

## Questions to Candidates

On previous occasions, those entitled to vote in the General Synod election have been able to engage candidates face-to-face at hustings. However, during recent elections, the number of candidates and electors attending these events has diminished dramatically. At the same time, electronic media make it much easier to raise questions through email, websites, Twitter, Facebook and in other ways.

***We have encouraged voters to pose questions which can be put to candidates collectively.*** The questions set out below are generic in nature, but based on those I have received.

If you would like to engage in this question and answer process, please enter your replies in the space provided after each question. I reserve the right to remove any response which might reasonably be considered offensive or prejudicial (though I do not expect that I shall need to do so).

A word limit has been set for your replies of **120 words per question**. Additional words will be cut from the final submission but you could, of course, give a shorter answer and invite anyone who wishes to discuss further with you to send supplementary comments to your email address (remembering, of course, to give it!).

Please return your completed form to [jrees@wslaw.co.uk](mailto:jrees@wslaw.co.uk) and copied to [sleader@wslaw.co.uk](mailto:sleader@wslaw.co.uk), by **9.00 am on Monday 28 September 2015**. Your submissions will be posted on the Diocesan website, with your Election Address and Video Presentation/photograph, on Wednesday 30 September at 5.00 pm.

**Canon John Rees**  
**Presiding Officer for General Synod Election**  
**September 2015**

<b>Name of Candidate</b> (please enter name in full)	<b>Andrew Atherstone</b>
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## Questions and Replies

<b>Question:</b>	Given there are such strongly held differing views on the issue of human sexuality in our Church, how do you think the Church of England should approach the issue in the next five years?
<b>Reply:</b> 120 word limit applies	The first thing we must do is engage deeply and prayerfully together on this question, with our Bibles open and our hearts softened to one another. Much of the current debate is destructive, sharply polarized, dominated by harsh language and a few forceful

	<p>personalities, but we need to sit down together and start treating each other like human beings made in God’s image. It is my conviction that the teaching of the Bible is the wisdom we need to hear, and is good news for everyone. As the Archbishop of Canterbury has put it, “God knows best”, so the Church’s public teaching and pastoral care must be shaped by God’s word in Scripture. That’s the proper focus of our Conversations.</p>
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<p><b>Question:</b></p>	<p>What role, if any, do you think the Church of England and its partner churches in the Anglican Communion might play in response to the world’s current needs?</p>
<p><b>Reply:</b> 120 word limit applies</p>	<p>The call upon all Christians is to be engaged in their local communities as “salt and light” (Matthew 5), not in an ecclesiastical ghetto or holy-huddle. The Bible lays particular emphasis upon protection and care for the marginalized – especially “widows, orphans, refugees, and the poor”. This is part of the Christian imperative. There is no point in General Synod passing resolutions which attract brief press attention but make no practical difference in the real world. Many of the best initiatives begin at the grass-roots level, when Christians get on and make a difference where God has placed them. There is much that the Church of England can do, in partnership with other churches worldwide, including influencing public policy for good.</p>

<p><b>Question:</b></p>	<p>Do you think the ministry of the Church of England might need to change in the coming years, and, if so, what changes would you support in the selection and training of its lay and ordained leadership?</p>
<p><b>Reply:</b> 120 word limit applies</p>	<p>The foundational principles of ministry in the Church of England (as explained, for example, in our Ordinal) are excellent – proclamation of the gospel, pastoral care, evangelism of the parish, together with the whole people of God. In selection and training we need to keep these “end goals” clearly in mind. God is calling many people into public ministry, from a multitude of backgrounds, but often it takes the Church too long to identify them. Our training needs to be more flexible, and higher-quality, so that ordinands and lay leaders are properly equipped, with special emphasis on biblical and practical theology, and character formation. It is essential that the Church continues properly to finance full-time training (including Mixed Mode).</p> <p><b>Email: <a href="mailto:andrew.atherstone@theology.ox.ac.uk">andrew.atherstone@theology.ox.ac.uk</a></b></p>