



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL  
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## Formal Written Questions and Candidate Responses General Synod House of Clergy Elections

This document brings together questions submitted by members of the electorate to candidates standing in the General Synod House of Clergy elections, together with the responses provided by those candidates.

Electors were invited to submit questions as a means of exploring candidates' views, priorities, experience, and vision for the future life and mission of the Church. All candidates were given the opportunity to respond to the same set of questions. However, candidates were under no obligation to answer any or all of the questions submitted, and no word limit was imposed on responses provided.

This document has been produced to promote transparency, informed engagement, and constructive dialogue throughout the election process. Electors are encouraged to consider candidates' responses alongside other available information when discerning whom they wish to support.

In preparing this document, some questions submitted on similar themes have been amalgamated. Where this has occurred, care has been taken to preserve the substance and intent of the original questions, ensuring that electors receive the information needed to make an informed decision when casting their vote. This approach was adopted in recognition of the limited timeframe available for candidates to provide responses, the importance of making those responses available before voting opens, and the desire to avoid multiple questions seeking answers on substantially the same issue.

In the interests of transparency, each question is identified as either **“As Submitted”** or **“Amalgamated”**.

All questions submitted to candidates are reproduced below, together with the exact responses received from them.

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The Bristol Diocesan Board of Finance Limited

Reg. in England: Charity 248502, Company 156243, VAT Registration 300254563



To improve readability and provide a consistent format for electors, candidate responses have been transferred into a single document and formatted uniformly. The content of responses has not been altered.

For ease, each question begins on a new page of the document. It will therefore be necessary to scroll past the final answer to the previous question to view the subsequent question and the candidate answers.

We hope this resource will assist electors in determining how they wish to cast their vote.

If you have any queries, please contact  
[governance.support@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:governance.support@bristoldiocese.org).

## Questions and Answers

**1.Many parishes in our diocese are declining while others are growing through creativity, pioneering, church planting, revitalisation, new worshipping communities as well as faithful local parish ministry. What three concrete changes would you advocate in General Synod to help more people come to faith in Jesus Christ through the Church of England? (As submitted by The Revd Josh Bradshaw)**

### **The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*In this diocese we have learned much about what works through our strategic development. Three things strike me at this time which I would bring to bear on assessing support for policy or practice on mission and evangelism at a national level:*

- 1. It must be relational and co-created. Top down doesn't work - parishes have their own expertise. Alternatively, an entirely bottom up, going it alone approach, misses out on a bigger perspective and the opportunity to be greater than the sum of its parts.*
- 2. It must be contextual and diverse. There is no 'one size fits all', no one church or tradition has the answer because no two parishes are alike. If there was one right way to do things we would all be doing it already.*
- 3. It must be simpler. Churches locally or nationally are complex organisations dealing with complex contexts - we must not add further layers of complexity. Complexity is a widely recognised 'silent killer' of growth, it freezes decision making and inhibits implementation.*

*Applying this learning at general synod can help shape decisions about a range of things which are fundamental to missional and evangelism - not least: vocations, removing barriers to ministry for underrepresented groups (GMH, working class, young people etc), and I will support motions which achieve the aims above. One critical piece of work for the next term of synod which is key in shaping the types of missional endeavour listed in the question is to hold the SMIBB to account for its balance of funding. Currently £79m is allocated per year for new projects but doesn't cover routine expenditure, and £44m is allocated to LinC funding which helps to remove barriers, whilst nationally dioceses are holding a £60 million deficit in their collective budgets. It seems to me that we need a new funding model to prevent lack of growth becoming an existential crisis. These issues, whilst seeming a long way from the parish 'coal face' make a huge difference to the availability of resource to put into mission. Where we have been able to invest in clergy, their wellbeing, and in parish development together we see people coming to Christ in this diocese.*

### **The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*Fundamentally we need to release our people - clergy and lay – for prayer and for mission. To do that we need to address the things that distract us and that take up more of our time and energy than we would want. So to pick three of many possible answers –*

- 1. Finance - there will be significant scrutiny of how Church Commissioners funding is allocated to Dioceses in the coming quinquennium. We need to find ways to release funds not just for new projects but to enable a mixed ecology of church, including the faithful local parish ministry you describe. We need to resource new things at a small scale in parishes, but also to take off some of the administrative and compliance burden.*
- 2. A new approach to our buildings – we have some amazing support available to think missionally about our buildings and make them a real asset to our churches but it's spread too thinly and for too many parishes the church building feels like a burden.*
- 3. Finish LLF – so much time and energy (and money) has been spent on LLF and it is distracting us from working together for God's kingdom. We need to reach a resolution and, wherever we end up, get on with being good news for our communities.*

### **The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*General Synod must shift the Church of England's culture from institutional preservation to empowering everyday discipleship. Ninety-five percent of our Church are lay people spending Monday to Saturday in offices, school gates, hospital wards, and local neighbourhoods. Reaching our nation requires releasing this 95% into everyday evangelism, supported by a Synod that prioritises the parish frontline.*

*To help more people come to faith in Jesus Christ, I would advocate for three concrete changes in General Synod:*

- i) A radical change to the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB), which distributes funding from the central church, but currently has huge bureaucratic demands and seems to create too many roles at a diocesan level rather than frontline ministry.*
- ii) Further simplification of local lay leadership pathways, giving incumbents and PCCs the tools to equip, authorise, and deploy gifted local leaders quickly.*
- iii) Shifting national ministerial training and deployment frameworks to explicitly reframe the clergy role from primary "doer" of ministry to spiritual facilitator — reducing administrative compliance burdens on incumbents so they have the capacity to commission lay people for Monday–Saturday mission*

### **The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*My three things would be:*

**A – Funding a genuine mixed ecology of mission** through a funding criteria that recognises that there is no one-size-fits-all model of growth. Faithful parish ministry, church planting, revitalisation, pioneering, chaplaincy and new worshipping communities all have a part to play. Funding should be accessible to churches in different traditions and contexts, shaped by local needs and focused on helping people encounter Jesus Christ and grow as disciples.

**B – Establish a stronger cycle of research, evaluation and shared learning** through ongoing research into what works well and what is not so effective which is rooted in an understanding of the needs of different communities and which is based not simply on attendance figures but also on whether people are coming to faith, growing in discipleship and becoming part of sustainable Christian communities.

**C – Make clergy flourishing and retention a central mission priority.**

*Flourishing clergy, working alongside well-equipped lay leaders, are better able to sustain outward-looking churches in which new disciples can be welcomed, nurtured and equipped. There are more details about this in later questions*

### **The Revd Wayne Massey**

*Someone once came to one of our Soul Food meals and another guest said to them, with a smile, “Be careful — these people actually love you, and before you know it you might find yourself at church or being prayed for!” She meant it as a compliment.*

*Over twenty years of parish ministry, I have become convinced that people are most likely to explore faith when they encounter churches that are healthy, rooted in their communities, confident in Jesus and genuinely loving.*

*So I would advocate three things that create those types of church families.*

*First, put the health and mission of the local church much more clearly at the centre of national decision-making.*

*Second, direct more resources towards helping churches equip children and young people, train ordinary Christians to speak naturally about their faith, and create places where people can ask questions, explore Christianity and belong before they believe.*

*Third, learn more intentionally from churches that are bearing fruit across different traditions and contexts. Planting, grafting, revitalisation, new worshipping communities and faithful parish ministry can all play their part.*

*There is no single model. The question is whether we are helping more local churches become places where people can meet Jesus.*

**The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks Josh. There are so many things that could be done, but here is my stab at a top three:*

*A commitment to Prayer: growth is always the work of the Holy Spirit. As Paul reminds us in 1 Cor 3:6 ‘I planted the seed. Apollos watered it but God has been making it grow’. I would want to ensure that General Synod is reminded that money and resources alone will not produce growth. The seed and the water need to be invested in certainly – but it must start on our knees.*

*A commitment to raising Gospel-confident leadership: the greatest sadness of my time on Synod for the last 5 years, is to often hear what feels like a watered down ‘lite’ version of Jesus’ his life, work and gospel message. The current wave of young adults who God seems to be drawing to our churches, seem hungry for a robust faith, that takes doctrinal depth seriously, which extols the supreme blessing of faith in Christ, but doesn’t play down the self-sacrifice, the ‘cross-carrying’ nature of discipleship.*

*Greater listening to people on the ground in our parishes and contexts about what we invest in: I am increasingly uncomfortable from my last 5 years at Synod, that the ‘centre’ is dictating what will lead to growth. The SMIB process still feels like we have to jump through too many hoops and comply with central thinking.*

**2. Where have you personally seen the Church of England most effective in reaching new people with the gospel- and what might the national Church and Synod learn from stories like these? (As submitted by The Revd Will Fairbairn)**

**The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*One of the joys of my itinerant role is that I see this everywhere I go. There is not one church where God's goodness is absent. Every Sunday I come away with an encouragement. 'Effectiveness' would depend on how you measure it but some rather simple stories I have seen and learned from which have opened the doors to people hearing the gospel would include:*

- A church that prays. One church took a very simple, but pro-active approach to praying for growth (in the intercessions every Sunday etc) not really believing it would make a difference. Some time later the PCC discussed whether they should stop praying because too many people were turning up and it was becoming too challenging to deal with!*
- A church that is full of disciples. One church I supported during a vacancy has a particular charism of active discipleship for all – a church that has disciples making disciples. Perhaps unsurprisingly they had to keep asking me to come and do baptisms of teens and young adults because they didn't have a vicar to do it!*
- A church that is intentional. I think of a group of traditional churches who made a well-discerned strategic plan through knowing and understanding their context and their gifts. With appropriate interventions they have now grown hugely in number and very much younger, numerous baptisms and confirmations, much social action, and even overpaying their parish share.*

*The common thread in each of these, and what the national church and synod must be continually reminded of is that it is the local church that does these things. The local church in its ministry, discipleship, and mission must be supported, funded, and enabled by the national church and not encumbered by it.*

**The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*I have seen so many wonderful examples of this across the Diocese and, as Co-Area Dean, across the Deanery, in ways that look different for different communities, contexts, churches and teams.*

*In my own ministry the single biggest opportunity for sharing the Gospel with new people is in schools ministry and I'm blessed to work alongside some amazing volunteers who put so much love and time into building up relationships with our local schools and telling hundreds of children about Jesus.*

*My parish is among the 50 least religious in the country (68% no religion / not stated) so post-Christendom is where I minister. The most effective way we are finding of reaching new people with the Gospel in this kind of community is*

*through partnerships which enable us to deepen personal relationships and demonstrate gospel values. Inviting people to be partners not guests is so powerful.*

*The national learning is perhaps to invest in what is already there and not simply starting something new; in being partners not providers; in responding humbly to the changing position of the church in our society.*

### **The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*In my own churches, the Alpha course has been a key driver in seeing the Gospel shared, received and transforming lives - it has been my joy to see people become disciples of Christ and move rapidly into evangelists through this. Where Alpha has been most effective, it has worked because of three key dynamics that the national church and Synod would do well to learn from:*

- a) **Releasing lay disciples as primary evangelists:** People rarely attend because of an institutional advert or a diocesan strategy; they come because a friend, neighbour or colleague invited them. When we equip lay Christians to share their faith naturally in their everyday lives - giving them simple tools and encouragement - they move quickly from being participants to being the ones who run groups, pray for others and bring their own contacts.*
- b) **Creating low-threshold, relational spaces:** Alpha works because it offers a hospitable, non-judgmental environment where honest questions are welcomed and no prior biblical knowledge is assumed. It strips away "churchy" language and artificial cultural barriers that so often intimidate seekers.*
- c) **Cultivating a culture of expectancy and grace:** At the heart of every effective Alpha course is a reliance on the Holy Spirit and an expectation that God actually changes lives today. It grounds evangelism not in self-righteous effort or guilt, but in the radical, unconditional grace of God.*

### **What Synod and the National Church Must Learn:**

- a) **Resource the Frontline, Not Bureaucracy:** Synod must focus central funding on equipping local churches with low-threshold missional tools, rather than burdening them with top-down administrative compliance.*
- b) **Prioritise the Great Commission Over Legislative Friction:** Amidst complex structural debates, Synod's primary measure of success must always be whether its decisions make it easier for local parishes to make and grow disciples of Jesus Christ.*

### **The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*Personally, I have seen it both through reaching out to those on the margins of society, for example those who have a learning disability, are neurodivergent or are disabled. When churches step up to find a way to enable them to be full*

*participants in the body of Christ not only they have flourished but the churches ministry has as well. This is coupled by my experience in rural parishes where slower faithful ministry within the local community is gradually seeing more people turn up to church wanting to know more about Jesus. Finally through chaplaincy in its many contexts. As a chaplain I have had so many conversations about God with people who would probably never have come to church but through the building up of relationships and trust people have wanted to know more.*

*So what we could learn is that we need to support ministry in all its diversity. Constantly looking to widen participation in our churches through reaching out and adapting what we do to include those who have been excluded. Continue to resource both rural ministry and chaplaincy. To develop programmes that both support chaplains and encourage more people to work or volunteer in this area.*

### **The Revd Wayne Massey**

*One of the greatest joys I have had as a priest is seeing how God uses ordinary Christians to reach new people.*

*A few years ago, someone with no church background began coming to our Saturday coffee group. Over time she got to know people and became part of the community. One Christmas, someone she had got to know gave her an invitation to our carol service, but had written a personal message in it just for her. She came, sat with someone she already knew and, as she later described it, was overwhelmed by the love of God and became a Christian.*

*I have seen that kind of thing again and again. Of course we need good services, courses and places where people can explore faith and ask questions. But often it is the love, confidence and witness of ordinary Christians that God uses to open people's hearts.*

*I think the national Church should invest more in helping local churches build those kinds of relationships and equip Christians to share their faith naturally. Synod cannot manufacture revival, but it can help create the conditions in which local churches are freer and better equipped to reach people with the gospel.*

### **The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks Will. In my role as an Archdeacon, I was privileged to see amazing innovative and fruitful gospel ministry in many contexts. Without any doubt, the key was having passionate, effective leaders, unafraid to try things, and with a clarity of vision, and who had the ability to envision and support and release lay people. I think primarily of three curates, in whom we saw these gifts, and we put them into three very different roles for their first incumbencies (one a large church with people large numbers of people in addiction, one started a plant on*

*a new housing estate and the other to a church that was small and elderly, all in Weston Super Mare). One in particular had a heart for a truly multi-generational church – all of their services are multigenerational (they do everything together). They have seen enormous growth. I think Synod needs to recognise that nurturing the gifts and passions of our ordinands and curates is key. Are we effectively nurturing the gifts of young leaders? Are we stemming the tide of effective leaders coming forward in the CoE because of the debates we insist on being dominated by? The key seems to me to be that we need other younger leaders to be alongside those three incumbents I've mentioned, and others like them, learning and being nurtured to do that kind of ministry. We currently have a crisis of leadership. It seems to me to be our number one priority to address.*

### **3. What signs would convince you that the Church of England was becoming healthier over the next five years - and how would you hope to see that in our Diocese? (As submitted by The Revd Will Fairbairn)**

#### **The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*The simple answer comes from Jesus' mandate that we should love one another, and by this everyone will know that we are his disciples (Jn 13). Jesus instructs us to unity in love, not despite our diversity but in our diversity, just as the Father and the Son are one (Jn 19). I am particularly beguiled by The Message paraphrase of Eph 4.13 of how unity might look for a healthy body of Christ, "...we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ."*

*I am sad to say that I certainly haven't always seen this, and General Synod has been a case in point. I am fully committed to working together with everyone on synod. to seeing the whole church flourish and to being committed to all aspects of its life. I was disheartened to see some members of synod turn up for just one debate in five days for example. It was notable that how full the chamber was correlated with how polarised the debate was. This has to be different. We must 'move easily with each other' in response to Jesus otherwise we will continue to be a national laughing stock rather than a national church. In five years I would love to see the chamber working together in healthy debate to move the church forward for the sake of the gospel.*

*In our diocese, the fruit of a synod like that would be an encouraged and enabled church, better resourced with the reputation that Jesus wanted for us. To bring that down to earth we will see enthused and energised disciples, loving, following and serving with greater trust of God and each other, and with greater ambition for joining in on God's mission to his world.*

#### **The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*I think there is a lot of work to be done within the Church of England to understand its institutional privilege – of the "simpler, humbler, bolder" vision, humility speaks to me most. Some of the recent failings within the church have been about a desire to defend the institution. I would like to see a confident and undefended House of Bishops, who model constructive, gracious diversity and a healthy understanding of power dynamics.*

*I would love to see diversity flourishing in expressions of church representing a range of traditions, contexts and communities, and see a church that better represents the diversity of its communities and is more inclusive.*

*I do think the culture of many parts of our Diocese is not deferential to the church, and I would want to see our Bishop and leaders seeing that as an opportunity, not a loss.*

*And I would like to see churches and ministries being enabled and encouraged to*

*find the right expression of church for their context, with different traditions within Anglicanism, including chaplaincies and fresh expressions, all valued. Finally I think clergy who are energised, inspired and feel supported, rather than tired and overstretched, would be a sign of a healthy church, and I would want the commitment to clergy wellbeing in our diocese to continue.*

**The Revd Rich Cresswell**

**a) A Reversal of Decline Among Children, Young People, and Families:**

**Nationally:** A healthier Church will see a tangible reversal in the decline of young families, evidenced by growing children's and youth ministries and flourishing church-school partnerships across the country.

**In our Diocese:** Local parishes equipped to build direct, sustained relationships with primary and secondary schools, supported by practical training in intergenerational worship so that our congregations become noticeably multi-generational.

**b) A Multiplication of Confident Lay and Ordained Leaders:**

**Nationally:** Accessible, streamlined pathways for both lay ministry and holy orders, with a deliberate, national push to encourage and fund vocations among those from working-class backgrounds.

**In our Diocese:** Building on the positive steps taken through our PREPARED programme, while actively addressing the deficit in ordinands by investing in local discernment and nurturing a strong, confident culture of call across all our parishes.

**c) A Renewed, Deeper Hunger for Scripture and Biblical Discipleship:**

**Nationally:** A healthier Church of England will be marked by a renewed confidence in the authority of God's Word. We would see a cultural shift away from treating Scripture as a historical artefact or moral compromise, toward a national movement of churches grounded in preaching, teaching, and obeying the Bible.

**In our Diocese:** Local parishes resourced to cultivate deep biblical literacy among everyday Christians—moving beyond superficial engagement so that disciples of all ages are equipped to read, understand, and apply the Bible to their everyday work, family life, and witness.

**d) Resources and Relief Flowing Directly to the Parish Frontline:**

**Nationally:** Central church funds transparently redirected to local parishes, accompanied by a measurable reduction in central red tape and administrative compliance.

**In our Diocese:** Parishes and clergy experiencing tangible administrative relief from the diocesan centre, freeing up incumbents and lay teams to spend less time on governance burdens and more time making disciples.

### **The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*Over the next five years, I would see a healthier Church of England not simply as a larger Church, but as one that is more faithful, hopeful, inclusive and outward-looking. I would look for more people encountering Jesus, growing in faith and finding a genuine place of belonging and service within the Church.*

*I would also hope to see congregations reflecting more fully the diversity of the communities around them, with children and young people, disabled and neurodivergent people, and all those who have previously felt excluded able to participate and exercise their gifts.*

*Another important sign would be healthier leadership: clergy and lay leaders who are flourishing rather than exhausted, more people responding to vocations, and churches collaborating generously rather than working in isolation or retreating into theological silos. I would also want us to value patient, faithful ministry alongside new initiatives, recognising that growth may look different in rural parishes, chaplaincies, established churches and new worshipping communities.*

*In our Diocese, I would hope to see churches sharing people, resources and learning across parish and tradition; stronger support for rural ministry and chaplaincy; new Christian communities taking root in places where the Church is not currently reaching people; and every parish becoming more confident in listening to its community and sharing the gospel in ways that are accessible and relevant. Above all, I would hope to see a Diocese in which people can point to lives and communities being transformed by the love of God.*

### **The Revd Wayne Massey**

*I don't think we should measure the health of the Church simply by numbers, but I do think numbers matter. Healthy things tend to grow, and behind every number is a person — someone discovering faith, becoming a disciple and finding their place in the family of God.*

*So in five years I would hope to see more people coming to faith and being baptised and confirmed; more children and young people growing as disciples; more people offering themselves for ordained and lay ministry; and local churches becoming increasingly confident in Jesus, Scripture, prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit.*

*I would also want that growth to overflow into our communities. Growing churches have more people, gifts and resources with which to demonstrate the love of God practically in our villages, towns and cities — particularly among those most in need.*

*In our Diocese, I would love to see that health across different traditions and communities, not concentrated in a few churches or places: flourishing parishes, renewed churches, new congregations and clergy rediscovering joy in their vocation.*

*For me, that would look very much like the Five Marks of Mission becoming increasingly visible in the everyday life of our Diocese.*

**The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks Will. There are so many things I could say, but actually |I think the primary sign for me would be a strong stream of gospel-confident, passionate, gifted leaders being raised up in the Diocese and wider church, properly equipped for the ministry context that we are now called to, properly supported and resourced and remunerated. In the end as Jesus says, ‘ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field’*

**4. As a member of General Synod, how would you encourage the Church of England to respond to the increasing shortage of parish clergy, a shortage caused not just by diocesan finances, but also falling numbers of working priests? (As submitted by The Revd Sally Robertson)**

**The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*This is a critical question and covers a number of important areas of work for the next term of synod. Things in particular that will help improve ‘recruitment and retention’ (for want of a better phrase) include:*

- *Vocations - supporting the ministry development team nationally and DDOs locally in their work to raise the number of vocations. I was an ADDO for six years, and now work as a National Advisor for vocations so can bring this experience to bear. It is deeply concerning that the projection for clergy numbers in 2033 is 5400, 2000 below the target set – more work must be done.*
- *Clergy well-being – much work has already been done on stipends and pensions, but there is more to do in particular taking the whole value of our remuneration into account when calculating pension so that we can afford council tax and water in retirement. I have been part of the team that has reviewed and developed actions from our clergy well-being surveys. I also support the convening of a clergy voice group. These things give me a good understanding of the issues so that I can represent your views.*
- *The Clergy Conduct Measure – this is nearly complete but needs to be fully implemented – it’s a vast improvement from the much criticised (and bluntly scary) Clergy Discipline Measure and is a direction of travel to be commended and refined.*
- *Unfilled clergy posts – as a lead recruiter for Clergy roles I see the front-line of this issue every day and can bring this experience to synod. We do well in Bristol, we are an attractive diocese, but vacancies take time to fill nonetheless.*
- *Working conditions – see answer to question 5.*

**The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*As you’ll see from my election statement, I know that this issue is a source of anxiety for many people.*

*The first challenge is vocations and retention. I have supported motions brought to Synod in the past quinquennium to address barriers that the institutional culture of the Church of England creates for people underrepresented among our clergy (but not necessarily in our churches!) – people from working class backgrounds, GMH people, neurodivergent people. These are a really important pieces of work that need to filter through discernment, training and deployment. I also believe uncertainty around LLF, and the bar to ordination for people in same-sex marriages, is having a negative impact on vocations. We need to*

*properly value and support our SSOMs and be more creative about how they are deployed. We also need to understand why people are leaving ministry before retirement age and address issues that lead to burnout and disillusionment. The second challenge is, if there are fewer clergy, who does the work? We absolutely need to resource and support and grow lay leadership but we need to honour our lay people's ministry out in the world witnessing to their networks beyond the church and not just governance and compliance roles within the church. The Church of England needs to look seriously at how some responsibilities that fall to clergy may be resourced in different ways – not simply by more volunteers but potentially paid lay professionals.*

### **The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*Thirteen years ago, the Church Growth Research Programme confirmed what experienced practitioners have long known: “churches are more likely to grow when there is one leader for one community”. The accelerating loss of parish clergy since then is a missional emergency. To reverse the clergy shortage, I would advocate for action across three areas in General Synod:*

#### **1. Restore Dignity and Sustainability to Clergy Support**

*We cannot expect to attract candidates—particularly younger or working-class vocations—if ordained ministry is seen as financially unsustainable. Synod must ensure stipends keep pace with living costs, address the long-term erosion of clergy pensions, and provide proper housing care. Valuing clergy properly is essential for recruitment and retention.*

#### **2. Restrain Destructive Multi-Parish Amalgamations**

*Spreading a single incumbent across five, eight, or ten churches stretches priests to breaking point, depresses parish giving, and accelerates early resignations. Synod should tighten oversight on pastoral reorganisation, encouraging alternative models like local focal ministry and robust lay leadership teams rather than endless parish mergers.*

#### **3. Eliminate Administrative Overload to Restore Pastoral Joy**

*Research consistently shows that heavy administrative compliance—not pastoral work or total hours—is the primary driver of clergy stress and burnout. Synod must actively audit and prune bureaucracy (from safeguarding dashboards to faculty red tape), freeing incumbents to focus on their core calling: equipping lay disciples, leading worship, and reaching the parish with the gospel.*

### **The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*This is an immense challenge but there are already a number of things being done to help including the rise in the minimum stipend and the new Clergy*

*Conduct Measure. In Bristol we are challenging this decline with growing numbers of people discerning a calling. So, I would like the Church of England to look at what is happening in those places where the national trend of decline in clergy numbers is not fully happening.*

*We also need to understand more about why people are leaving ministry through a more structured exit interview process that allows us to understand trends this will then inform changes that could be made.*

*And we need to understand and overcome barriers to why some people are not moving into stipendiary ministry. In Bristol although 50% of our clergy are women only around 28% are stipendiary. We are already working on a programme to understand why this but it would be even better if this sort of thing could be done nationally. Finally, any changes to rules and regulations need to be weighed against whether they increase or decrease pressure on clergy.*

### **The Revd Wayne Massey**

*After 14 years serving the same parish, I can still say that being a parish priest is one of the best jobs in the world. You have the extraordinary privilege of walking with people through the biggest moments of their lives, preaching the gospel, building community and seeing God at work.*

*But if we want more people to offer themselves for ordained ministry, we need to create an environment in which priests can flourish.*

*That means reducing unnecessary burdens, making sure clergy are properly supported and cared for, and helping them build real communities of colleagues rather than feeling isolated. It also means a stipend that enables people to live well and a pension that communicates gratitude for their service and confidence that the Church will care for them into the future.*

*We also need to invest intentionally in vocations. In our own church, we have young people who have said they would like to become vicars. That is hugely encouraging.*

*A healthy Church should be the kind of Church in which priesthood looks like a joyful, worthwhile calling. If our churches are healthy, hopeful and outward-looking, I believe more people will hear God's call to serve them.*

### **The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks Sally. As you can see from my previous answers, this for me is the key question we face and so I add this as an addition to what I've said above. For many years we have been told that the looming cliff edge of clergy retirement outweighing those coming into ministry was approaching, and it feels like it is now here. To be honest – I think we need to take a hard look at whether the parish*

*system needs a re-think. I am a great advocate for ‘a Christian presence in every community’, rather than a ‘CoE presence in every community’. Currently we are trying to do the same ministry with fewer people and only end up making parish ministry increasingly undoable – with clergy taking on more and more parishes. I’m a trustee of a large patronage trust and we are seeing pastoral reorganisations increasing at a fast rate, often linked to decreases in clergy numbers. With the best will in the world, money is going to be very tight and asking clergy to take on more will simply stem the tide of leadership coming forward. So I think we need to ask some fundamental questions about the nature of ministry of the CoE. Clearly different dioceses are trying new things, for example with ‘super-parishes – but ultimately we are just trying to spread less resource more thinly. I think it needs something more radical.*

**5. How can we ensure that parish clergy, churchwardens and PCCs are adequately supported in the increasingly complex and time-consuming day-to-day running of parishes, so that their time, energy and financial resources can remain focused on the mission of the Church. (As submitted by The Revd Jenny Cresswell)**

**The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*My 'day job' is supporting clergy and volunteers in doing just these things, and I am deeply concerned that the pattern of fewer clergy and volunteers dealing with greater and administrative, governance, or compliance demand saps, or even completely consumes, precious missional energy.*

*There are different solutions: growth would give more volunteers; admin hubs or other administrative support if it could be resourced may lift some of the burden; collaborative working across parishes may give an economy of scale; and others too, however each of these feels like either a long game solution or patching over the issue. Nonetheless they are each part of the solution.*

*For many parishes this more than just time-consuming, is an existential issue - the compliance and governance of being a church and charity is just too much for the people and finance resource available. So, something has to fundamentally change, whether it is the way parish governance is set out in statute (could each diocese be one charity rather than hundreds?) or by the way the parish is resourced (could a root and branches review of the way the CofE is resourced be the right next move? Clergy centrally funded rather than by parishes? Something else?) Do talk to me about what you think.*

**The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*I wish there was an easy answer to this question! And if the predicted reduction in numbers of active clergy nationally becomes a reality, this will be critical as clergy become responsible for more churches.*

*I think this is fundamentally about resourcing – how can our diocesan central services be resourced so they have capacity to effectively support the day-to-day running of our parishes? How can our parishes be resourced so that we can focus on mission not compliance and administration?*

**The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*Parishes are being smothered by administrative creep. Today, parish clergy, churchwardens, and PCC volunteers spend hundreds of hours managing safeguarding dashboards, data protection, health and safety, and complex legal compliance. While diocesan support is often piecemeal, the central Church has the scale to deliver standardisation and relief.*

*To protect the time, energy, and resources of local churches for mission, I would advocate for action in two key areas:*

### **1. Centralised Compliance Relief for PCCs**

*Rather than expecting thousands of PCCs to independently navigate complex regulations, the national Church should provide ready-to-use, gold-standard compliance packages tailored to different parish sizes. Furthermore, Synod should establish a national administrative review to actively streamline and reduce duplicate reporting across dioceses, freeing up churchwardens and clergy from bureaucratic overload.*

### **2. Reform of the Faculty System to Prioritise Mission**

*The Church of England cares for roughly 12,500 listed buildings—far more than the National Trust and English Heritage combined. Yet we are a living church, not a museum. The faculty system is frequently a costly, time-consuming drain on parish energy. I would support legislation to:*

- i) Expand List A and List B (minor works) to allow PCCs to adapt buildings for mission, community outreach, and modern accessibility without full faculty permissions.*
- ii) Amend the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules to ensure that the missional fruitfulness and growth of a church take precedence over heritage considerations when reordering buildings.*

### **The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*This is an increasing challenge which needs both a national and diocesan action and I don't think there are any easy answers as our world becomes more complex and with increasing legal requirements coming from organisations such as the Charity Commission. Parish clergy, churchwardens and PCC members should not have to become experts in every area of charity law, safeguarding, employment, buildings, finance and data protection simply in order to serve their communities. Here are a few thoughts:*

- A thorough review of all the administrative and regulatory demands placed on parishes so that overlaps, and obsolete activities can be removed and other activities streamlined.*
- To continue to develop clear systems, processes and resources that support people in their roles both locally and national. When new legislation and processes are brought in consideration given as to how these will impact parishes and what support would be needed to implement them. This should include whether any changes ease pressures or add more responsibilities.*
- Greater use of deanery and diocesan administrative hubs could give smaller parishes access to expertise they could not afford individually.*

- *Sustained investment in people including financial support from the National Church for church administrators.*
- *Improved training and support for volunteers which is flexible enough for volunteers with different levels of experience and confidence.*

### **The Revd Wayne Massey**

*One thing parish ministry teaches you very quickly is that, whatever the size of the church, many of the core responsibilities are the same. Safeguarding, finance, buildings, governance and compliance all matter, but a small parish may have only a handful of people carrying them.*

*There are a number of things we can do.*

*We can be much more honest about unnecessary administrative burdens. Every new requirement should be tested by asking what additional work it creates for clergy, churchwardens and PCCs, and whether there is a simpler way of achieving the same purpose.*

*We need to provide stronger practical support. I think some of the work our Diocese has been doing with, for example PCN churches, is pointing in the right direction: helping parishes share expertise, receive training and access support rather than expecting every church to solve the same problems on its own. We should build on that, including shared administration and specialist help where appropriate.*

*We need to make sure more of the Church's resources reach the local level where the work is actually being done.*

*None of this means weakening safeguarding or good governance. Those things are essential. But our systems should serve the Church's mission rather than slowly consuming the time and energy needed for it.*

*Whenever we create a central structure, I think we should ask: is this genuinely making life and ministry easier for the local church?*

### **The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks Jenny. In my experience, both as a parish priest for 21 years and an Archdeacon for 7, is that the thing clergy and lay leadership desire most is regular, supportive and encouraging contact with senior leadership and Diocesan support services. Many can feel remote from their Bishop and unsupported. I've seen Bishops' lives up close as an Archdeacon, and the demands of the role by the local and national church conspire against their primary role as shepherd of the sheep. If we can get senior leaders focusing more*

*time on being in parishes, that way, senior leadership is able to properly listen to and understand the needs and perspectives of those working on the ground. This is especially important when senior leadership has different theological traditions to their clergy and lay leadership. It's vital that clergy and laity feel heard, backed and supported despite those differences – I sense +Neil has that ability.*

*I'm also committed to practical steps that support clergy and lay leadership. I have found the coaching available in Bristol Diocese really helpful. I've seen very effective pastoral support in Bath and Wells. I voted in favour of clergy being given 2 full days off per week during my term on General Synod – in the end Synod approved 36 hours – which personally I think makes no helpful difference to clergy. I have spent the last two years campaigning for a fair and just pension and retirement provision for clergy, and we have had considerable success recently.*

**6. Have you used, or if requested would you use, or support the use of the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy for the blessing of people in a same sex relationship? (As submitted by The Revd James Cannan)**

**The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*I have not used the PLF, however I would be open to doing so, and supportive of their use in an appropriate context and at the discretion of the incumbent or dean of the church or cathedral in question and in line with the pastoral guidance from the House of Bishops.*

**The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*Yes, I have, and would gladly do it again in the future. I would add that I have members of my clergy team who have prayerfully discerned that they would not do this, and I will defend their right to hold this position, and I value and cherish them as colleagues.*

**The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*I have not used the Prayers of Love and Faith liturgy, nor have I been requested to do so.*

*The liturgy of the Church of England must express our received doctrine (“lex orandi, lex credendi”). The Prayers of Love and Faith fail this standard because they rely on deliberate theological ambiguity—attempting to offer liturgical blessings for relationships outside historic Christian marriage while claiming not to depart from the Church’s established doctrine (Canon B 30).*

*My position rests on three clear commitments:*

***Unconditional Pastoral Welcome:*** Every individual, regardless of sexual orientation or relationship status, is warmly welcomed, cared for, and included in the life of our parish as an image-bearer of God saved by grace.

***Liturgical and Doctrinal Integrity:*** Church liturgy cannot pretend to be neutral. Offering public blessings for non-marital sexual unions compromises the historic teaching of the Church on Holy Matrimony as a lifelong union between one man and one woman.

***Respect for Synodical Order:*** Attempting to introduce these prayers via episcopal “commendation” rather than proper synodical authorization under Canon B 2 has damaged trust, created profound pastoral confusion, and strained our unity with the wider global Anglican Communion.

*For these reasons, I would not use them, nor do I support their implementation across the Church.*

**The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*I have not used them but I would do so if requested within the constraints of what we are currently allowed to do legally.*

**The Revd Wayne Massey**

*I have not used the Prayers of Love and Faith and, if I were asked, I would not personally use them. That is because of my own understanding of the Church's teaching on marriage.*

*At the same time, I recognise that the prayers have been authorised for use in the Church of England and that there are colleagues whom I know and respect who, in good conscience, have come to a different view and do use them.*

*So if someone came to us asking for the prayers, I would want them to be treated with kindness and respect. I would explain honestly why I was not able to offer them, but I would also be willing to put them in touch with a colleague in the deanery who could.*

*Across the Church we already know what it is to disagree on this and still enjoy one another's company, support one another, pray together and care about one another. I think that matters. The disagreement is real, but it does not have to define the whole of our relationship with one another.*

**The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks James. The short answer is no to each part of your question. I will unpack my thoughts in subsequent questions.*

**7. In July, General Synod voted on whether “all baptised, believing and faithful persons regardless of sexual orientation are full members of the Body of Christ” and to “recognise a legitimate range of theological perspectives, held in good conscience, across the Church of England, on the right ordering of committed, faithful, intimate same-sex relationships.” If you were present, how did you vote on this? If you weren’t, how would you have voted? (As submitted by The Revd Dr Anthea Colledge)**

**The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*I voted for this motion.*

**The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*I was present and I voted in favour.*

**The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*Although I was not present, I followed this debate closely.*

*I can whole-heartedly endorse the first statement: all baptised, believing, and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full, equal, and cherished members of the Body of Christ. Every person is made in the image of God, welcomed in our churches, and called to belong.*

*However, had I been present, I would have voted against the motion as a whole.*

*While intended as a compromise, the motion attempted to hold together two fundamentally contradictory views on sexual ethics and declare them both equally valid expressions of Anglican doctrine. Rather than bringing pastoral clarity, adopting such ambiguous wording creates deep confusion for local parishes, undermines the historic teaching of the Church on Holy Matrimony, and avoids the real theological task before us.*

*I believe true grace and honesty require us to be transparent about what the Church actually believes. Synod must stop relying on ambiguous compromise motions and instead focus on holding fast to biblical truth, so that together we can get on with our primary calling: sharing the life-transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ with our nation.*

**The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*I was present and I voted in favour of the motion as worded in the question.*

**The Revd Wayne Massey**

*I wasn't present, but I think I would have voted against the final motion as amended, although there was much in it that I would have been glad to affirm.*

*The final motion was somewhat fuller than the wording quoted in this question. I wholeheartedly agree that baptised, believing and faithful Christians, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ. I am also grateful for the faith, friendship and ministry of LGBTQ Christians across the Church.*

*I also recognise the reality that faithful Christians, seeking to follow Scripture, have reached different conclusions on same-sex relationships, and often hold those conclusions deeply and in good conscience.*

*Where I would have hesitated was in asking Synod to go further and make a theological judgement about the status of that whole range of views. The Church's theological work on these questions is not finished. The Faith and Order Commission has done significant work, and the House of Bishops has established further Relationships, Sexuality and Gender work precisely because important theological and pastoral questions remain unresolved.*

*My instinct would therefore have been not to pre-empt that work by a Synod motion, but to allow the Church to do the theology carefully, prayerfully and properly.*

### **The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks Anthea. Yes I was a member of Synod in July. You may be aware that all electronic voting records are available online. As you will know, this was a PMM on the second to last day before the end of the 5-year term of that Synod. We had debated long and hard the issue of LLF and PLF over those years, and the House of Bishops had set a course for the next stages which will take us into the next Synod. I felt that any PMM seeking to pre-empt both the process that the bishops set out, and the election of a new Synod, was not wise.*

*As you will be aware, the PMM was amended, and I voted against the amended motion for the reasons I have stated above. I believe current road map now set out is the one we should walk along together.*

*In relation to the two phrases that you picked out in the motion. I am in full agreement that “all baptised, believing and faithful persons regardless of sexual orientation are full members of the body of Christ”. That is the wonderful radical inclusivity of the gospel. I would have happily and enthusiastically voted for that part of the motion.*

*However, I was not convinced by the phrase ‘legitimate range of theological perspectives’. It all depends on what we mean by ‘legitimate’. Plainly the conservative and progressive positions on human sexuality are held genuinely by those who hold them. They have come to their positions through their reading of*

*scripture and through weighing that alongside reason, tradition and experience. From that perspective, they are legitimate positions to hold. However, the two positions are inherently incompatible – they cannot both be the view that God takes of human sexuality. So, from that perspective they cannot both be legitimate. The struggle we are facing as a Church, is how we move forward together with two incompatible theological positions on human sexuality. It was because of this ambiguity in the use of the word ‘legitimate’ that I could not support the overall motion.*

**8. Does your church pay parish share directly to the diocese to support ministry across all churches in the diocese, or do you limit who can be supported by using an arrangement such as the Ephesian Fund, where only those churches who agree with your theological position on sexuality can be supported by your giving? Do you agree with your church's position on this?**  
*(As submitted by The Revd Sarah Hancox)*

**The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*I am not currently a 'member' of any particular church in the diocese, as befits my role. My personal giving to date has gone either directly to the Diocesan Board of Finance or to churches who give directly to the DBF.*

**The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*My churches pay parish share direct to the diocese and I am in strong agreement with this.*

**The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*Both of the churches I serve pay parish share directly to the Diocese of Bristol. I fully support and agree with my PCCs in this practice, as Parish Share is a vital expression of mutual support across our diocesan family—allowing stronger parishes to resource ministry in less affluent areas.*

*At the same time, I believe it is deeply sad when a parish feels compelled, in good conscience, to withhold or restrict their parish share via mechanisms like the Ephesian Fund. Where this occurs, we should not respond with institutional defensiveness or condemnation. Instead, Synod and diocesan leaders must embark on an urgent work of listening, dialogue, and reconciliation to address the underlying concerns so that every parish feels able to contribute directly once again.*

*The widespread use of alternative funding routes is a symptom of a profound trust deficit within the Church of England. Withholding share is rarely about money—it is about a breakdown in relational and theological confidence. As a member of Synod, my priority would be working to rebuild that trust: fostering transparent governance, listening to conscience-held convictions, and restoring our shared commitment to funding frontline parish ministry across the whole diocese.*

**The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*The primary parish in which I currently minister pays its parish share to the Diocese and I fully support them in this.*

**The Revd Wayne Massey**

*B&A pays its parish share directly to the Diocese, and I agree with that approach. We want to grow our giving base so that, as we become stronger, we are able to be increasingly generous in supporting ministry across the Diocese.*

*For me, that generosity is not only financial. Through B&A Meals we currently provide around 800–1,000 meals each week through partner churches and community organisations, many of them Anglican, and we have also released people to support ministry in another parish.*

*I think healthy churches should want to strengthen the wider Church, not simply themselves. Parish share is one important way of doing that, particularly because it helps sustain ministry in places where the local church may not have the same financial capacity.*

*I recognise that some churches have taken a different approach to giving because of their convictions on sexuality, and I understand the concerns that lie behind that. But our own position is to continue paying directly to the Diocese and to seek to grow both our giving and our practical support for other churches.*

**The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks Sarah. My role is an itinerant one as the Interim Minister for Swindon Deanery, so I don't lead a church, so am not currently facing the question you ask. When I was a parish priest, I was very reluctant to withhold parish share as a means of protest. However, I am not wholly opposed to the use of the Ephesian Fund, if it allows parishes to continue to pay their share into the Diocesan common fund in such a way that members of the parish churches feel able, in good conscience, to continue giving financially to their local churches. That way both the diocese and the parish are still resourced. Pragmatically, the Ephesian Fund route (or Diocesan versions of the route, as we had in Bath and Wells) seems far more preferable than parishes simply withholding funds altogether.*

**9. If elected to General Synod, will you promise to adhere to the historic doctrines of the Church of England as defined in the Declaration of Assent? In particular, will you make every effort, in a reasoned and compassionate manner, to defend the doctrine of Christian Marriage as set out in Canon B30? (As submitted by The Revd Michael Graham)**

**The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*Whether or not I am elected to synod I have sworn the Declaration of Assent before the Bishop in this diocese and so have affirmed and declared my faith as revealed by scripture, the creeds, and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness, and in public prayer and sacrament only to use forms of service which are authorised or allowed by Canon. It is one of the jobs of an Archdeacon use the Canon to further the work of the church and I do so gladly in whichever form they take now or in the future.*

*With respect to Canon B30, I will, in a reasoned and compassionate way, continue to work so that all are able to hold firm to their genuine and conscientious theological position without coercion or exclusion.*

**The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*At ordination and licensing, I have prayerfully and gladly made the declaration of assent to “affirm, and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness.”*

*I will defend the doctrine of Christian marriage as I believe marriage is a gift from God, and conducting weddings is one of the great joys of my ministry. However, the church already offers marriage beyond the doctrine as set out in Canon B30, to people who are divorced and whose former spouses are still living, and I have performed a number of such marriages. I would also note that sometimes it is right for the canons to be amended, and I have been active on General Synod in 2005-2010 in working to change Canon C2 to enable women to be ordained as bishops.*

**The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*As an ordained priest, I have joyfully made the Declaration of Assent (Canon C 15), and I stand unreservedly by my solemn promise to affirm the historic doctrines of the Church of England as rooted in Holy Scripture and expressed in the 39 Articles, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordinal.*

*Regarding Canon B 30, I hold firmly to the Church’s received doctrine that Holy Matrimony is, according to Christ’s teaching, a lifelong, exclusive covenant between one man and one woman. In all conscience, I will not vote for or support any legislative or liturgical proposal that undermines or contradicts this doctrine.*

*At the same time, I recognise that debates around sexuality carry deep personal cost and pain for many. My commitment to biblical doctrine is inextricably bound to Christ's command to love:*

- ***Reasoned and Principle-Driven:*** *Defending historic marriage is not about institutional rigidity; it is about holding fast to God's good design for human flourishing as revealed in Scripture.*
- ***Compassionate and Gracious:*** *Holding this conviction does not diminish my pastoral heart. I am fully committed to treating every person with unconditional dignity, listening with empathy, and serving alongside those who hold differing views with grace and mutual respect.*

### **The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*I affirm the Declaration of Assent and am committed to the faith revealed in Scripture, set forth in the creeds and witnessed to in the Church of England's historic formularies and I will also uphold the Church's canons and authorised liturgy while they remain in force. However, I could not promise to defend every aspect of the present wording of Canon B30, because I support the Church of England moving towards marriage equality for same-sex couples. If elected, I would engage with this question prayerfully, theologically and honestly, seeking lawful change through Synod processes while treating those who hold different convictions with respect and compassion so that no one is diminished or excluded from the life of the Church.*

### **The Revd Wayne Massey**

*Yes. I made the Declaration of Assent when I was ordained, and I gladly stand by it. For me, that is not simply a promise made a long time ago; it describes the faith that has changed me and in which I have tried to live and minister.*

*As a parish priest, I seek to uphold the Church's teaching on marriage as expressed in Canon B30. I have not arrived at that position because of the current debate. It is the understanding of Scripture and Christian marriage with which I was ordained and in which I continue to serve.*

*I also think the words "reasoned and compassionate" in the question really matter. These conversations are not abstract. They involve people we know, love, worship with and care for, often with deeply held convictions on different sides. In our own parish, we have tried to teach clearly while having conversations that are loving, careful and respectful of people who see things differently.*

*So, yes, I would seek to defend the Church's doctrine of marriage, but I would want to do so thoughtfully, graciously and without making people feel that they themselves are the argument. I do not think faithfulness to what we believe and kindness towards those who disagree with us are in tension. We need both.*

**The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks Michael. Yes, I promised at my ordination to uphold the doctrine of the Church of England and am committed to the doctrine of marriage as currently expressed in B30.*

**10. Would you support someone in a same-sex marriage to take on a lay leadership role in your church? (As submitted by The Revd Steve Wilkinson)**

**The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*I do not have a church, but yes, I would be supportive of this in the right church context.*

**The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*Yes. (assuming of course that they were a good fit for the role and went through the usual safer recruitment etc!)*

**The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*My response rests on two clear commitments:*

***1. Unconditional Welcome & Pastoral Care***

*Every person—regardless of their background, identity, or marital status—is warmly welcomed into the life, worship, and community of our church. We are all saved by grace alone, and no one who joins our congregation does so as a 'second-class' Christian.*

***2. The Role of Church Leadership in Modelling Doctrine***

*Lay leadership roles involve public trust and spiritual oversight. Church leadership is not merely about using functional gifts; it carries a responsibility to model the Church of England's historic doctrine, including that of Holy Matrimony.*

*Out of faithfulness to Scripture and the established doctrine of the Church, I would not appoint someone to a public lay leadership position whose decision to enter a same-sex marriage represents a direct departure from that doctrine.*

*This is not about singling anyone out or making personal judgements about their character; it is about keeping our parish leadership aligned with the historic Christian faith. We want to help everyone find ways to serve and belong, while holding fast to the teaching we have received.*

**The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*Given my role as an SSOM this would not ultimately be my decision but I would support anyone who felt that they were being called into ministry within the church irrespective of the sexuality, gender, race, intellectual ability or any of the barriers that we have traditionally put in place for many people.*

### **The Revd Wayne Massey**

*Everyone who comes to B&A is invited to belong, explore faith and play their part in the life of the church. We do not expect people to have sorted out every question of faith, life or sexuality before they can become part of our community.*

*The House of Bishops has itself recognised the importance of welcoming people in same-sex marriages into the worshipping life of the Church while also acknowledging the Church's existing teaching on marriage. I think that matters. Everyone should be able to find a place within the life of a church family.*

*There are, though, some roles which carry particular responsibility for teaching, training and discipling others, and I think those roles need to reflect the theology and values of the church in which they are exercised. For that reason, I would not support someone in a same-sex marriage taking on that kind of senior spiritual leadership role at B&A.*

*Across the Church of England, churches have reached different conclusions on this. Part of the challenge ahead is creating enough space for churches with genuinely different theological convictions to live those convictions faithfully, while continuing to recognise one another as part of the same Church.*

*Above all, I would never want somebody arriving at our church looking for faith, friendship or Jesus to feel that their relationship status had already decided whether there was a place for them.*

### **The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks Steve. The current doctrine of Church of England as stated in Canon B30, and re-affirmed by General Synod throughout the last 5-year term that I have been a member, is that marriage is between a woman and a man. My understanding of Christian leadership is that it should seek to model, however imperfectly, the doctrine of the Church. I made promises at my ordination that I would uphold and order my own life according to the doctrine of the Church of England. So, for that reason, I would not currently be able to offer my support.*

**11. You are called 'to proclaim the faith afresh in each generation, led by the Holy Spirit': how are you specifically doing this in your ministry at the moment? (As submitted by The Revd Matt Southcombe)**

**The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*Proclaiming the faith afresh in each generation' has been one of my go-tos ever since I first read the ordinal. It's exciting right? It's what has driven much of my ministry, I was once asked if I was an evangelist at heart by a Bishop and I burst into tears – he then asked me if I needed a hug.*

*The opportunities for this have changed in my current role – which is much more naturally inward-facing. Nonetheless I inhabit this every time I preach, and as an itinerant preacher it often feels a bit like a guest service anyway... I had a reputation in one of my churches as being the one who always preached from the Bible (!), but what I always intend to do it to preach Jesus and what he has done for us, and then to offer a chance to respond.*

*I also have a deep passion and concern for emerging generations, have worked intentionally with children and young people in education and church contexts for over 25 years (Psalm 145.4 is a motivator) and I continue this now through leadership of CYPF and education strategy and governance at diocesan level, and I have engaged for a number of years with this at national level. I have been disappointed how this has not been part of my General Synod experience in the last year despite it being the 'priority of priorities for the Church of England' to quote the Archbishops Council. I will do all I can to make sure it is firmly on the agenda during the next term of synod.*

*Even in one of my smaller roles, as Team Leader for Deliverance ministry, I start from a point that it is an evangelistic, as well as a healing ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. My role, alongside a parish priest, is to introduce Jesus into these situations as he is the one who brings the freedom, healing and peace.*

*[Geeky archidiaconal attention to detail – there is a full stop after the word 'generation', and 'Led by the Holy Spirit...' starts the next sentence. Not that this changes the question or my answer – but it is good to pay attention to the text closely when on synod 😊]*

**The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*That's such a lovely lens to reflect on my ministry through! Some examples - encouraging and resourcing my congregations in prayer and discipleship to help equip them to share their faith in their life beyond church; bringing thousands of people into my churches through partnerships with organisations like Bristol Light Festival and West Bristol Arts Trail and ensuring they find a personal welcome from a living community of faith when they come in; partnering with Christians at Bristol Pride and Inclusive Church to offer an LGBTQI+ affirming church presence; engaging with racial justice particularly around Bristol's history; screening the People's Emergency Briefing in partnership with our local*

*community organisations and working together to respond to the climate crisis; engaging with schools in collective worship and RE; growing the fringes of my church community by inviting users of our church buildings to be involved in our Christmas carol services. And plenty more!*

### **The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*I am passionate about encouraging everyday disciples and a large portion of my ministry in Bradley Stoke has been about building up leaders, potential leaders and the wider congregation to be confident disciples and evangelists. This includes running the CPAS “Growing Leaders” course for a number of churches in our deanery, but also my preaching about challenging current issues. In this way, I very much hope that I am helping many others to “proclaim the faith afresh”, but I also seek to lead by example.*

*One area where I have felt prompted by the Spirit over the last ten years has been in teaching the overarching narrative of Scripture. I have loved the opportunity to share my “Bible in 60 minutes” talk with a number of groups, both in Lichfield Diocese and now here in Bristol and Swindon.*

*My ministry to schools, children and young people allows me to proclaim the gospel to our youngest generations. At our local primary school, I have introduced the giving away of hot cross buns alongside information about the meaning of Easter, alongside invitations to our Easter events. Similarly, I rebooted our benefice youth group so that we actively read the Bible together and talk about issues of life and faith together - this group is growing! Plus, we have made our summer holiday club more overtly Christian, being unashamed to speak of Jesus.*

*A new parkrun began in my benefice about two years ago and I have made a point of being part of it as much as I can, with “REV RICH” plastered all over my running top. I am using it as an opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ and to open the door to a range of faith conversations. Alongside that, my churches regularly join with me in a parkrun takeover, filling as many of the volunteer spots as we can to support the event and be a visible presence in the community. Many have described parkrun as being like church without the faith element, but I’m making a point of bringing Jesus with me to parkrun every way I can.*

*If elected to Synod, I will bring this same grassroots commitment to our national debates: ensuring central strategy always serves and resources frontline parish evangelism.*

### **The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*My ministry is varied, but the thread running through it is a commitment to meet people where they are and help them encounter the love of God in ways that are accessible and meaningful to them.*

*At LIGHT Church, a fresh expression for people with learning disabilities, we are creating a worshipping community for people many of whom have not felt able to belong to a church since childhood. We adapt worship and teaching so that everyone can participate, including those who communicate without speech, and we have offered opportunities such as an adapted Alpha course to help members explore and deepen their faith and which led to several members seeking baptism and confirmation. We also minister alongside families, carers and volunteers. Our gatherings can be gloriously chaotic, but within that I often recognise the Holy Spirit gently drawing us closer to God and to one another.*

*As an Air Cadet chaplain, I serve young people who are often eager to talk about the pressures and questions they face. This is largely a ministry of presence: building trust, listening carefully and sowing seeds. Over time, young people begin to seek me out with deeper questions about life, faith and God.*

*In parish ministry, through preaching, leading worship and pastoral care, I am helping sustain and encourage a church community through its second interregnum in five years. Part of that work is equipping the congregation to remain outward-looking, connect with its local community and share the gospel with confidence. Through this we have seen members of the local community coming to church or coming back to church.*

*In my diocesan ministry, I support churches in becoming more inclusive of people who have traditionally felt excluded. For me, proclaiming the faith afresh does not mean changing the gospel; it means listening to the Holy Spirit and finding faithful ways for each person and community to hear it, participate in it and recognise that they too have gifts to offer the body of Christ.*

### **The Revd Wayne Massey**

*One of my favourite examples at the moment is the Discovery Bible Study I help to lead after Soul Food on Wednesdays. A small group of us open the Bible, talk honestly and pray together. Many of those who come would not normally walk into church on a Sunday, and some are people wider society can easily overlook. Yet by creating a different kind of space, we have seen people come to faith and grow in faith. I love that.*

*More widely, as a PCC we are deliberately prioritising how we reach younger generations in a post-Christian culture. That means investing in children and*

*young people, building relationships with local schools, developing work with young adults, running Alpha and creating other bridges where people can explore Christianity and ask real questions.*

*We also try to contribute more widely through the More Tea, Vicar? podcast, which aims to speak apologetically and accessibly to people interested in faith, and through our practical service across Bristol through B&A Meals.*

*And because the call is to proclaim the faith afresh led by the Holy Spirit, prayer has to sit underneath all of this. We have a wide range of weekly prayer gatherings where we deliberately seek the Lord's guidance and ask him to lead us in mission.*

**The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks Matt. Great question. Partly the answer is that I seek to bear witness to Jesus is my life generally. I have close family and friends who are not Christians, and I seek where possible to bear witness to Jesus in how I live among them, and to graciously share the hope that I have in Christ. At every opportunity I have to speak about faith, through weekly preaching and occasional offices, I seek to proclaim the good news of Christ, as found in the scriptures. I have a strange ministry role at the moment, which means I don't have congregations of my own. However I am currently building a relationship with a local secondary school in Swindon, and exploring becoming a Foundation trustee of a local academy trust, seeing that as a means to build gospel bridges.*

**12. How do you understand the difference between acceptance and affirmation in creating an inclusive church community? (As submitted by The Revd Chris Brown)**

**The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*For me, 'acceptance' is welcoming all as I have been welcomed (Lk 15.11ff, Ro 15.7). Welcoming them just as they are (sinners, tax collectors, outcasts - as am I), with no conditions (grace comes only through faith, Ro 5), and with no judgement (Jn 3.17). Anything less than that is not full acceptance in the way I have been fully accepted.*

*'Affirmation' is something that builds people up and builds them into Christ. It is a move towards equality, to removing barriers, and to celebrating individuals as they are uniquely created by God, uniquely accepted by God, and affirmed by their identity in God as being welcomed just as they are without condition and without judgement. Love the sinner (you me everyone), and take the plank out of your own eye, as Jesus said to those he has adopted (another 'a' word).*

**The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*Acceptance can sometimes be used to describe an attitude that is more like tolerance – someone can be accepted as part of a church community but may feel that there are implicit or explicit conditions on that, and that they can't fully be themselves. They may feel that there are limits on what they are invited to do within the life of the church, because of who they are.*

*Affirmation is more about the image of God in each person being recognised and rejoiced in, without conditions. People being welcomed to fully participate in the life of the church community, as they are. A truly inclusive church community would celebrate and affirm every person.*

**The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*The distinction between acceptance and affirmation gets to the heart of how a local church models gospel grace alongside biblical truth. While the terms are often conflated, they represent two fundamentally different approaches to Christian community and discipleship.*

*Acceptance reflects the radical hospitality of Jesus. It is the posture of a church that flings its doors open wide to every person, exactly as they are, without prerequisite, qualification, or preliminary moral alignment. It recognises that all people are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and that all have fallen short (Romans 3:23). Christ died for us "while we were still sinners" (Romans 5:8). It means that anyone and everyone - regardless of their background, beliefs, lifestyle, or identity—can come, belong, hear the Scriptures, encounter the Holy Spirit, and experience authentic Christian love. It means that our welcome is unconditional. No one is required to fix their life before they can sit in the pews, join a seeker course like Alpha, or be embraced as part of the community.*

*Affirmation, by contrast, moves beyond welcoming the person to formally endorsing, validating, or blessing their actions, beliefs, or lifestyle choices as fully aligned with God's revealed will and biblical ethics. It requires the Church to align its moral teaching, doctrine, and leadership standards with the choices or self-understandings of the individual or wider culture. It suggests that to truly love someone, the Church must agree with and validate their self-expression or lifestyle choices.*

*A grace-filled parish strives to mirror Jesus, who offered maximum acceptance alongside transformative truth. In ministry, holding this distinction requires immense ongoing grace, humility, and careful pastoral wisdom. If elected, I am committed to upholding this biblical balance firmly, while remaining a warm, listening, and collaborative colleague to all clergy across our diocese.*

### **The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*For me acceptance is saying 'yes please come in and be a part of our family.' Affirmation is taking a step further and asking what can we do to enable you to be a full part of this family and what role might God be calling you to among us.*

### **The Revd Wayne Massey**

*For me, our faith is wonderfully inclusive because it begins with grace. None of us earns our place in the family of God. We are all welcomed because of Jesus. This is something I see across our different churchmanships, and something some of us need to learn to apply better in practice.*

*I think acceptance actually means something much richer than simply tolerating someone. It means being known, loved, listened to, included and given a genuine place in the life of the church. That is what, in Jesus, we want to offer the communities we love and serve.*

*But I don't think love requires us to affirm everything about one another. That is true for all of us, not simply in questions of sexuality. Part of Christian discipleship is learning to bring our relationships, desires, ambitions and understanding of ourselves to Jesus and allowing him to shape us.*

*Augustine's picture of the human heart has helped me here; our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God alone. Our deepest Christian identity is found in Christ. I think that can be wonderfully freeing. Whether we are married or single, gay or straight, widowed or divorced, none of those things has to carry the whole weight of telling us who we are.*

*So an inclusive church, for me, is a community where people can genuinely belong even when we do not agree about everything; where nobody is reduced to their sexuality or relationship status; and where together we keep discovering what it means to find our life and identity in Jesus.*

### **The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks Chris. Maybe I can explain my understanding this way. The gospel is radically inclusive. The New Testament is clear that ‘all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God’ (Romans 3) and yet, to all those who receive Christ, to those that believe in his name, ‘he has given the right to become children of God’ (John 1). The scriptures are clear that entry into relationship with God and therefore into the body of Christ is by grace alone, though a simple yet profound act of repentance and belief in the person and work of Jesus. It is this extraordinary truth that makes clear that the gospel is available to all. That means that everyone has a place in the church, in every Christian community, through the grace of God. No-one is excluded – everyone who trusts in Christ receives full acceptance – ‘there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus’ (Romans 8).*

*However, that doesn’t mean that God affirms everything we think and do as members of the Christian community. Much of the New Testament, as well as encouraging the Christian community in its faith, also challenges their thinking and actions. None of us is left unchallenged and unchanged by being drawn into the Body of Christ. As Paul reminds us in Romans 12 (‘Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will). None of us can expect God to accept every aspect of our thinking and practice, all of us are subject to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. Often God asks for radical, sacrificial changes to the ways we think and live as part of the Christian community.*

**13. Given the recent developments and improvements to marriage laws in England and Wales, the Church of England's systems and processes around marriage are becoming increasingly cumbersome, irrelevant and unjust in the context of our society's cultural and legal norms around marriage.**

**Would you be willing to help consult on and formulate a motion to General Synod to further revise marriage practise in the Church of England, to include the following:**

**1) Churches will be responsible only for checking parochial eligibility/qualifying connection to marry in the parish, but all other legal eligibility checks and marriage preliminaries to be dealt with by the Register Office (as an administrative extension of all marriage registrations being transferred to Ros since 2021)**

**2) The ability for clergy to marry same-sex couples in church who are eligible according to the law of the land. Within this, the right could be reserved for those whose conscience differs, in a similar way to the current provision for marriage after divorce, namely that a minister may refuse to officiate on grounds of conscience but may not prevent the church being used to hold a marriage ceremony for those who are legally eligible.**

**3) To develop legislation with appropriate safeguards which allows priests to conduct marriage services according to the rites and liturgies of the Church of England in parish locations other than churches. (As submitted by The Revd Jae Chandler)**

#### **The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*I have no problem with any of the propositions here, and in principle would be willing to consult on this. In particular (1) and (3) are eminently sensible – in reducing a good deal of administration by the former, and the latter allowing a greater missional opportunity by allowing priests to be more (inter)active in their communities, building relationships and ultimately bringing Jesus into marriages more explicitly! I would see this as similar to conducting a funeral at the crematorium. This would require changes to the law of the land. With respect to (2) again in principle I have no problem in supporting all clergy to act in accordance with their conscience. My concern is that in the context of the current general synod climate this needs to be done really well, in good order, and in ways which synod can subscribe to as a majority and I am not convinced that synod is there yet (see my answer to q3).*

#### **The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

Yes. These would be significant changes but I think the vision behind them is to relieve parishes of administrative responsibilities and to enable us to offer and promote Christian marriage more missionally, which are really important. I would gladly work with Jae and others to explore these options and bring them through Synodical processes.

### **The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*If I may, I will answer the question in three sections, relating to the individual points of the proposed motion:*

*1. I can see in this proposal the well-intentioned desire to move many of the bureaucratic marriage preliminaries away from clergy, especially those clergy who conduct multiple services each year. However, I think such a decision has the possibility of unintended consequences. Firstly, it would be a further removal of marriage from church to state. Secondly, it risks further weakening the link between people and parish, and making the church a “service provider” (pun intended). Furthermore, such a move risks becoming a stepping stone toward the continental European model, where a civil marriage at a town hall is mandatory for all, and a church service is relegated to an optional religious blessing. Many would argue that this weakens the historic understanding of Christian marriage as a unified civil and spiritual covenant.*

*2. I note the pain of those Christians who yearn for the day when the Church of England permits marriage for same-sex couples. However, until Synod has fully debated and voted on the doctrine of marriage, this proposal would be unworkable.*

*3. Again, I can see a well-intentioned desire to take the church to the people within this proposal and I would want to celebrate the sentiment behind it. However, there remains a deep risk of the “service provider” consequence that I have mentioned above. The potential to build relationships between a couple, their wedding party and a church community are enormous if a church takes seriously its obligations and opportunities in this regard. Added to that, in Anglican theology, a parish church is not merely a venue or scenic backdrop; it is a consecrated place set apart for prayer, sacrament, and community worship over generations. The sacred space reinforces the solemnity of the marriage covenant made before God and the church community. As such, whilst there are many reasons to applaud the intentions behind this motion, I would be unable to support it in the form proposed.*

### **The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*I will take this question in three separate parts as it is written*

- 1. I would be interested in exploring whether this would be practicable or whether there might be another more local alternative that could also be used such as each person having a paid person who did this role.*
- 2. This is a really difficult question and I am not sure I have a clear answer as yet. I support the Church of England moving towards the solemnisation of same-sex marriages in church, and I would be willing to help consult on*

*and formulate a motion to General Synod. However, I would want to see—and listen carefully to—detailed proposals before committing to the final wording.*

*I would support provision allowing individual clergy, on grounds of conscience, to decline to officiate at a same-sex marriage. I would also want the consultation to examine carefully how this could work in parishes where clergy, PCCs or congregations hold differing convictions. My hope would be to secure genuine access to marriage for same-sex couples while also making appropriate provision for conscience, without allowing one person's objection to remove that access across a wider area.*

*Any motion would need to be developed with same-sex couples, clergy, parishes and those who hold differing theological convictions. It would also need clear legal and pastoral guidance so that couples are treated with dignity and are not passed repeatedly from one church to another. I would approach that work constructively, prayerfully and with the aim of finding a settlement that is both just and workable.*

- 3. This is something I'd be interested in reflecting on and exploring but I am not sure I have a definitive view on it at this point in time. I would prefer marriage in church to remain the norm, while allowing appropriate flexibility where a church building is inaccessible or unsuitable. Any change should preserve the sacred character of Christian marriage and strengthen couples' connection with the Church, rather than simply competing with the commercial wedding industry.*

### **The Revd Wayne Massey**

*I think these three proposals raise quite different questions, and therefore I would not want to treat them as one.*

*On the first, I would be open to looking carefully at whether some of the legal preliminaries around marriage could be simplified and handled differently, particularly if that reduced unnecessary administrative burden on parishes while preserving the parish connection and good pastoral preparation.*

*On the second, whilst personally I do not support changing the Church's doctrine of marriage, I recognise that we need to complete the theological work that is already underway and then have an honest conversation about how we move forward, recognising the depth of the differing convictions that now exist across the Church of England. Questions about how marriage is conducted, and what different churches and clergy may be able to offer with integrity, will clearly form part of that wider conversation.*

*On the third, I would want to see the detail very carefully. God is, of course, not confined to church buildings, but I believe our consecrated churches are an amazing gift to the nation. They are places set apart for worship and prayer, and there is something distinctive and beautiful about being married before God in such a place. I would not want us to lose that distinctiveness.*

*So I would be willing to engage constructively with reform, but I would want us to distinguish administrative simplification from questions which touch the doctrine and distinctive character of Christian worship and marriage.*

### **The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks Jae. One of the things I have really valued as a member of the General Synod, is the opportunity for genuine debate. My synod experience has been at its most fulfilling when I have gone into a debate thinking one way, and then through listening to various arguments expressed in debate, have sometimes found myself changing my mind. I therefore would struggle to commit to how I would vote in advance, to both this scenario and the one in your next question.*

*In terms of the different parts of your proposed motion:*

- 1. I would want to unpack this a bit more. I am in some ways sad that we no longer register our own weddings. Practically, I have found liaising with the local Registrars office quite a frustrating experience. Having said that, I have just got back from a wedding in a (non-C.o.E) church venue where the registrar was present and registered the wedding and issued the certificate there and then. There is something attractive about not having the responsibility for 'getting it right' with all the paperwork. This could also make sense for the preliminaries. Having said that – I think we lose the opportunity for building gospel bridges if we were to lose banns altogether. However, banns make do feel increasingly anachronistic these days, given that local communities don't know each other.*
- 2. For reasons I have expressed in answers to other questions, the current doctrine of the Church of England is that marriage is between a woman and a man and so that doesn't leave the option for same-sex marriage services in the Church of England open to us.*
- 3. I would really like to have the opportunity to debate this. I'm instinctively attracted by the idea. As we know, Christian communities don't always meet in church buildings! But I would love to hear a range of views on this, and they weigh it up.*

**14. Will you support a motion to develop direct financial and other practical support for churches in areas of deprivation and where there is a high priority for racial justice work, such as those in areas with racially diverse communities, as well as those with significant contested heritage? (As submitted by The Revd Jae Chandler)**

**The Revd Adam John Beaumont**

*In principle I have no problem with this. However, I hold it in the context that the Church Commissioners through the SMIBB is directing £133.5m of funding through LinC (lowest income community) parishes in 2026-28, and £100m through Project Spire (2023-31) to invest in ministry and mission in communities affected by historical chattel enslavement. The National Justice Racial Justice unit has a grant scheme for projects between £5k and £100k).*

*It is all true to say that this could be much better. See my answer to questions 1 and 5 about holding the commissioners to account for finding the right balance of funding and methods of resourcing the parishes generally which will be particularly important as we move towards the next funding triennium (2029-31) when budgets are set. And I bring to this too our experience of the RJU being uncommunicative in their response to funding requests, and that the last triennium funding review had a negative effect on the budget of this diocese – all of which inhibits the crucial and wonderful work of the parishes in the places you describe. It may be that speaking into the debates about funding patterns that are already happening, rather the suggesting new one may be a more appropriate course of action, but I am open to either.*

**The Revd Kat Campion-Spall**

*Yes. There are key missional areas parishes are asked to address, such as racial justice and net zero, which many parishes find challenging to resource, especially if those parishes are in areas of deprivation. I would be really keen to support ways in which central funding and resource could be made available for that work.*

**The Revd Rich Cresswell**

*Yes, in principle I support this direction. As I advocate throughout my platform, central church resources must be radically redirected away from bureaucracy and straight onto the frontlines of parish ministry. The Fourth Mark of Mission calls us to transform unjust structures, and ensuring resilient funding for churches in low-income housing estates, racially diverse communities, and areas of high deprivation is a gospel priority.*

*However, having watched Synod pass many well-intentioned motions over the years, my enthusiasm for the principle is matched by an insistence on practical accountability:*

- **Direct to the Parish Floor:** Any financial mechanism must deliver resources straight to local PCCs, stipends, and parish ministry—not be absorbed by central diocesan administration or endless consultancy reviews.
- **Mission Over Bureaucracy:** Grants and support packages should be accessible without forcing small, resource-stretched parishes to jump through overwhelming application hoops.
- **Focusing on People over Stone:** While contested heritage requires wisdom and grace, central funding must prioritise building up local worshipping communities and living discipleship over endless legal processes.

*If elected, I will gladly support motions that channel real funding into deprived and diverse parishes, while scrutinising the fine print to ensure every pound directly serves frontline gospel ministry.*

#### **The Revd Canon Alice Kemp**

*Yes, I would support this in principle. I would however want to consider the motion's final wording before committing fully.*

#### **The Revd Wayne Massey**

*I would be very open to supporting such a motion, but I would want to see the detail before promising my support to something that has not yet been formulated.*

*The underlying principle matters to me. Scripture repeatedly calls us to generosity, justice and care for those who are too easily overlooked. In Bristol and across our Diocese there are parishes serving communities where much of the wider social infrastructure has been hollowed out over time — fewer shops, fewer services, fewer shared spaces — and yet the local church is still there. Those churches often carry significant demands with fewer local resources. The wider Church should be willing to share money, people and practical expertise so that ministry can flourish there.*

*That is something we are already trying to live out at B&A, both through practical support for other churches and through B&A Meals. It has been a real blessing to us as well, as we have been able to serve communities far beyond our own parish.*

*Bristol also has a particular history when it comes to the slave trade, and that means questions of race, trust, memory and reconciliation really matter. There are places where the Church needs to do serious work to build bridges, heal*

*wounds and address racial injustice. That work needs to be properly resourced and rooted in the gospel's vision of reconciliation in Christ.*

*For me, the key questions would be what the support is intended to achieve, how it would strengthen the local church and its mission, and how we would know it is making a real difference.*

*So I would approach such a proposal positively. I would want our shared resources to help churches proclaim Jesus, make disciples, serve their communities and become places where people of every background know they genuinely belong.*

**The Ven Dr Adrian Youings**

*Thanks again Jae. As I said above, I would love to participate in such a debate, and then make up my mind. As a Synod, we do review our budgets regularly. As you know we have LinC funding directed towards our lowest income communities. As a Diocese, we have a particular focus on our Priority Communities Network. In my last Diocese, we did the same though targeted support to our 'Magnificat' parishes. I absolutely support the principle of the priority of serving our most deprived communities. I also absolutely believe that we should be fully committed to supporting in practical ways our most racially diverse communities. The question for me, with all funding questions, is how can any money be best used to genuinely support these communities. I would be very keen to hear than unpacked a bit more in a debate.*