

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 and copied to 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

Name of Candidate (please enter name in full)	Revd Canon Rosie Harper
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Questions and Replies

Question:	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?
Reply: 120 word limit applies	'The time is always right to do the right thing' Martin Luther King. We have kicked this into the long grass for the last 30 years. Discussions might possibly help, but meanwhile we treat LGBT people very badly. They continue to pay the price for our inability to act honourably. What if the institution had at least as high a standard of equality and inclusion as our fabulous church schools? I'm sorry that some people think that accepting gay people in loving relationships compromises their sense of belonging, but our present policy compromises our ability to be 'good news' and our integrity. I am completely in favour of moving as fast as possible a fully inclusive church.

Question:	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?
Reply: 120 word limit applies	The church has two particular strengths. Firstly we have the privilege of a voice at the national and international level and need our Archbishops and Bishops to speak out courageously and consistently. Secondly we have amazing local networks and the potential to respond to the needs of refugees, those in food poverty and in debt, and to implement environmental policy. For this to become more effective there surely must be a move away from our internal angst and towards the bible values of caring for widows and orphans.

Question:	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?
Reply: 120 word limit applies	I think that the heart of the church is always local and diverse. Therefore I'm rather cautious about moves to a more command and control model. Leadership is not management -we have Diocesan Secretaries for that. Let's put more value on lay skills, and also on academic rigour, and on scientists, poets and prophets. I also believe that leadership skills can emerge as a ministry develops and can't always be identified at an early age.