

Reverend Rich Cresswell

Vicar of Bradley Stoke

(Kingswood and South Gloucestershire Deanery)

Proposer: Reverend Sally Thomas (Bristol West Deanery)

Seconder: Reverend Dan Watts (Kingswood and South Glos Deanery)



Synodical and committee experience

- Member of Lichfield Diocesan Synod 2021-2023
- Member of Bristol Diocesan Synod 2023-present
- Elected member of Bristol Vacancy-in-See committee 2025

Parish experience

- Served as a Reader (LLM) prior to ordination, then 11 years ordained
- Curacy in a semi-rural multi-parish benefice (Lichfield Diocese)
- First incumbency in a rural multi-parish benefice (Lichfield Diocese)
- Current post is an urban/sub-urban two-church benefice (28,000 people)

Wider experience

- Former Assistant Rural Dean (Lichfield Diocese)
- Former Vocations Advisor (Lichfield Diocese)

Having served across rural, semi-rural, and large suburban parishes, I understand the distinct pressures clergy face on the ground. My involvement in leading leadership development courses across deaneries reflects my conviction that we must equip lay leaders while sustaining vocations to the priesthood. Additionally, my wife Jenny has just been ordained deacon, so I have an up-to-date insight into the challenges of those in the early stages of their ministry journey and of clergy partnered with clergy.

A voice for accountability and listening

Within Bristol Diocesan Synod, I am known as someone willing to ask difficult questions and hold leadership to account. At the same time, being invited to serve as a table facilitator demonstrates my ability to listen deeply to conflicting viewpoints. On the Vacancy-in-See committee, I worked hard to ensure that the broad spectrum of traditions and contexts across our Diocese was represented fairly.

If elected to General Synod, I will bring this same approach: holding central bodies accountable while building bridges across traditions.

Key Priorities for Synod

1. **Refocusing on local evangelism and grassroots ministry** : Our primary task is sharing the Good News with the world around us, drawing people into a deep relationship with Jesus Christ through the power of the Spirit. The national Church must better resource local

parishes to innovate in their unique contexts - remaining “*anchored to the Rock, geared to the culture.*”

2. **Clergy wellbeing and resourcing:** I have already raised concerns at Diocesan Synod regarding clergy workload, housing, and stipends. I will advocate strongly for parish-focused spending over central bureaucracy, and ensure proposed changes to clergy pensions are fully delivered. The issue of clergy who were encouraged to sell houses before being ordained is a dark stain that still needs to be resolved.
3. **Safeguarding reform:** I am fully supportive of robust, independent safeguarding oversight, whilst recognising the need for safeguarding practices to be grounded in a realistic understanding of the day-to-day realities and unique pastoral context of parish ministry.
4. **Engaging Debates with Grace:** On complex and dividing issues (such as sex and relationships), I am committed to engaging with deep respect and biblical integrity - listening graciously to all perspectives while upholding the authority of Scripture as our shared foundation.

Asking for your vote

I am grateful to colleagues from a range of settings and churchmanships who have encouraged me to stand. I bring practical experience, a willingness to listen, and a heart for all who serve diligently in ministry.

I would be honoured to receive your **first preference vote**, or a high preference if you are supporting other candidates. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.