

# GENERAL SYNOD ELECTIONS 2021

Candidate answers to the following questions:

1. General Synod members are elected for a 5 year period. If elected, what would you hope to achieve during your term of office?
  2. The strap line of the Church of England is '*A Christian Presence in Every Community*'. What are your thoughts on this statement?
  3. How do questions about identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ?
  4. Does the Church of England's current commitment to the environment go far enough?
  5. How can we take positive action to increase the inclusion and representation of BAME people across the Church?
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There are 7 candidates standing for the 3 seats in the House of Clergy:

1	Andrew Micklefield	Clergy
2	James Pitkin	Clergy
3	Adrian Pearce	Clergy
4	Benjamin Sargent	Clergy
5	Rachel Noel	Clergy
6	Angi Nutt	Clergy
7	Daniel Newman	Clergy

Election Addresses are available via the online voting portal, or the diocesan website:

<https://www.winchester.anglican.org/general-synod/>

# THE REVD ANDREW MICKLEFIELD

## Candidates Questions

### 1. General Synod members are elected for a 5 year period. If elected, what would you hope to achieve during your term of office?

The first thing is to be a good listener and reader of papers and reports. Over the last five years I have realised how important it is to engage with the written reports and also with debate. It is all too easy to jump in with preconceived ideas – ‘be quick to listen and slow to speak’

To vote with confidence with my individual conscience and according to the principles of open evangelicalism – looking carefully at Scripture and the teachings of Jesus, striving for growth in faith and numbers in the Church and willing to be informed from other traditions.

To engage sufficiently with the Living in Love and Faith process so that I can be true to the above. I would be willing to attend extra meetings to make that real.

I feel passionately about clergy well-being and the maintenance and increase of joy in ministry so will look for opportunities to support and speak in favour of moves by Synod to attend to this.

As a firm believer in ‘every member ministry’ and ‘ecumenism’ I would like to offer to be an advocate for Setting God’s People Free and anything which promotes unity.

To put myself forward to serve more widely so that I can affect and be affected by processes, change and other people.

### 2. The strap line of the Church of England is ‘A Christian Presence in Every Community’. What are your thoughts on this statement?

This does not mean that in every community to have presence we need a tall pointy looking building which we call a church. ‘We must not be Rotary with a pointed roof’. That which we call church is a community of people gathered and committed to the worship and witness of Jesus.

A Christian presence means that means every community needs to have a group of people - however big or small - who are committed to be expressing worship and witness well - small regular praying groups; schools ministry; leading of worship in a residential home; a social enterprise shop on the High Street where people are welcomed and loved; a group of people in a local coffee shop reading their Bibles and discuss; a Parish Communion on Sunday morning in the community centre; a Full High Mass in the Parish Church; a fresh expression ministering to a particular people and place.

A Christian presence is vital for the flourishing of each and every community. The opportunity is to allow this to happen in creative and contemporary ways and allowing them to be just what they are.

### 3. How do questions about identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ?

The Good News of Jesus is to give us fulness of life. Yet this abundant life is not a free for all to be anything and everything we want. In the beginning God created an order and a number of

complementarities - we have light and darkness, land and sky, birds of the air and fish of the sea - man and woman. Our fulness of life - the gospel - is rooted in this order and formed in behaviours that set us free to live well for ourselves, in partnership and community. I see nothing in Living in Love and Faith for this to be changed or challenged.

There are other parts of what it means to live out the gospel. We need honesty – to admit that we cause pain and sin creating disorder and brokenness; humility - to listen to the Word with each other and most importantly to God; hospitality to entertain those who are different from us remaining fellow disciples.

I don't support a change in the way in which the Church of England views identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage but the process is still important as we model a fulfilling way to engage with our fellow Christians. That is gospel.

#### **4. Does the Church of England's current commitment to the environment go far enough?**

What has been asked of us so far in the 2030 agreement is challenging nationally, regionally and locally. I personally feel that if we can make that we will be doing incredibly well. I am all too aware that if we can accelerate it then the difference to God's creation will be enormous. I have to measure that against the practicalities, the other important issues we face and the resources at our disposal.

I would really like to believe that our current commitment is valid but as I listen to others who are at the forefront of the climate change initiatives, to those who research and to the leaders who will be meeting at COP26 and the like I feel that we have no choice.

This leaves us with a priority issue. What do we leave whilst we attend to our environmental commitment? Can we afford to leave them? Somehow the priorities to coalesce, we need dedicated joined up thinking and to put our money and resources where our mouth is.

Simply, the answer is no. How it is achieved? - I will listen and respond but not just at General Synod but in my own local context and home.

#### **5. How can we take positive action to increase the inclusion and representation of BAME people across the Church?**

All of these need local, regional and national dimensions:

A commitment to including historically under represented people and communities in the life, worship, mission and ministry of the church

A commitment to ensuring there are policies, procedures, practices, and programmes in place to encourage and support inclusion and active participation of members of minority ethnic groups.

Support and resource group for BAME members of our parishes, schools, and congregations, often this will need to be done in partnership

Encouragement to increase the inclusion and representation of BAME people across the Church, in its governance structures and in church activities

Encouraging all BAME people to pursue their call to discipleship and help those who work with them to understand issues relating to BAME experience of life and faith.

Organising opportunities for networking for BAME Anglicans within each Diocese.

Promoting understanding of racism and issues around ethnic and cultural diversity.

Working with faith and other organisations committed for the elimination of racism and to gain clarity in supporting cultural understanding.

# THE REVD JAMES PITKIN

## Candidates Questions

### 1. General Synod members are elected for a 5 year period. If elected, what would you hope to achieve during your term of office?

- **Clergy Discipline and Safeguarding** - I sponsored and spoke to a motion for speedy replacement of the Clergy Discipline Measure. I want to continue shaping a new Clergy Conduct Measure. We must protect clergy from vexatious complaints, heavy-handed processes and unaccountable episcopal decisions. In Safeguarding, there are many wrongs to put right - a Gospel priority for today's Church.
- **Mission and Pastoral Measure (2011)** - As a member of CECA, the Ecclesiastical Law Society, and on General Synod, I am involved in its review. If re-elected, I aim to help draft any legislation. How the Measure has been applied in our Diocese has highlighted some drawbacks (and some advantages) to the current system. As an Area Dean I have useful experience for the review.
- **The Parish System** - I believe wholeheartedly in the parochial system – being available and ministering to all who live in the parish, the whole community. I welcome opportunities for the church to grow and develop in new and exciting ways whilst recognising the rich treasury of traditional resources we have and maintaining these.

Having just served on General Synod I believe that continuity is needed and that Synod needs to be held to commitments made.

### 2. The strap line of the Church of England is '*A Christian Presence in Every Community*'. What are your thoughts on this statement?

I am a passionate supporter of the Parish System and have argued long and hard with those who seek to dismantle it (or fatally damage it) – both at General Synod and in this Diocese.

For me, the Parish System ensures that there can be a **VISIBLE** Christian Presence in Every Community. In the rural setting in which I live and work, the church buildings are a visible reminder of the presence of a worshipping community in every place but there are other reminders:

- **Schools** - I have been a School Governor for many years in many different types of school – as a Parent Governor as well as a Foundation Governor. The presence of Foundation Governors in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled Schools reminds everyone of the Christian Presence in the School Community. Encouraging Christians to support Schools is essential.
- **Self-Supporting Ministers (SSMs) and Retired Clergy** - Having trained alongside SSMs I have an appreciation of the ministry offered – invaluable! Parishes would be in a parlous state without SSMs and the ministry given by Retired Clergy. Being on General Synod would continue to offer the opportunity to speak up for much valued colleagues.

### **3. How do questions about identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ?**

The Gospel is for all – I believe in a church which is open and welcoming and does not discriminate in any way. Jesus didn't and nor should we!

We must welcome and serve all people in the name of Jesus Christ. We must be a Church which: is scripturally faithful; seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

In the Church of England we are in the middle of 'Living in Love and Faith'. This has mostly been about education and the House of Bishops will identify 'Next Steps'. The Church has set a task of understanding what it means to follow Christ in love and faith, given the questions about identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage emerging in our society.

On a personal note: I want to see a Church where no order of ministry or appointment is barred to clergy on grounds of sexuality. I want to see an optional authorised, or commended, liturgy available to those who want to use it to commit their lives to God as same-sex couples.

### **4. Does the Church of England's current commitment to the environment go far enough?**

The Church of England includes the Church Commissioners, General Synod and the Dioceses. All need to be involved. There is no serious doubt that climate change is happening, and that people are causing it. In February 2020 General Synod voted in favour of a revised date to achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2030. Before the debate, the target was 2045 – I was one of those who voted for the earlier commitment. This is an ambitious target and one that might not be met – but better to have an earlier target.

Recent research indicates that now:

- 5% of churches sampled were already net-zero carbon
- A 12.5% carbon reduction has been made, when compared with a comparative, although smaller, 2006 study

There is still significant scope for churches to install cleaner technologies and switch to a renewable electricity tariff.

Elsewhere in the Church of England, the [Church Buildings Council](#) and the [Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England](#) have accepted this 2030 target. The Church Commissioners are working to a 2023 target for disinvestment from fossil fuel companies not working to the Paris Agreement.

We need to support other ways of being better stewards of God's World – eg Fair Trade and ecological projects.

### **5. How can we take positive action to increase the inclusion and representation of BAME people across the Church?**

**Make our Principles Better Known** - We believe that ethnic and cultural diversity are an integral part of our shared identity and help us deepen our understanding of God's love in creation. We acknowledge that racism disfigures the image of God in each other. We are all part of the body of Christ made in the image of God, fully human. We must include historically under represented people and communities in the life, worship, mission and ministry of the Diocese and the wider church.

**Promote Values and a Healthy Diocesan Culture** - foster healthy relationships with, and across, ethnic and cultural divides. Thus the contribution of every part of the body is valued, recognized and celebrated. Promote racial justice -working with faith and other organizations to eliminate racism and support cultural understanding. Involve BAME people in wider church activities. Encourage BAME people to pursue vocations and help those who work with them to understand relevant issues.

**Change Practice** – ensure that the Diocese has policies, procedures, practices, and programmes in place to encourage and support the inclusion and active participation of members of minority ethnic groups in its life and structures. Use the CofE [UK Minority Ethnic Mental Health Toolkit](#)

# THE REVD ADRIAN PEARCE

## General Synod Election 2021

1. **General Synod members are elected for a 5 year period. If elected, what would you hope to achieve during your term of office?**

I wish to stand for 'General Synod' as one who upholds the traditional Anglican views and values of the received Church, is faithful to the teaching of the first four Ecumenical Councils and to the three ecumenical Creeds. **Pastoral care** and upholding **established doctrine** are central to my ministry, with **veneration of the sacraments**, the teaching of **biblical scripture** and **attending those in need** being central to my priestly life.

On the basis of these tenets, I would hope to be able to empower the Church to recognise the two 'pillars' of scripture and sacrament as central and fundamental to its life and witness in effecting the delivery of the Christian message. An understanding of the apocalyptic nature of Christ's message is what I would hope to achieve as clearly 'spoken' through our Church. There are laudable and noble attempts to minister the 'seven mercies' of Christ through the Church's mission and ministry, but I believe that in order to understand why we do what we do that there is a need to do so in the context of preaching the Kingdom; the message that the joy of the promised Kingdom is inviolable whether our blessings are many or few.

2. **The strap line of the Church of England is 'A Christian Presence in Every Community'. What are your thoughts on this statement?**

This question calls for a definition of its two component parts; 'Christian presence' and 'community'. For centuries, the Parish has been understood to be the 'community' ministered to by its church, where that 'Christian presence' has been a visible and practical witness. Essential to a thriving Church, is the maintenance of the parochial system. The growth of the 'mega-Church', crossing parish boundaries has been, a laudable attempt to reach greater numbers of worshippers, especially with the restrictions imposed upon accessing a worshipping community by the pandemic, but it cannot substitute for the personal intimacy of a ministry where people are known by name, their houses are visited by that 'Christian presence' and their circumstances are intimately understood and ministered to by their priest or pastoral care-team. Within the virtual Church lies a potential for Christians to become anonymous and absent to fellow worshippers; distanced from the God who knows us by name and whose image and presence we know in the faces and in the touch of others. A virtual church can only minister to a virtual community. An authentic Christian presence is manifested in the incarnate word and made flesh in the body of Christ, which is the people.

3. **How do questions about identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ?**

I have read with interest the recent Church of England publication 'Living in Love and Faith'. I consider it to be a frank and fair analysis of the impact of a changing social dynamic upon the contemporary Church. It presents much varied and thought-provoking material for consideration in the light of developments in thinking concerning human relationships, within the spheres of both



psychology and sociology, in a shifting cultural understanding of human relationships. A compassionate understanding of both sexuality and gender-perception has enabled those, who previously felt marginalised, to find welcome and fellowship in the community of the Church, consistent with the Lord's hospitality towards those considered to be marginalised. Legislation for civil partnerships has acknowledged the civil legality of same-sex partnerships.

To endorse the sacramentality of marriage, as consistent with the teaching of Jesus Christ and the received Church, I believe it essential that Holy Matrimony is understood as a divine grace instituted in accordance with the will of God-eternal. As such, marriage remains a divinely eternal grace, upheld by the 'Book of Common Prayer' to be that between one man and one woman. I believe it is only in that context that Christian marriage is defined and consecrated.

#### **4. Does the Church of England's current commitment to the environment go far enough?**

Climate change developments, observed in global warming, with their resultant effects seen in wild fires, floods and storms, are matters which must be of central concern to the Church if we are to be faithful stewards of the world which God has entrusted to us. As custodians of God's gifts, we have a responsibility to future generations to ensure that the Church plays its part in safeguarding their transmission from generation to generation. I am encouraged by the Church's objective of becoming carbon neutral by 2030, and I am delighted with grants made available to churches wishing to install solar panels to reduce fossil fuel consumption. In all of this, I see a 'top down' led mind-set focused upon the Church playing its part in these issues and acting as an example to the world. Addressing these issues from the 'bottom up' is challenging. Financial pressures mean some churches are not able to respond as effectively as others. I believe that environmental issues are clearly understood by church communities and that, with the best of intentions, and with the resources available, there is a conscious effort by the Church to reverse the consumerist trend threatening the planet's future.

#### **5. How can we take positive action to increase the inclusion and representation of BAME people across the Church?**

The Church of England has long borne a spirit of hospitality, extended to a varied congregation. This has arisen through its global missionary work from days of old. As the Church of England today, this is established in our congregations but is geographically reflected to different extents. Cities have a higher proportion of BAME folk compared with rural areas and this may create the impression that some churches are doing less to attract BAME people than others. There are cultural issues which influence BAME worshippers in their choice of Church. Where a culture resonates more with a heart-felt, overt expression of the faith, Pentecostalism may well prove more attractive than the more reserved nature found in Anglicanism. With the breadth of tradition within the Church of England, its doors are not closed to such worship; it may just initially be less visible. I would stress that this is not about 'quota filling'. I believe that no one is excluded from the 'broad' Church, but neither is anyone expected to mould their life of worship to any particular model. We need to be conscious of our welcome of strangers to ensure that that welcome is not influenced by personally held prejudices.

# REVD DR BEN SARGENT

## General Synod Election 2021

### **1. General Synod members are elected for a 5 year period. If elected, what would you hope to achieve during your term of office?**

If re-elected, I would continue to work for the resourcing of parish ministry so that every generation, in every part of the country, can hear the Gospel of Christ. I will continue to vote and write for justice for victims of abuse. I want to see a more democratic Church with a General Synod that makes decisions and provides proper scrutiny. I will continue to engage with and vote on legislation, whether it seems exciting or not. I want to see the Church of England humble in its dealings with wider society and especially those who have been hurt by it. I want to see the Church of England simpler in its functioning so that parishes might flourish. I want to see the Church of England bolder in its commitment to the Gospel handed on to us for the good of the whole nation.

### **2. The strapline of the Church of England is 'A Christian Presence in Every Community'. What are your thoughts on this statement?**

Through the process of diocesan reorganisation, I'm now looking after four rural parish Churches in the New Forest and a further Chapel of Ease. That means taking five services every Sunday for our worshipping community of just less than 300 people. Despite being pretty tired, the last thing I want to see is for any of these Churches to suffer through lack of resource, or to see the local nature of each Church overwhelmed by the big benefice. Each Church is culturally unique and has deep roots in the village in which God has built it. Because of this, local Christians have a deep investment in their local Church and a sense that their contribution matters and their voice is heard. Nothing could be better for evangelism in this part of the Forest than these local communities set within a nexus of friendships with neighbours, colleagues, family members and friends. The resource provided by well-trained clergy is not irrelevant to the strength of our local Churches. I want to see priority given to the recruitment, training and deployment of clergy to serve in local Churches. They are the hope of our nation because they are the hope of Christ in every local community.

### **3. How do questions about identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ?**

Marriage should never be idolised: it is not better than being single, nor is it the defining feature of anyone who is in Christ. Marriage is, however, a beautiful picture, Paul tells us, of the relationship between Christ and his Church. The sacrifice involved in marriage points us to the cross of Christ. The exclusivity of marriage reminds us of the unbreakable covenant God has made with his people. The way in which marriage brings difference into unity shows us that our difference to God - his holiness, justice and purity - will never be a barrier to our unity with him. The Christian understanding of marriage is good and, in its goodness, challenging. In my own marriage, I see the goodness in the blessing it brings to me, knowing that another argument, another depressing bank statement or visit to the doctor will not be the end of my relationship with my wife. This is good, too, for my children, for whom our covenant commitment brings stability. We must do more to promote the goodness and challenge of marriage, but I am not persuaded that this means adapting the understanding of marriage that has been entrusted to us.

### **4. Does the Church of England's current commitment to the environment go far enough?**

No. I gave a speech to Synod in 2018 which explains why I think this in a little more detail ([Synod speech #1 \(in case I don't get to give it\) – Benjamin Sargent](#)). Too much emphasis is given to

statements which are intended to look good in the media and to projects which are engaging and well-meaning but make little impact. Of course, we should think about how we heat and insulate our Church buildings. Of course, we should encourage biodiversity in our churchyards – and I am proud that my parish has been running a churchyard management project since 2014. However, as we all know, the Church is people, not a building. The biggest impact we can make is through the way we live our lives. We could make a much bigger contribution to addressing the climate crisis through cutting unnecessary travel, cutting food waste and rejecting the throwaway culture. However, at the heart of the climate crisis is a spiritual problem: the religion of consumerism. People need to hear from the Church of England that you are not defined by what you own or where you go on holiday, because Jesus Christ offers something so much better.

#### **5. How can we take positive action to increase the inclusion and representation of BAME people across the Church?**

One of my churchwardens is UKME and we have reflected on this a great deal. As some of you may know, I organised a seminar earlier this year with the Diocese of London UKME adviser to engage with this too. These are the practical things I've drawn from these conversations. We need to speak about Jesus Christ and strive to shape our communities around his word. Jesus is radically inclusive. Churches which proclaim Jesus Christ and consciously reject the aim to be a haven for just one group of people will be diverse. This has certainly been my experience in the New Forest where the Church is the only place where the diversity of the local community is reflected. We can build on this by deliberately building personal friendships with those whose backgrounds and experience are vastly different to our, but only if we are humbly willing to learn. At an institutional level, the Church needs to strive for recruitment shortlists which are ethnically diverse. This has long been the policy of St Mellitus College, of which I am a trustee. It is a small step, but a step in the right direction.

#### **The Revd Dr Ben Sargent**

Vicar of Bransgore and Hinton Admiral

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# THE REVD RACHEL NOEL

## Candidates Questions

### **1. General Synod members are elected for a 5 year period. If elected, what would you hope to achieve during your term of office?**

To represent the Diocese well, to be part of a diverse group of clergy from Winchester diocese, to model good disagreement and relationships across the breadth of our traditions.

To raise the profile of disabled and neurodivergent people, to open up conversations about the depth of ableism in our institution.

Canon C4:3 “No person shall be admitted into holy orders who is suffering, or who has suffered, from any physical or mental infirmity which in the opinion of the bishop will prevent him from ministering the word and sacraments or from performing the other duties of the minister's office.”

This canon is currently still part of our constitution. Combined with the fear and ignorance that still persists regarding various aspects of disability, neurodivergence and mental health, this canon is used to prevent the ordination of and restrict the ministry of those with physical and mental health differences.

To achieve the implementation of better processes and accountability regarding clergy wellbeing and clergy discipline measure, to address the very real challenges of deference and power identified by IICSA, and the options to be opened for the full acceptance of LGBT within our liturgy and at all levels of our institution.

### **2. The strap line of the Church of England is ‘A Christian Presence in Every Community’. What are your thoughts on this statement?**

One of our greatest strengths as the Church of England is our parishes, that we physically have a presence in every geographical community.

Pandemic has released creativity and opportunities for engaging more widely in various online communities too. We have huge opportunities in our parishes, through our weddings, funerals, baptisms and schools to connect with a huge variety of people.

Resources, in terms of people, money, time, etc can make this feel aspirational. We have to be honest about that. There are many people of all ages that have not got any experience or connection with any of our churches.

However, I think we often underestimate the impact of the parish church, the connection that so many feel to their churches, the luxury of opportunities that we have to share our faith with so many people.

My hope is that we will continue to find ways to equip, to resource, to care for our clergy and lay leaders, to notice the signs of hope and life, to celebrate the diverse ways that Christians are present in so many communities, and to use that Christian presence wisely, for the good of all, to help come to know Jesus.

### **3. How do questions about identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ?**

We are here in our glorious diversity, each of us created by our creator. The depth of wonder, at the heart of our faith, is that our creator chose to make itself part of existence too. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, fully human, fully divine, subject to change, human relationships, death, just like us. Through Jesus, we are each invited into relationship with him.

Questions of identity and sexuality are part of who each of us is created to be, the wonder of creation. We each live within the reality of the body, mind and soul that we are given. Every time we form relationships with one another, we imitate and anticipate the way God seeks to be with us. We see glimpses of God's glory through those relationships.

I want to see the opportunity within the Church of England, for churches, for clergy to be able to choose to bless the relationships, the marriages, the families, the identities of our LGBTQI brothers and sisters; for them to be fully welcomed, loved and belonging within our church. I think this is the good news of Jesus.

### **4. Does the Church of England's current commitment to the environment go far enough?**

The research seems to suggest that turning back time would be one of the few things that could actually address the challenges facing the environment. Failing that, turning off all heating in our very large buildings and limiting the number of children people have in the western world would perhaps have more impact – but unlikely to be popular or adopted strategies for the Church of England.

I think the challenges of the structure of the Church of England are significant in our commitment to the environment. The complexity of parishes, benefices, dioceses and national church can make it really difficult for commitments to actually result in action. Parishes faced with the challenges of attendance, commitment, financial challenges, listed buildings, churchyards, safeguarding and all sorts of other responsibilities, along with finding volunteers, especially in the wake of pandemic, can make it hard for this to find traction in our PCCs, who are often maintaining old heating and lighting systems and feeling the burden of responsibilities.

This aspect of the five marks of mission is often neglected; currently it is many secular organisations that are having more impact in raising awareness and driving change in attitudes to caring for creation.

### **5. How can we take positive action to increase the inclusion and representation of BAME people across the Church?**

I think this action is needed for more than BAME people, but also those currently under-represented in our structures and institutions around wealth, class and disability.

There needs to be a deeper understanding at all levels of our church, that God's kingdom is not predominantly white, middle class, able bodied. Through our theology, our training, our liturgy, our

prayer, our working together, we need to be intentional in challenging racism, ableism, and many forms of inequality. We need to pay attention to the images we use, the stories we share, the voices we listen to, the books we read, the speakers we give platform to, to ensure that there is diversity, that there is respect for the dignity and value of each person (and not tokenism). We need to pay particular care to listen to those with different experiences, to pay attention to power and cultural differences, to actively promote inclusion.

We need to be brave in facing our own biases, in sitting with our discomfort, to give people opportunities to get involved, and to actively encourage and support those from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences to get involved at every level of our organisation.

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inspiring love for everyone

# THE REVD ANGI NUTT

## Candidates Questions

### 1 General Synod members are elected for a 5 year period. If elected, what would you hope to achieve during your term of office?

*What I hope to have achieved in 5 years is to have been a part of a process, speaking up even when my voice shakes, listening well to others and to the Holy Spirit, to grow a church that:*

- *sees that the wellbeing of clergy and lay workers is to be taken seriously. Where no one is vilified, ignored or bullied because of physical or mental health issues, but enabled to live out their vocations with support, in safety to the fullest extent.*
- *has found a way ahead after Living in Love and Faith, that allows clergy who wish to, to welcome same sex couples and bless and acknowledge their relationships before God. Where clergy able to hold the tensions of this locally, supporting and working together to enable those with different views to minister and flourish.*
- *is growing in its racial and ethnic diversity to mirror the country it serves, where we all can examine our biases, become more self aware and where the micro and macro aggressions of racism are not tolerated.*
- *is the foremost institution in the country calling for and living out creation care and climate action, in the name of our Creator God.*

### 2 The strap line of the Church of England is 'A Christian Presence in Every Community'. What are your thoughts on this statement?

*It's part of the uniqueness of the Church of England, that person whoever they are ( provided they're not camping in the extra parochial bits of the New Forest) is in a parish and therefore considered a part of the parish community.*

*The "cure of souls" that every incumbent takes responsibility for includes everyone, not just those who come to church or are on the Electoral Roll.*

*There is no need for the parish to be in danger, a false dichotomy is being set up between the new ways of mission, outreach and worship, and what is seen as traditional parish life.*

*Pope Francis said*

*"The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community."*

*I believe that parishes are part of the answer of how to minister to and care for those outside of our church buildings.*

*Proclaiming the Gospel afresh in each new generation means being creative and innovative, pioneering new ways, fresh expressions, whatever you want to call them.*

*"The Parish"™ is vital in the development of this mixed ecology to build on our Christian presence in every community.*

*We already have a system and a structure , let's not let it stagnate or pit it against innovation, but use it well.*

### **3 How do questions about identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ?**

*I believe the heart of the good news of Jesus is encapsulated in John 10.10*

*'I have come so that they might have life in all its fullness.'*

*For so many people this life in all its fullness feels like an impossibility.*

*The Church can proclaim welcome to all, but it too often comes with caveats, or restrictions. Showing the welcome and love of Jesus to individuals is vital.*

*In the Gospels Jesus welcomed and accepted people as they were and enabled connection and relationship with him.*

*If we reject or marginalise people based on their sexuality or relationship status, then what they understand is that Jesus rejects them; and yet we see it all too often for the LGBT+ community, for single people, unmarried parents and many others. I have experienced young people driven from church and faith because of real or perceived attitudes towards them and their peers. They are being kept from encountering the Jesus who loves them, who wants them to flourish, and to know fullness of life in him. We will not all agree and for clergy and communities there need to be options about what they can offer in pastoral provision and blessing.*

*The 5 marks of Mission call us to dismantle unjust structures, so for the sake of the Good news and our Mission let's begin with our own.*

### **4 Does the Church of England's current commitment to the environment go far enough?**

*In short , No.*

*I applaud the commitment to Net Zero Carbon in all institutions of the Church of England by 2030. Initiatives such as Eco Church , Church Yard greening, and tools for parishes and diocese to calculate and reduce carbon footprint are a huge step in the right direction, and the individual efforts of parishes and individuals all are part of how we need to be living out the Fifth mark of mission in caring for creation. However there is so much more that can be done, and I want to see a greater urgency and support in making the big changes that are urgently needed in a far shorter timeframe. It needs to be far easier to get permission to install solar panels, to insulate buildings, to make ground source heating viable. We need to do these even where they cost us, not just because feed-in tariffs are beneficial. While every little helps, bigger steps could be taken with united effort and support. The church should be leading the way on this issue.*

### **5 How can we take positive action to increase the inclusion and representation of BAME people across the Church?**

*The marginalisation and under representation of UKME people, let alone overt racist attitudes and bias in our church is absolutely lamentable. Stories of exclusion and casual dismissal are far too common, and for every one of those there are many more stories of pain, hurt and damage, to faith, mental health and life.*

*An important part of facing up to this issue is not I believe try and solve it just with strategies and initiatives – helpful though they can be, but to dig deep into the roots of the problem, namely the embedded colonial culture and the attitude of superiority that those of us who are White British often unwittingly carry with us. We need to honestly unpack our culture, and see where our own*



*conscious and unconscious biases lie, bringing them to God for transformation. Scripture commands us to care for the foreigner and the exiles, & to know we are one in Christ -neither Jew nor Greek. This is an ongoing work which needs to sit alongside support for networks like the Teahouse and the UKME curates and ordinands network and other projects. Listening humbly, and allowing people of UKME heritage to set the tone and agenda for our work in these areas is vital as we strive for better representation in our churches and leadership.*

# THE REVD DANIEL NEWMAN

## Candidates Questions

### 1. General Synod members are elected for a 5 year period. If elected, what would you hope to achieve during your term of office?

I would hope to support the Archbishops in keeping their pledge to support the parish system. I would want to push for greater transparency in the allocation of central funds so that resources are directed towards the frontline and that church revitalisations and plants are carried out with greater sensitivity to the existing parish structures. I would resist moves that make it easier for dioceses to close churches and make clergy redundant. I would want to ensure that clergy continue to receive a robust theological education and spiritual formation to meet present demands.

Trust in clergy needs to be recovered, and I would listen to the recommendations of recent reports into abuse in order to contribute to the reform our safeguarding practices so that justice is done and victims receive the care they need.

I would want to work with the Liturgical Commission to make sure there are good-quality, effective resources for prayer and worship, both traditional and contemporary, including online, for use every day and also significant national events, for example the Platinum Jubilee.

I would want to contribute to responses to medical issues, for example, the sanctity of life until natural death, and therefore advocating for excellence in palliative care.

### 2. The strap line of the Church of England is '*A Christian Presence in Every Community*'. What are your thoughts on this statement?

My conviction that this is the vocation of the Church of England as the established church is what drives my commitment to the parish system we have inherited. I believe stipendiary clergy and buildings are not key limiting factors but are key enabling factors for mission and the ministry of others. In my own parish, I am working to grow the smaller congregations to increase the Christian presence in their communities rather than let them wither on the vine. At the same time, there are new housing estates being built which would not identify with the historic villages and their churches, and currently have no Christian presence; this highlights the needs for new congregations within the parish structures.

I also take seriously the opportunity the parish system gives to build relationships with other institutions through which we can share the good news of Jesus Christ and seek the good of the place where we live, including schools and political structures, such as local councils. I serve as a foundation governor and lead collective worship in the Church of England VC Primary School in the parish, and have been developing relationships with the non-church school, leading assemblies and contributing to lessons.

### 3. How do questions about identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ?

The good news of Jesus Christ gives us a new identity which defines us, not our desires or how we experience ourselves; he calls us to bring our lives in line with that new identity we have received.

Everyone has ongoing desires and behaviour belonging to their old self that they need to put off, including our sexual desire, which leaves no room for condemnation.

Marriage is given a picture of the relationship between Christ, the bridegroom and his church, the bride. It needs to be open to and ordered towards having children to bring up in the faith.

I support the church's existing historic understanding of marriage and the forms of prayer that are currently available. I recognise that many people find this difficult. The church provides the context for relationships which makes it possible to live this out. The Holy Spirit gives the necessary strength. Two of the clergy who were most instrumental in my growth whilst at university, experience same-sex attraction; they believe that our identity in Christ means it is wrong to act on those desires so they remain celibate and live content and fruitful lives.

#### **4. Does the Church of England's current commitment to the environment go far enough?**

The Church of England is rightly committed to the environment. It has value because it has been created and the future is renewed creation. This is an important point of engagement with our culture at the present moment. It provides common ground and the opportunity to ask whether others have a consistent reason to account for their commitment to the environment. The question is not so much whether the commitment goes far enough but whether it is rightly directed. I believe the Church of England should be careful to scrutinise the impact of the environmental and economic policies it supports so that it does not inadvertently support policies which cause damage to the environment or inhibit economic development in alternative ways. The Church of England's commitment to the environment should extend to seeking positive solutions such as innovation in technology and development of infrastructure. On a more local level, there needs to be realism about the feasibility of implementing changes in some settings, especially rural parishes. The Church of England can encourage and provide resources for action that parishes make take, for example rewilding to increase biodiversity. A recent event I organised highlighted a local resident's contribution to this.

#### **5. How can we take positive action to increase the inclusion and representation of BAME people across the Church?**

First and foremost, we need to take congregations on a journey from tolerating to celebrating and enjoying diversity by captivating their hearts with the vision in Revelation 7 of a church of every nation, tribe, people and language. Parishes need to learn to accommodate themselves to, rather assimilate BAME cultures. That requires sensitive teaching at every level of the church in different forms, without superficially rushing past parts of Scripture which are problematic for some BAME people. Resources can be provided to give parishes ideas about how to communicate through the visual environment of their buildings and worship that BAME people are welcome. Churches need help to reflect on who lives in their communities, their narratives, and whether there is anyone already ministering there from whom they can learn. Intercultural friendships can be encouraged. Clergy can train BAME people with character and potential for public rôles in the church without leaving them to think they are only there because of their ethnicity, and I would particularly want to listen to the wisdom of the diocesan minority ethnic vocations champions. Central funding could be directed towards revitalising and establishing new churches in areas with a significant BAME population.