

Andrew Smith

Standing for election to General Synod (House of Laity) in Rochester Diocese



[Pictured with my wife, Charlotte. We are expecting our first child in October]

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Age 33 (born 1987)

Proposer Timothy Prideaux, St John's Tunbridge Wells

Seconded Norma Buck, King Charles the Martyr Tunbridge Wells

Why am I standing for General Synod?

- **I care deeply for the gospel**
 - As Christians, we all belong to one body, joined together in the unity of the gospel. I am very keen to see the gospel safeguarded and passed on to the next generation and I believe that the Church of England and General Synod have a very important role to play in that. I think that this is especially important in a country which has less familiarity with Christian faith and values.
- **I wish to serve and represent all lay people**
 - Having gained a lot of experience with Church of England governance through my involvement with Deanery and Diocesan Synod for nearly 10 years, I haven't been put off wanting to attend more meetings! On the contrary, I would love the opportunity to represent all laity in my Diocese at the national level and contribute to the important debates with clarity and humility.
- **I believe in a diversity of voices and views**
 - I think that it's crucial that we have a diversity and plurality of voices contributing to discussions at Synod. Therefore, as someone in their early 30s, I hope that I could bring a fresh voice and perspective from an age group which has been somewhat underrepresented in the past. Having said that, I am very mindful that I am standing to represent people of all ages in the Diocese and so I hope that as a younger person I would be able to do that humbly and with integrity.
- **To champion the local church**
 - I strongly believe that the local church is the bedrock of the wider church and so I feel that the General Synod should be attentive to the important local issues that affect our churches on a daily basis such as parish offer commitments, clergy numbers and funding for future ministry. Therefore, I would see part of my role as ensuring that the national is not out of touch with the local and it would be my commitment to provide an effective conduit between the two by reporting back regularly.
- **To bring clarity and compassion to important debates**
 - Over the next five years, Synod will discuss many important matters such as Living in Love and Faith and the financial impact of Covid-19. I want to be able to contribute to those debates in a loving way showing forth grace and truth while also bringing to bear skills from my work background, particularly in finance-related matters. I feel that these skills are especially important as the church grapples with its long-term financial provision.
 - As I engage with these important issues, I seek to be guided by God's word in the Bible while at the same time being attentive and alert enough to listen to the voice of the church and to take part in these discussions with compassion and generosity of spirit. I always aim to focus on the things that unite us rather than divide!

A bit more about me

- Born in Essex in 1987, I currently live in Tunbridge Wells in Kent with my wife and (soon to be born!) first child and have worshipped at St John's Church in Tunbridge Wells since moving to the town in 2010.
- For my day job, I work in the financial services industry in the City of London and have done so for nearly 10 years, developing a career in business, specifically in investment management roles.
- In my spare time I play several sports to a mediocre standard and am an avid follower of my hometown football team Colchester United (a lesson in suffering therein...)
- I have had a life-long association with the Church of England; from being a chorister and attending Sunday School as a boy through to serving in a variety of ways as an adult. I have been involved in youth and children's ministry for many years and have experience as an occasional lay preacher. I have served on PCC, Deanery Synod and Diocesan Synod for nearly 10 years and was formerly part of the Church of England Youth Council at a national level. I also consider it important to be active as a Christian in my local community and, as such, have helped with food distribution to homeless and disadvantaged people, seeking to share the love of Jesus in practical ways.
- As a younger person and a committed Anglican with an active faith in Jesus, I would look to bring energy and passion to a role on General Synod and it would be a great privilege to represent all the laity in the Diocese in that way.

Thank you for reading my election address, I hope that you will be able to prayerfully consider my nomination. If some of the items I have outlined resonate with you, then I would be greatly appreciative of your highest preference vote. I would encourage you to use your vote to ensure that we have strong local representation at General Synod.

Please feel free to contact me using the details at the top of this election address if you would like to discuss anything further.