

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

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| Name of Candidate (please enter name in full) | Gavin Oldham - 07767-337696 |
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Questions and Replies

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| 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 | When I read John ch 8 vs 1-11, I see Jesus suppressing his irritation that judgements on sexual behaviour were obscuring His message of unconditional love. He did not condone the adulterer's behaviour, but he also did not condemn. |

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| | We need so much to learn from his response. It teaches us not to elevate these issues to the extent that they get in the way of loving our neighbours as ourselves. We are all sinners in need of redemption: let's accept that and get on with the work of genuine Christian witness. |
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| 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 | <p>Our role should be as set out in Luke ch 4 vs 18-19: to proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for prisoners and the oppressed, sight for the blind - and proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. In other words, community action should be the cutting edge of Christian mission: throughout the world. In that way our language will be understood by people of all faiths and none, and we will eclipse doctrinal differences with a blaze of unconditional love.</p> <p>My own passion is to empower and enable disadvantaged young people, as much overseas as here in the United Kingdom. The world is crying out for our help: we and the Anglican Communion should go to it.</p> |

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| 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 | <p>Our problem is that we are rooted in tradition: in our ministry, our organisational structure, our language and our customs. The Church is the vehicle for carrying the faith from generation to generation, but it's not keeping up - generational change is just happening too fast!</p> <p>We must empower the laity with short online training courses so that no one feels reserved about speaking out for our faith. We should also introduce a new 'virtual diocese' in social media and on the internet, in order to reach the millions who have no contact with our geographical structures but are part of the vibrant online community.</p> <p>In this context there is also a need for more leadership from the Archbishops' Council.</p> |