to me.*

*Thank you for taking the time to read my Election Address. Please do get in touch by phone or email if you have any questions or would like me to elaborate further on any particular issue.*

*Blessings,*

*Sophie*

## About me:

Having grown up in Northern Ireland, I became a Christian at 17 on a mission trip to Philadelphia. At 21 I moved to London to work as a Church Assistant for All Souls Langham Place and I have lived in London for over four years now. The following year I completed a Master's at King's College London to study Geopolitics, Territory and Security. I currently work for an MP in Westminster as their Parliamentary Assistant and absolutely love my job! I enjoy being active and particularly enjoy swimming and volleyball and play for my local club. However, you'll most often find me with a cup of coffee spending time catching up with friends. I am most energetic when meeting new people and love to welcome and connect individuals. I have a heart for people and find it such a joy spending time with someone and getting to know them more deeply. I love to come alongside my friends, providing a supportive and listening ear as well as encouraging them in their walks as we share our faith in the Lord Jesus together.

## Experience:

My current experience in Parliament has been an invaluable insight into political systems. I believe I would be able to transfer my skills into a General Synod setting. I have become exceptionally familiar with the procedures of the House of Commons which would stand me in good stead for serving in General Synod. I have also worked on national campaigns, researching and implementing strategy and enjoy the buzz of shaping the direction of policy.

I also worked for All Souls Langham Place and gained an insight into the running of a large Anglican Church in central London. Over the year I completed a vast array of tasks ranging from power washing the building to running large events and providing talks. I found this year extremely formative, as it showed me the importance in caring about small details which leads to loving congregations well and running a church effectively. I have always been very interested in church governance. I'm currently serving my third year as the youngest member of our PCC, and earlier this year I was elected to the Deanery and Diocesan Synod.

Earlier this year I was asked to join a Theological Advisory Board in which we analyse national policies through a Biblical lens. We discern what these will mean for society and how we can help implement them as Christians in different spheres of life. This process takes discernment and wisdom in seeing the big picture and understanding what the future implications will be. I believe this is a vital skill to bring to General Synod.

I am on the committee of our growing and vibrant 20s and 30s group. My aim is to help form a solid community in a busy and transient city and I take the lead in running and organising our events as well as overseeing our social

media accounts. I have also served in both children and student ministries and count the time invested into those younger than myself as very valuable in growing and equipping young disciples for Christ.

I have also helped mentor young women and care passionately about releasing them as disciples of Jesus, blogging on topics such as mental health, self-image and forming spiritual disciplines.

### My perspective of the issues the Church of England is facing in 2021:

**Engaging young people:** We must address the significant decline of interest from young people. I believe this is vital nationally but also to the wellbeing and sustainability of the parish. Church must become a place that welcomes younger people and goes out of its way to make them feel comfortable in a potentially new and confusing setting. There are many beautiful and unique traditions in the Church of England that I value and believe we should make accessible for future generations. Corporate prayer in Confession and sharing Communion together symbolise our fellowship and unity, as we all, whether young or old, participate in the Body of Christ. The Church needs all ages and needs the wisdom and advice of young people as much as any other generation.

**Vision for the future in a post-covid world:** I am excited by the C of E's vision to put Jesus at the centre of everything we do throughout the 2020s. I want to encourage more young people to share and live out the gospel of Christ and witness to their friends and colleagues, and to stand out as salt and light in their workplaces. The last year has demonstrated how important community is to us and I long for people of my generation to encounter Jesus and be encouraged in fellowship with others. The Gospel transforms every part of our lives; there is no area of society left untouched by Christ, whether that be in our discussions around the environment, housing, or racism. As a young woman I am aware that the C of E can lead the way on these discussions and can encourage a younger and more diverse audience to encounter Christ through them.

**Discernment on key topical issues:** There are several important issues which require careful and considered discernment due to be discussed over the next five years. Particularly important to me is the topic of freedom of religion or belief, especially in the light of recent international developments. As part of our training for being on PCC, I have undergone unconscious bias training and believe strongly in listening to the experiences of minority groups. I am conscious that racism remains an issue which affects the C of E and contradicts the core of the Gospel. Within the next few years decisions will be made after the conclusion of the Living in Love and Faith process; I believe it is important to listen to everyone's experiences, viewed beneath the guiding lens of Scripture. I am also conscious that we must look after our environment. This is an issue young people have really found a voice on in recent years and I want to help the C of E implement its decision to be carbon neutral by 2030.

### My commitment to you:

In seeking election as one of the lay representatives for London on General Synod, I believe it is important I make the following commitments to you:

- I will devote the **time** and **effort** necessary to fulfil my obligations **faithfully** and to the **best** of my ability
- I will be committed to my role **prayerfully**, seeking God's **guidance** in decisions whilst also seeking wise earthly **counsel** and **accountability**
- I will be **available** to you by phone, email or to meet in person to **answer** your questions and **receive** input
- I will provide an email **update** after each February, July and November General Synod meeting to keep you **up to date** with proceedings
- I will **listen** to your concerns and **address** important local issues and remain **involved** at Diocesan level
- I will be **accountable to you** for my performance **upholding** my commitments outlined in this address

As a young woman I believe I provide a unique and under-represented voice to General Synod. I am passionate about the C of E. It is a unique and broad church, and my desire is to help build unity and consensus where possible. That is why I am asking for your vote to serve on General Synod.

*'And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.'* (Colossians 3:17)

Thank you again for considering my candidacy.

**Proposer:** Abimbola Sanu member of Bishop's Council and Diocesan Synod for Edmonton Area

**Secunder:** Sarah Tett Vice-chair Kensington Area Council and member of Bishop's Council.