



AIDEN HARGREAVES-SMITH

GENERAL SYNOD | STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION

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WHY AM I STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION?

I am **deeply committed** to the Church of England – to its sacramental and missional life, working for the advancement of God's Kingdom; and to 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 to provide **continuity** at a time of significant change for the Synod; 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 seek your support to continue this work on your behalf: listening carefully, engaging constructively and discerning prayerfully.

COMMITMENT TO A BROAD CHURCH

My professional life as a church and charity lawyer has brought me into regular contact with parishes and church bodies from every part of the Diocese and of every tradition. I remain convinced of the importance of maintaining the rich and lively diversity which characterises our Diocese.

Like many members of Synod, I am a member of a Synodical group (in my case, the Catholic Group). However, I 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, and show God's redeeming love for all.

I have actively encouraged people from under-represented groups, including younger people and those from diverse backgrounds, to become more involved in the synodical life of the Church. I have spoken to many groups about General Synod and the bodies on which I have served, and I am always happy to discuss synodical business. Some questions I have tabled arose from those conversations.

GENERAL SYNOD EXPERIENCE

Since being elected, I have attended every group of sessions except one, when I was ill. I have served on legislative and other committees, spoken in debates and tabled questions on a wide range of issues, including:

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

NATIONAL CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES

My extensive experience over 20 years on national church bodies includes:

- Senior Appointments Review
- Fees Advisory Commission
- Appointments Committee of the Church of England
- Standing Committee of the House of Laity
- Legal Aid Commission – legally qualified member
- Chair, Crown Nominations Commission
- Elections Review Group

I have also served as a **Chair of the General Synod** (for 8 years) and as a central member of the **Crown Nominations Commission** (for 10 years).

MISSION – OUR URGENT PRIORITY

Living and proclaiming the Gospel together must be our priority. We must be clear and confident about our fundamental purpose: to love God and our neighbour; nurture vocations; and equip lay and ordained ministers through proper formation. The focus should be on parishes and local communities as the primary vehicles for mission.

THE FIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

I wholeheartedly support the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests and the Five Guiding Principles.

We must work hard to promote genuine mutual flourishing and ensure that relationships with those with whom we fundamentally disagree are characterised by prayerful generosity and charity.

YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION

I have a long-established commitment to the Church's role in education and work with young people. Before legal practice, I was a university tutor in an Anglican foundation and I served for 18 years as a Governor of Pusey House, Oxford.

My maiden speech was in a Youth Strategy debate. I have called for Government recognition of the importance of the spiritual and moral development of young people, and for teaching to be valued more highly as a Christian vocation.

CHRISTIAN WITNESS & ETHICAL ISSUES

We live in a society where Christianity is often misunderstood, marginalised or attacked. The Church must witness sensitively but boldly to the Faith, and should 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 assisted dying, while promoting a compassionate understanding of the dignity and sanctity of all human life. I have also supported ethical investment policies and responsible stewardship of the earth's resources.

ECUMENISM

The Body of Christ remains wounded as long as the scandal of the disunity of the Church subsists. We must engage with renewed vigour in pursuing that unity which Our Lord wills for the Church - or we undermine the Gospel message.

SUPPORT FOR PARISHES

Our parishes are the lifeblood of the Church, yet many feel under intense financial and administrative strain. I have supported changes to make increased funding available to poorer dioceses and parishes, and it is vital that further work is done to support parishes with the resources necessary for their local ministry and mission.

LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH

The LLF process has caused confusion, hurt and mistrust. I remain committed to engaging sensitively in these conversations and debates. I accept the Canonical understanding of marriage as a sacrament. The Church's pastoral response should be gracious, generous and authentic. Any new proposals must avoid further division.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is a fundamental Gospel imperative. Much work has been done, but more is needed – especially in supporting parishes in promoting a healthy safeguarding culture. Faced with long and complex policies and guidance, parishes need simplicity, clarity and certainty about expectations and processes.

I have both wide experience and relevant expertise through my professional work as a diocesan registrar, including dealings with the Charity Commission in this area.

GOVERNANCE & CHURCH ORDER

Governance issues are likely to occupy a significant amount of the next Synod's time. Good governance in an Ordered Church must be based on structures and processes which are clear and accountable, and which enable the Church to live out its calling effectively and confidently. I have many years of both personal and professional involvement, as a charity trustee and as an adviser, in promoting good governance. For pastoral, theological and ecumenical reasons, I do not support a change to the Church's Canon Law in relation to the seal of the confessional.

PRAYER

All our Synodical endeavours are in vain if we are not rooted in prayer and attentiveness to the Holy Spirit, and nourished by Word and Sacrament.