



SHAUN O'BRIEN

Diocese of London | Laity

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ABOUT ME

Growing up on a council estate in Newcastle upon Tyne, and spending part of my childhood in foster care, taught me the life-changing importance of communities that offer stability, hope and belonging. The unwavering support I received from my home church during those turbulent years continues to shape my conviction that every parish should be a place where everyone is welcomed, safeguarded and enabled to flourish.

Those experiences also made me realistic: good intentions alone are not enough.

Flourishing parishes need resources, training and support, and clergy and lay leaders cannot be expected to carry ever-growing responsibilities without the investment and trust they deserve. If we are serious about renewing the Church's mission, we must strengthen the people and parishes at its heart.

My working life reflects those convictions. I began my working career in palliative care, supporting people at the end of their lives and their families through profound grief. Today, I worship at, and am Communications Manager for St Paul's Knightsbridge, where I previously served as Liturgical Scholar, having earlier been a Sheppard Scholar at St Martin-in-the-Fields. Alongside the Communications role, my full-time job is as Senior Fundraising Officer for a national charity, securing resources for families facing some of life's toughest challenges. I have also served as Development Manager at St Mary le Strand.

Across all of these roles, I have learned that trust is built through listening, good communication, wise stewardship, compassion and a clear vision for the future.

WHY I'M STANDING

I believe the Church of England is at its best when every parish is equipped to serve its community, every volunteer is valued, every priest is supported, and every person knows they belong.

The Church of England has extraordinary strengths: faithful parishes, dedicated clergy and lay people, beautiful liturgy, and a unique calling to every community across our nation.

I am standing because I believe in the Church of England – and in what it can yet become.

I am not standing because I think I have all the answers. I am standing because I believe Synod needs people prepared to listen, to ask difficult questions, to work across differences and, when necessary, to challenge the way things have always been done.



See overleaf for my priorities for General Synod, and how you can ask me questions - or just say hi! - during the voting period.

STRENGTHENING THE PARISH



The parish is the Church of England's greatest gift to our nation.

It is where most people encounter the Church at life's most significant moments, and where worship, pastoral care, evangelism and service come together.

I support the principles of Save the Parish because I believe well-resourced, flourishing parishes are essential to the future of the Church of England.

In General Synod I will work to:

- ✳️ strengthen the parish as the primary focus of mission and ministry
- ✳️ ensure local churches are trusted with the resources they need to flourish
- ✳️ reduce unnecessary bureaucracy that distracts clergy and lay leaders from ministry
- ✳️ encourage greater transparency in how Church finances are managed and how decisions affecting parishes are made
- ✳️ support mission that grows from and strengthens parish life rather than competing with it

I also recognise that our volunteers are the backbone of parish life. Churchwardens, PCC members, safeguarding officers, treasurers, musicians, servers, flower arrangers and countless others quietly sustain our churches week after week. They deserve to be trusted, supported and freed from unnecessary bureaucracy so they can focus on serving their communities.

GET IN TOUCH

Throughout the voting period, each Monday between 6 and 7pm, I'll be hosting an informal Teams chat where anyone can join to either ask questions, get clarifications or simply to say hi!

Drop me an email via the email on the front page to receive the link (it'll change each week, mind!)

BUILD AN INCLUSIVE CHURCH

The Church should reflect the welcome of Christ.

Every person should know they are treated with dignity, listened to with compassion and valued as part of the Body of Christ. We will not agree on every theological question, but we can choose to speak with grace, listen generously and remain committed to one another.

I want to see a Church that:

- ✳️ welcomes people from every background into the life of our parishes
- ✳️ provides compassionate pastoral care for LGBTQ+ people and others who have often felt excluded
- ✳️ values diversity while maintaining unity in Christ encourages honest conversation across theological differences rather than deepening division

I believe the Church is strongest when people who disagree are still able to work together for the sake of the Gospel. I will always seek to build bridges rather than deepen divisions.

STRENGTHENING SAFEGUARDING

Creating safe churches is not simply a legal obligation – it is a Gospel imperative.

I will support work that:

- ✳️ strengthens safeguarding practice across every level of the Church
- ✳️ promotes transparency, accountability and appropriate independent scrutiny
- ✳️ ensures survivors are listened to, supported and treated with dignity
- ✳️ continues to improve safeguarding training, reporting and culture throughout the Church

