

TIMOTHY FOOT

Dear electors,

I am standing to be one of your lay representatives on the General Synod for the next quinquennium (2026-2031).

I worship at Great St Bartholomew, Smithfield, where I am Vice-Chairman of the PCC and Chairman of the **Mission & Outreach** Committee, and I have been an elected lay member of the **Diocesan Synod** since 2024.

In my day-to-day life, I practice as a chancery barrister from chambers in Lincoln's Inn, advising on and litigating in (*inter alia*) commercial, property and charity matters. Outside my normal areas of practice, I have co-authored a book on the royal prerogative (*Executive Power*, Hart (2022)).

About me

Born and brought up in Oxford, I was lucky to grow up in two wonderful parishes which gently nurtured my faith and inspired in me a lifelong love for the Church of England.

I have been a church volunteer since childhood, as an altar-server and a (more eager than pitch-perfect) member of a parish choir, then in my student days as a chapel warden.

At Great St Bart's, I have helped develop and support new ventures, including an annual retreat for young adults, parish-wide pilgrimages and quiet days, "soup and scripture" evenings, and "Hymns and Pimm's" events. As well as spending probably too many evenings at parish committee meetings, I assist as a server, reader, and sidesman.

Why am I standing?

My experience on Diocesan Synod has opened my eyes to the desperate situation in which the Church of England finds itself. A crisis of identity and a crisis in finances is likely to overwhelm parishes in our own diocese and throughout the country.

The Church of England faces a stark choice: will it continue to be a church *for* the nation, or just be one of many nationwide churches?

A parish church is there for all, through joy, grief and everything in between. Nor does the Church exist for one churchmanship or another, but for all God's people.

We need to keep our churches open, well supplied with clergy, and well resourced to serve their communities.



AT A GLANCE

Priorities

- Invest in parishes
- Support volunteers
- Provide for our clergy
- Scrutinise legislation



*Except the Lord build the house,
they labour in vain that build it*

Psalm 127:1



*These, like a fire of glowing coals,
Strike warmth into each other's souls,
And though they be but two or three
They keep the church for you and me.*

John Betjeman, *Septuagesima*



NOMINATORS

Roy Sully
Great St Bartholomew

Sophie Pateman
Holy Trinity, Sloane Square



ANY QUESTIONS?

CONTACT ME

If you have any questions,
just get in touch:
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(Continued)

My priorities

If elected, I would see it as my moral duty to support the **Save the Parish** movement to defend the Church that has done so much for me. In particular, I would work to:

1. Put the frontline first

Parish share (which keeps going up and up) should be directed to mission and the cure of souls, not **ever inflating central costs**. Diocesan costs have grown (nationally) by 29% over the last three years, and dioceses employ an average of 1 person at central HQ for each 3.5 parochial clergy.

This is not *just* a story of “bureaucracy gone mad” (albeit it is doubtless an overstaffed system), but a **deliberate choice** to change the model of the Church of England away from the parish system. That is a path that must be **resisted**.

2. Sustain our volunteers

As all of you will know, the Church of England relies on its lay volunteers. But they are being **pushed to breaking point**: by way of example, up to 21% of parishes have no churchwarden at all and 78% of churchwardens would resign tomorrow if they thought someone else would take over.

This is a **direct result** of decisions made by the central Church. Those should be **reversed**: there should be a “one in, two out” standard for compliance and regulatory restrictions; dioceses should be prevented from making unnecessary demands on parish volunteers; and there should be a mandatory cut-off for church vacancies.

3. Care for our clergy

The Church of England has always been a two-way street between clergy and laity, each essential to the mission and ministry of the other. Yet there is a crisis in the **recruitment** and **training** of clergy, and too many parish priests are put under **intolerable stress**. We need to halt cuts to front-line clergy posts; preserve manageable benefices; and dismantle the managerial model imposed on our rectors, vicars and curates.

4. Scrutinise and reform legislation

With legislation, **the devil is in the detail**. General Synod will face a number of important decisions this quinquennium. Although Save the Parish has had significant victories, the Mission and Pastoral Measure and a revised version of the National Church Governance Measure are due to return for debate. As a lawyer, I would hope to be able to contribute to that **scrutiny** to defend the parish system and the important national role of the Church of England.



Beyond the parish

General Synod also sets the tone for debate throughout the Church of England, particularly on topics that profoundly affect people’s lives. Personally, I am committed to a Church that is **equally open to all**, at all levels and roles within the Church. The potential for disagreement is not a reason to close down discussion, but it saddens me when the *manner* in which we disagree crowds out our common priorities.

*If you share my concerns,
please support me with your
first or a high preference vote.*

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