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Dear Elector,

I am delighted to have this opportunity to write to you as a candidate to once again represent the Diocese of London in the House of Laity on General Synod.

I decided to put my name forward for re-election 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 experience, commitment and wisdom 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 crucial, 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:

I am 30 years old and have been married to my wonderful husband Peter for three and half years. 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, where I have continued to worship ever since. The following year I completed my Master's degree and I have now lived in London for over a decade. I worked in Parliament for four years, and I currently act as Head of Partnerships for a Westminster think-tank and absolutely love my job! I am also a trustee of several charities, and I have a heart for people. I find joy in developing deep friendships, where we can listen, support and encourage one another in our walk as disciples of Jesus.

Experience:

Having been a Lay member during the last quinquennium, I now feel that I have a comprehensive understanding in the work and processes of General Synod. In the last five years, I have given speeches which have helped shaped debates and been involved in committees. I currently sit on the Evangelical Group on General Synod (EGGS). Alongside this, I have also been part of my PCC for eight years and the Deanery and Diocesan Synod for over five years. My time working in Parliament also helped me to get to grips with the unique procedures and business motions which are found in General Synod sessions.

Away from church governance, I have experience of the breadth of the Church of England, and although I worship weekly at an evangelical church, I enjoy a range of traditions, particularly Choral Evensong. I have served in a variety of capacities, including being a Bible Study leader for the last five years, helping with Christianity Explored courses, and heading up, together with my husband, my church's 20s/30s network for three and a half years. I have a particular interest in the intersection of politics and faith, and a deep love of liturgy, and recognise the importance of the local parish for Christian witness throughout the country.

Why I am re-standing for General Synod:

Having spent most of my adult life growing and serving in the Church of England, I am deeply committed to ensuring that the Church of England remains a place where people of every age and background can hear the life-changing gospel of Jesus and can grow in their love and knowledge of Him, whoever they are. Some areas where I believe I can make a contribution to General Synod are:

Engaging young people in the church: There has been much coverage of the renewal of interest in Christian faith among younger people in recent years, many of whom are searching for a steady and constant foundation. This is a real opportunity to welcome young people back to the Church of England, helping the wellbeing and long-term sustainability of the parish. I want to see the Church become a place that welcomes younger people, and helps them to feel at home in a setting that can feel unfamiliar. This is something my husband and I worked on by building our 20s and 30s network in church, which exists to give younger adults a genuine sense of belonging and community within church and London life. The Church needs people of every age, including young adults.

Helping to eradicate poverty: Poverty in Britain is rarely just about lack of money. It is often bound up with broken relationships, addiction, educational failure and worklessness. The Church of England is uniquely placed to address it at root level, not just its symptoms. This is something I care passionately about and it is the focus of my working life. We are called to love our neighbour practically, and through local churches, which are present in almost every community in Britain, we have both the relational reach and the responsibility to walk alongside those who are struggling. I want to see the Church continue to invest in poverty alleviating initiatives such as debt advice, family support hubs, mentoring and food banks. The gospel is “good news for the poor”, and we must continue to represent Christ in our communities, bringing the light of Jesus to those who are most in need.

Helping our churches become spaces where everyone is embraced, valued and treasured: As bearers of God's image, I want all to feel welcome in church, whatever their sexuality or gender. I hold to a traditional understanding of God's plan for human sexuality, gender and marriage, while affirming that Scripture clearly teaches, we are each made in His likeness and deeply loved. It matters deeply to me that our churches remain places where every person is cherished equally and given the chance to discover God's transforming love through Jesus.

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 **commit** 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 **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 can provide an 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.