

What is the General Synod and what does it do?

General Synod is the legislative body of the Church of England. Together with the Westminster Parliament, it is the only body in the land which is entitled to make national law for England.

Legislative Measures passed by the Church of England are signed off by the Queen as Head of State. In addition to legislation, the General Synod also agrees the national Budget for the Church of England and debates a wide range of public and social issues from the perspective of a faith organisation.

Why stand?

This is an opportunity to represent the concerns of your community and your diocese at a national level. You can have a say in national legislation that affects all parts of the Church of England. You can also raise issues and contribute to debates on social and policy matters.

Who can stand?

The General Synod has three Houses: Bishops, Clergy and Laity. Diocesan Bishops are automatically members of Synod by virtue of their office. In addition, each province of the Church of England elects two Suffragan Bishops from each Province. Each diocese is allocated a number of seats in the Houses of Clergy and Laity – the number of seats varies according to the size of each diocese.

Any member of clergy who holds ecclesiastical office in a diocese or cathedral or who has permission to officiate can stand in an election to the House of Clergy for their diocese. Clergy representatives (known as "Proctors") are elected by their peers, i.e. other clergy persons in that diocese.

To be elected to the House of Laity, a person must be a communicant member of the Church of England, at least 18 years old and have their name on the parish roll in the diocese; on the roll of guild church in the diocese of London; on the roll of a chaplaincy in the diocese in Europe; or on the community role of a cathedral church of the diocese.

Time commitment and expectations?

General Synod usually meets twice a year for 5 days each in London and in York. Each synodical term (known as a "Quinquennium") lasts for five years. At the start of each Quinquennium, Synod also meets in London in November for a three-day Inaugural Synod. It is very unusual for Synod to meet three times a year outside the inaugural years.

Do I get paid?

Your diocese will reimburse your expenses up to a nominated amount including travel expenses and accommodation at London Synods. For York Synods, accommodation and meals are provided on the campus of York University where Synod meets each July. Synod members may claim expenses for travel to York Synods.

How do I get nominated?

For clergy and laity, you need two people from your category to nominate you to stand for Synod; ie clergy will need two clergy people to nominate them, and lay candidates will require two members of a Deanery Synod in the diocese to nominate them. The presiding officers in each diocese will, no later than Friday 30 July 2021, issue invitations to nominate to all qualified electors, inviting them to send nominations to the presiding officer. Further detail can be found in paragraphs 37-47 of General Synod Elections 2021 - Notes for the Guidance of Dioceses.

Who can vote?

All clergy in a diocese may vote for members of the House of Clergy in their diocese. Members of Deanery Synods may vote for lay members of the General Synod.