

## ELECTION TO GENERAL SYNOD FOR DIOCESE OF OXFORD – HOUSE OF CLERGY



### **Venerable Jonathan Chaffey - Archdeacon of Oxford**

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#### **Proposed by:**

*Ven Judy French – Archdeacon of Dorchester*

#### **Seconded by:**

*Revd Geoff Bayliss – Chair of Diocesan House of Clergy and Area Dean of Cowley*

### **What is my role?**

As Archdeacon of Oxford I stand alongside the clergy, church officers and congregations of the Oxford and Cowley Deaneries in their Christian witness. It has been a privilege to observe the dedication of clergy and laity in maintaining church life within our parishes during the pandemic.

My role carries legal responsibilities and is both missional and pastoral (and often all three). As a Residentiary Canon I also represent the Cathedral and College of Christ Church. Across the Diocese I chair the New Congregations Board, co-chair the Interfaith Relations Committee and am an advocate for the ministry of chaplains across sectors such as hospitals, education and prisons.

My wife, Jane (also an ordained priest), and I have lived in the diocese since 2008, largely within the Wycombe Deanery. Before taking up my current role I enjoyed a short period as Interim Minister within the Hambleden Valley. Prior to that I ministered in the Liverpool Diocese then in the Armed Services, most recently as Archdeacon for the Royal Air Force. I have also served as an Honorary Chaplain to The Queen and was a member of General Synod (GS) from 2014-18.

### **What are the most important issues facing General Synod?**

**The Vision for the Church of England in the 2020s is rightly ambitious.** It outlines clear priorities for creating a church which is younger and more diverse, a church of radical discipleship and one whose ecology will express our cherished, inherited resources and patterns whilst fostering diverse new communities. I would like to see the Synod make more of its position as a national forum for advocating social justice (as it was in the fight against fixed odds betting agencies) and responses to the climate emergency. Its agenda will need to be addressed against a backdrop of a church that needs time to regather and reassess in the wake of a pandemic and within the considerable financial constraints faced by many dioceses.

**Three particular issues** will need to be handled with sensitivity and clarity:

- **pastoral support for victims of abuse** - together with an emphasis on professionally managed safeguarding processes
- **wellbeing of clergy and church officers** - including careful revision of the Clergy Discipline Measure
- **Living in Love and Faith** – discernment and decisions that address different integrities within our shared Anglican heritage

## **What might I bring to the work of General Synod?**

It would be an honour to contribute to the work of General Synod as a legislative body in serving the mission of the local church and in its witness to the Kingdom of God within the public arena. I believe that I would bring passion, experience, some expertise and clear thinking.

**Passion** - I have a deep love for the Church of England, given its unique position in national life and Christian presence in every community. *'Christ-centred and Jesus-shaped: Simpler, humbler, bolder'* is a wonderful vision for the next Synod. We have much ground to recover. It is exciting that the associated priorities are aligned to the goals of our diocesan Common Vision and reflect the Anglican Communion's 5 Marks of Mission.

**Experience** – I have led a range of church communities of various traditions in parishes and chaplaincies. Ministry alongside people of diverse faiths and backgrounds in secular environments has given me an understanding of the need for a contextual approach to mission. I would bring a passion for sharing the Gospel with young people and for supporting Christians in living out their faith with integrity and vitality, hence my advocacy of 'Setting God's People Free'. I would also look to blend missional priorities with financial diligence and resource planning, utilising experience at board level in the public sector.

**Expertise** – I offer skills in ecumenism, interfaith liaison and chaplaincy. As an Archdeacon I am also very keen to continue the simplification agenda and for church legislation to be both a protector and liberator of church life. By temperament and experience I am a bridge-builder with experience in conflict transformation.

**Clear Thinking** – It is important that General Synod holds true to its core Anglican identity whilst feeling the pulse of the local church, listening to the needs of wider society and observing the stirrings of the Holy Spirit. I would hope to see beyond the presenting issues while appreciating the fine details and relating with grace and honesty.

**Above all, please pray for the work of General Synod and for its elected members.**

The next General Synod has the potential to offer tremendous service for the life of our dioceses, our nation and within the Anglican Communion. It would be a privilege to help it set the agenda, model Christian community and liberate both traditional and emerging forms of mission.