

**Diocese of Oxford
General Synod Elections 2021**

From the Presiding Officer, Darren Oliver (Diocesan Registrar):

The postponed General Synod elections will take place over the coming months. The 2015-2021 General Synod will be dissolved on 13 July 2021 and this will trigger the election process. Only those clergy and laity who remain qualified at 6.00 am on 13 July will be entitled to vote.

1. How to nominate or vote

For the first time, the election process (both making nominations and casting votes) will be conducted largely online via an election portal. Those who have not provided an email address through their parish electoral roll or deanery synod roll may still submit a nomination or a vote on paper.

Information setting out how to submit a nomination will be sent to you by email / post (as relevant) on 30 July. Please note that each nomination must also have a proposer and a seconder (see paragraphs 2.3 and 2.8 below).

Please note that no one may vote or stand as a candidate in more than one diocese/electoral area.

2. Who can be nominated for election?

Clergy candidates

- 2.1 A proctorial candidate must be an ordained priest or deacon who is one of the following:
- (a) a qualified elector (as described in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 below) in the diocese (excluding all assistant bishops);
 - (b) a person who would be a qualified elector (see paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2) if he or she had been a member of a deanery synod in the diocese (i.e. a priest or deacon holding written permission from the bishop to officiate within the diocese);
 - (c) a person qualified to vote in the Universities and TEIs constituency who:
 - (i) would be qualified as a diocesan elector (see paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2) but for the fact that he or she is qualified to vote in the UTEIs constituency;
 - (ii) is beneficed in, or licensed to, any parish in the diocese or is licensed to serve as a vicar in a team ministry in any benefice in the diocese; and
 - (iii) has chosen to stand in the diocesan election rather than in the election to the Universities and TEIs constituency (by informing the presiding officer).
- 2.2 A candidate must **not** be the holder of a paid office or employment to which one of the following central bodies may make or confirm an appointment:
- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| the General Synod | the Church Commissioners* |
| the Convocations | the Church of England Pensions Board |
| the Archbishops' Council | the Corporation of the Church House |
- *(A Church Commissioner in receipt of a salary or other emolument is **not** so disqualified.)
- 2.3 **Proposers** and **seconders** must be electors qualified (see paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2) as such at 6.00 a.m. on Tuesday 13 July 2021 (the date of dissolution of the 2015-2021 Convocations and thus of General Synod).

Lay candidates

2.4 A candidate must be a lay person who:

- (a) has received Communion according to the use of the Church of England, or a Church in communion with it, at least three times in the twelve months up to 12th July (or would have done so but for matters connected with coronavirus); and
- (b) is either confirmed (or ready and desirous of being confirmed) or comes within paragraph 1(b) of Canon B 15A (i.e. is a communicant member of a Church which subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity); and
- (c) is aged at least 18 years old on 12th July; and
- (d) satisfies one of the following conditions:
 - (i) is on the church electoral roll of a parish in the diocese or on the cathedral's community roll;
 - (ii) is to be declared by the relevant dean to be a habitual worshipper at St George's Chapel, Windsor or the Cathedral Church of Christ in Oxford; or
 - (iii) is declared by the leader of a mission initiative in the diocese to be part of the worshipping community involved in the initiative.

2.5 Unlike electors, candidates need not be members of a deanery synod.

2.6 Candidates must normally be qualified as such at 6.00 a.m. on Tuesday 13 July 2021 (the date of the dissolution of the 2015-2021 General Synod). Exceptionally, the deans of St George's Chapel, Windsor or the Cathedral Church of Christ in Oxford or the leader of a mission initiative may declare persons to be habitual worshippers at those places, at any time during the period Monday 14 June – Wednesday 11 August 2021 inclusive.

2.7 A candidate must **not** be the holder of a paid office or employment to which one of the following central bodies may make or confirm an appointment:

the General Synod	the Church Commissioners*
the Convocations	the Church of England Pensions Board
the Archbishops' Council	the Corporation of the Church House

(A Church Commissioner in receipt of a salary or other emolument is **not so disqualified.)*

2.8 **Proposers** and **seconders** must be diocesan electors (see paragraph 3.3 below) qualified as such at 6.00 a.m. on the date of the dissolution, Tuesday 13 July 2021.

3. Who can vote in the election?

Clergy electors

3.1 A bishop, priest or deacon is a qualified elector (***subject to the exceptions in paragraph 3.2 below***) if in one of the following categories:

- (a) assistant bishops in the diocese (but **not** members of the house of bishops of the diocesan synod);
- (b) archdeacons of the diocese;
- (c) beneficed clergy of the diocese;
- (d) clergy holding office in a cathedral in the diocese;
- (e) clergy holding office at St George's Windsor (but not the Dean);

- (f) clergy licensed under seal by the bishop of the diocese (including any clergy resident outside the diocese but holding licence of the bishop of that diocese);
- (g) clergy with permission to officiate who are members of a deanery synod of the diocese.

3.2 The following are **not** qualified electors:

- (a) bishops who are members of the house of bishops of the diocesan synod;
- (b) the dean of the cathedral;
- (c) the dean of Saint George's Windsor;
- (d) all Forces chaplains;
- (e) the Chaplain-General of Prisons;
- (f) electors in the Universities and TEs constituency; and
- (g) members of religious communities.

Lay electors

3.3 The diocesan electors are the members of the houses of laity of all the deanery synods in the diocese, other than co-opted members and the members of a religious community with representation in the General Synod.

4. When can nominations be made?

Invitations to nominate will be sent to the electorate on 30 July. Nominations must be made by 12 noon on 8 September.

5. What is involved in the nomination process?

Nominated candidates will have three optional opportunities to engage with the electorate:

- (i) By submitting a written electoral address (by 12 noon on 15 September)

There is no required format, but it will be limited to two A4 pages in length (ie on both sides of a single sheet) in a legible font. It can include a photograph of the candidate. The content is a matter for each candidate but material which is, on the advice of the presiding officer, defamatory or unlawful will not be permitted.

The electoral address will be posted on the online elections portal and on the diocesan website. Hard copies will be printed in black and white and posted to those who have not provided an email address.

- (ii) By recording an introductory video (between 8 to 16 September)

Candidates wishing to provide a video will attend Church House Oxford to record a brief video (lasting no more than 3 minutes) with the diocesan communications team. The candidate will be asked the following three questions:

- Can you tell us who you are, and where you worship in the diocese?
- What do you believe you can bring to the work of the General Synod?
- What do you think are the most important issues facing the Church of England over the next five years?

The recordings will be identical in format and will be recorded against the same neutral background. They will be posted on the diocesan website on the day voting invitations are sent.

(iii) By providing written answers to selected questions posed by the electorate

The electorate will have the opportunity to submit written questions to candidates between 9 August and 5pm on 20 September. The presiding officer will collate these questions into groups so that three or four general questions will be selected. These questions will then be sent to nominated candidates by 5pm on 22 September. Candidates who wish to provide answers to some or all of the questions can then do so by 5pm on 27 September.

Any written responses will be posted against the candidate's name on the diocesan website.

There will be **no obligation** for any candidate to provide or participate in all or any of these opportunities. If a candidate does not wish to do so, words similar to "no information provided" will simply be listed beside the candidate's name.

6. When will voting take place?

Voting invitations will be issued (with instructions on how votes can be cast) on 17 September. Electors may wish to have the benefit of reading and watching the candidates' addresses and responses during the election process before casting votes. Voting will close on 8 October.

A full timetable for elections within the Diocese of Oxford is below.

Dissolution of General Synod / finalisation date for electorate	6.00 am on 13 July
Invitations to nominate issued	30 July
Notice to electorate inviting questions to candidates	9 August
Closing date for nominations	12 noon on 8 September
Candidates' video recordings take place	8 to 16 September
Deadline for submission of written election addresses	12 noon on 15 September
Voting invitations issued	17 September
Candidates' video recordings posted on diocesan website	17 September
Deadline for submission of questions to candidates	5pm on 20 September
Questions issued to candidates	22 September
Deadline for return of candidates' responses to questions	9am on 27 September
Questions and candidates' responses posted on diocesan website	Wednesday 29 September 5 pm
Deadline for return of votes	Friday 8 October
Count	11, 12, 13 or 14 October (tbc)