



# General Synod elections 2021

Would you like to shape the direction  
of the Church of England?



## What is General Synod and why does it matter?

General Synod is the national assembly of the Church of England.

Decisions taken at General Synod shape the life, worship, financial health, ministry and mission of our church.

Representatives of the whole church of England – dioceses, cathedrals, religious communities, universities, armed forces, bishops, clergy and lay people - usually meet three times a year to debate and decide the future direction of the church.

Decisions affect the life of every parish – for example the ordination of women to the priesthood and as bishops; and the recent commitment for the church to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030 in response to the Climate Emergency.

In the next five years, the responsibilities of General Synod will include:

- Ensuring the Church meets its 2030 net zero carbon emission targets
- Furthering the Church's understanding and teaching on human sexuality, through the Living in Love and Faith report
- Developing our response to safeguarding cases and concerns, past and present

So if you care about the future of the Church, General Synod definitely matters!

## Why are we having an election? Who votes?

Each diocese has clergy and lay representatives at General Synod. Bath and Wells has 4 clergy and 5 lay representatives.

Every five years, elections take place to decide on who those representatives are. In 2021, elections are taking place for the 2021-2025 session.

Our Bath and Wells representatives are elected by members of our Deanery Synods.

## What do General Synod members do?

Meetings of General Synod usually take place three times a year, with each meeting lasting 3-5 days.

During this time, members have the opportunity to speak during debates, vote (every decision taken at Synod is subject to a vote) and worship together.

Between meetings, members are expected to keep in touch with the people they represent in the diocese, by sharing what goes on at Synod and being closely aware of the issues facing their particular area, to help Synod reflect the reality of church life.



## Who can stand for election?

- Serving clergy (or retired clergy with permission to officiate and membership of a Deanery Synod)
- Any lay person on the church electoral roll and over 18

## Why stand?

We need good candidates to stand to represent the breadth and depth of the Church here in Bath and Wells. If there are insufficient candidates for an election, anyone who stands will automatically get a place – however unrepresentative.

During the next five years major decisions will be made on the priority of mission and the need to reshape financial resources, church buildings and rural ministry.

We need good candidates to help steer our Church through this time of great change. Will you take on the challenge?

## I'd like to stand - what do I need to do?

Get nominated! You will need a proposer and a seconder. Clergy require clergy nominators and laity require laity nominators from your deanery synod. All those eligible to vote (deanery synod members) will have nomination papers sent to them. The election will be run by the Presiding Officer, Flourish House, Wells, with the support of an online elections portal run by Civica. If you have any questions please email: [Presiding.Officer@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:Presiding.Officer@bathwells.anglican.org).

## Why vote?

Few dioceses achieve more than a 50% turnout of voters for General Synod elections. If you don't vote you risk not having your views represented. This year voting will be easier, because there will be an online process for nominations and for voting, although any voter who would prefer to carry on using the paper system is free to do so. Further details will be published as soon as possible.

# How else can I get involved?

Even if you aren't eligible to vote or you don't wish to stand as a candidate, you can still help with the election process:

- Help spread the word about the General Synod election and its importance
- Encourage those who are eligible and who you think would do a good job to put themselves forward as candidates
- Support candidates with prayers
- Encourage your deanery synod members to use their vote

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Please use your vote when the time comes and consider standing for election. Make your voice count.

## Provisional General Synod election timetable

By 30 July	→	nominations papers distributed
3 September	→	closing date for nominations
17 September	→	ballot papers issued
8 October	→	closing date for ballot papers
11-14 October	→	election count and declaration of results
15-17 November	→	first session of newly elected Synod

For more information about the election contact: [Presiding.Officer@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:Presiding.Officer@bathwells.anglican.org)



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