

Revd Dr Ruth HOWLETT-SHIPLEY

Standing for the House of Clergy – General Synod

Proposer – Revd Becky Roberts

Seconded – Revd Canon Richard Curtis

Dear Elector,

I am writing to ask you to vote for me in the election to General Synod.

Thank you for reading my electoral statement.

Ruth



Why do I want to stand for General Synod?

Many people ask me why anyone would want to stand for General Synod. But those same people then complain about the decisions that are made there. I want to be part of the decision-making process rather than just a recipient of the decisions.

As both laity and clergy I have served at Deanery and Diocesan Synods in the Dioceses of Salisbury and Portsmouth and have had the privilege to have **served on General Synod for the last 2 years** having been elected to a casual vacancy in 2024. It takes time to understand how Synod works and I feel that I am now at the point when I can contribute more meaningfully.

I would love to continue to represent the clergy of Salisbury Diocese on General Synod.

Who Am I?

I am fortunate to serve as **Team Rector** in the Chalke Valley Benefice and **Rural Dean** of Chalke Deanery. Like many benefices in Salisbury Diocese, the Chalke Valley Benefice is a multi parish, geographically large, rural Benefice with 14 churches and nine parishes but only just over 4000 people.

In common with many other parishes in the Diocese our churches are sustained by a small pool of generally older volunteers, but we have much to celebrate and I believe our churches have a vital role in the life of our villages and our schools.

It is important that Synod hears the voice of the rural church just as loudly as the voices of larger inner-city churches.

What are my priorities in General Synod?

This continues to be a challenging time for the Church of England and General Synod has a crucial role in how we navigate the challenges that we are facing. I want to be part of some of the solutions.

Managing Difference - The way that we manage and deal with differences is going to be critical to enable the Church of England to move forward in a way that is both inclusive and supportive to all. We need to listen to the voices of everyone with respect and openness - I want to represent your views at Synod.

Inclusion - I believe that the Church of England should, and can, be an **inclusive church** where all can be welcomed, valued and enabled to worship regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality or disability. We are all made in the image of God and God is Love and that love extends to everyone; we are all invited to the Lord's table.

Clergy Health and Wellbeing - I am committed to enhancing the health and wellbeing of all in ministry from the discernment process, training pathways of ordinands and lay leaders, and the support and development of ongoing ministry. General Synod has started to address issues of clergy wellbeing but there is more to do if we are to enable both clergy and laity to flourish in their ministries.

Prior to ordination I was a Consultant in Public Health Medicine and am aware that changing the culture of an organisation takes time and needs to be resourced adequately. It is not enough to just talk about wellbeing; making a difference requires practical and realistic changes.

Safeguarding - Although there has been considerable progress in the area of safeguarding over the past few years, safeguarding continues to be a challenge to the Church of England. I have wide experience of safeguarding throughout my professional and personal life and would hope to work to further improve the approach to safeguarding, and the response and support for survivors of abuse, in the Church of England.

I believe that I have the skills and competencies necessary to represent the clergy of the Diocese of Salisbury and hope you will support my application to serve as your representative on General Synod.

I hope you will be able to support me by voting for me, and preferably making me your first choice candidate, by the close of voting on Tuesday 13th October.