

# Jonathan Baird

2026 General Synod Election, House of Laity, Diocese of Salisbury



Since the Reformation, the Church of England has had its ebbs and flows.

However, its present crisis is existential. And the next five or so years are going to be critical in saving it, principally from itself.

Having been involved with Save the Parish since before its launch, I support and endorse lustily its objectives.

In addition to this, as part of the lay awkward squad, I have been involved closely in additional and intensive private discussions and negotiations with churchycrats ( a word, which I invented ), parliamentarians and regulators on:

Getting central Church and diocesan funds redirected towards the parish; cranking up the recruitment, retention and redeployment of clergy and thereby addressing the chronic dearth of vicars; stopping in its tracks a dangerous centralisation of Church governance and control of funding; achieving diocesan structural reform ( there are too many dioceses and their overheads are roughly twice what they should be ); helping to influence the Diocese of Salisbury in some of its decision making; attempting to save two churches in Southampton, which were threatened with closure under the Mission and Pastoral Measure; undoing the ruinous policy of trying to achieve net zero by 2030; and dismantling Project Spire, the Church Commissioners's endeavour to pay slavery reparations of £ 100 million, whereas such funds should be redirected towards parishes. Project Spire has been described by Robert Tombs, one of our foremost historians, as 'historically fraudulent'.

As a lay member of General Synod for Salisbury for the last quinquennium, I have tried to hold the archiepiscopate, the episcopate, the churchycrats and the dioceses to account and keep their feet held to the fire, principally by speaking truth to power on the above subjects.

May I please encourage you to read the dozen letters, which I have written over the last five years to the Telegraph and the Church Times, and which attempt to do precisely that.

In order to access the letters, kindly follow this link:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/19Li7XYk77NNZZLO0l2NJATRGJCKnSIBE/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/19Li7XYk77NNZZLO0l2NJATRGJCKnSIBE/view?usp=share_link)

Furthermore, with Professor Nigel Biggar, Lord Biggar of Castle Douglas, Professor Richard Dale, Professor Lawrence Goldman, Dr. Ian Paul, Alka Sehgal-Cuthbert, Lord Tony Sewell and Professor Robert Tombs, I coauthored the paper '***A critical commentary on Church Commissioners' historical links to African chattel enslavement***', which was published by History Reclaimed in June 2025. The paper substantially debunked the Church Commissioners's historical case, which underpins Project Spire and their proposed payment of £ 100 million in slavery reparations.

Finally, during the last quinquennium, I asked a total of twenty-one written questions at General Synod ( the equivalent of Parliamentary Questions ) on the following subjects:

The folly of closing the churches at the beginning of lockdown; the imbalance of power and resources between diocese and parish when a church is threatened with closure under the existing and proposed Mission and Pastoral Measure ( in parallel, I sat on the Reference Group for the revised Mission and Pastoral Measure ); the eye-wateringly high staffing and refurbishment costs of Lambeth Palace; the paucity of spending on training of new ordinands; the amount of time wasted by bishops in the House of Lords; the ruinous cost and lunacy of trying to achieve net zero by 2030 and the burden, which this places on parishes; the fact that so few dioceses use Total Return Accounting ( thereby increasing the financial burden on parishes of parish share ); the non-validity of the Church's Vision and Strategy ( it was never voted for by General Synod and yet it is depriving principally rural parishes of vicars and stipendiary boots on the ground ); what percentage of the Church Commissioners' total assets come from parochial endowments, which were seized in 1976 ( for the first time, the written answer to this question established that it is 19% ); concerns about increasing centralisation of Church governance and control of funding; how significant amounts of money are being diverted away from the parish in order to finance episcopal vanity projects; and seven questions about Project Spire and slavery reparations.

In addition to these, I orchestrated, and arranged for, a number of fellow members of General Synod to ask a further thirteen written questions, which related to Project Spire and slavery reparations.

I am an active and enthusiastic member of the congregation of St. John the Baptist, Chirton, near Devizes.

Aged sixty-six, brought up in a naval family on the west coast of Scotland, with an MA in History from Cambridge and an MBA from Insead, I spent nine years in investment banking before running my own firms in finance for the last thirty-five years. In 2015, after living in France for twenty-eight years, I semi-retired to deepest Wilts.

I have considerable experience of negotiation, effecting change, getting the message across and getting things done.

If you were able to please lend me your first preference vote, I would be most grateful.

Thank you very much indeed.

And if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch directly.

We need to keep up the pressure!

Jonathan Baird ( plus Tigger and Plato in the photo )

Flint Cottage  
Conock  
Wilts, SN10 3QQ

Cell: + 44-7768-164-597  
e-mail: [jwabaird@gmail.com](mailto:jwabaird@gmail.com)