



Joey Hardin

Son, brother, uncle to many

e-mail: joeyhardin@hotmail.co.uk

Proposer: Barney Frith (barnabyecfrith@gmail.com), Bath

Seconder: Doreen Maitland (jamesanddoreenmaitland@gmail.com), Yeovil

Thank you for taking the time to read this! Please allow me to introduce myself:

About Me

I am Joey, a 21-year-old lay person and a member of St Aldhelm's Church in Doultling, near Shepton Mallet. I live between Wells and Cambridge, where I study music at university, and on the side of that am a choral scholar in St Catharine's College choir, though it was in our own Wells Cathedral where my love for choral music and Anglican tradition began.

I am a great backer of the choral tradition of the Church of England; I find it a wonderful way to worship God in the beauty of holiness and how it connects worshippers back centuries to other Christians before us. It is certainly a proud heritage that we have: to boast some of the world's finest music, not only now but for hundreds of years!

Though not originally from an Anglican background, I have come to love the CofE and the way of community life therein. As a young'un I attended my parents' independent evangelical church, stopped going for most of my childhood, but later began to rediscover my faith in Christ while singing in the cathedral as a school student. It was through the beautiful inheritance of the Church of England that Jesus Christ has transformed me.

I greatly admire the beautiful old churches scattered around every recess of England, as well as our unique tradition of the Book of Common Prayer, and our ability to have a parish vicar to whom everyone in a village can turn for help.

I have served my parish for the last two years as a reader and occasional organist; more recently I have also served on the PCC as the deanery synod representative. It is such a blessing that local communities continue to be shaped by the familial fellowship of our parish churches.

Beside my walk with God, (though never separate) I am an avid hiker and a keen brewer of mead. I have quite a diverse variety of work experience including on assembly lines, as a family tour guide, an exam invigilator in a secondary school (wherein I underwent safeguarding training having worked closely with children) and, perhaps more sporadically, a jazz session pianist.

The Next Synod

I seek to offer a fresh perspective to synod as a young person: though my chief priority is that **love and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ**, and love for our **neighbours**, dominate every aspect of synod including my own ventures. General Synod is engaging with a lot of difficult debates, and we can only come together to reach a respectful consensus **equipped with the grace of Jesus**.

In an increasingly urban world it is necessary to **support rural parishes**, particularly by raising more money for churches which are not listed buildings. I have witnessed first-hand how many churches need work done on the organ, roof repairs and new books among other things. Many parishes lack both lay and clergy support staff, and consequently their congregations have suffered. As a member of a very small and rural parish church, I desire to **amplify the voices** of all such churchgoers to restore dynamic **ministry opportunities for lay people**.

As a young adult myself I feel I am able to engage with **safeguarding** matters in synod, and having worked in a school I am familiar with the procedures, and can offer an **informed perspective** on these things. Having experienced the personal issues of people of many ages, I have come to realise just how helpful safeguarding training is for helping **restoring the trust of many in the Church**, and subsequently in Jesus Christ. I hold that more people, both lay and clergy, should have the opportunity to become equipped with the ability to help those who have suffered as a result of overstepping pastoralship, or whose trauma is in some way related to Christianity. Given my experience and age, I believe I am in something of a unique position to positively affect the way Christians handle this matter in a genuine way.

Lastly I am firm believer in every parish church having an incumbent: I am fortunate to belong to a church which has a rector, but not everyone is as lucky, and many churches often face long-term vacancies, particularly in rural areas. At synod I would **stand up for rural churches** so that they are not overlooked as the Church of England grapples with the current **clergy shortage crisis**. One of the great blessings had by England is our effective parish system; the presence of Christianity in every community leaves nobody forcibly excluded and provides opportunities for people of all backgrounds to love and encourage one another. As someone who has benefited from this system, namely with the opportunity to learn from people in the community much older and experienced than me, I am called to **defend the system** that has benefited so many of us here, no matter our age.

I hope I am able to be an encouragement to all of us in Bath and Wells, representing the concerns of Somerset's people in General Synod. If you would like to discuss further the motions I have raised, please email me at the address on the previous page. I would appreciate your fullest support through voting for me as your first-choice candidate: please do this if you trust me that I am capable of influencing synod on these issues. Thank you and God bless you all.