

Candidate: John Brydon

1 Describe your Anglican identity in three words.

Parish, Priest, People.

2 What would be your top three priorities for this coming General Synod if you were elected?

As listed in my statement my immediate priority is working to ensure that Parishes and Dioceses are adequately funded and that the money reaches its destination. Synod is very much a top-down organisation. Work already started to ensure the voices of the people, who are the church, needs to continue. We also need to encourage people who have a vocation to come forward. The recent stipendiary increases and proposed pension changes will help but so will setting realistic workloads and good theological training.

3 What would you bring to the General Synod which will enhance its culture, reputation and work?

Having just served on Synod I bring experience of its workings and culture as well as common sense and I hope a willingness to listen to all views. I have not just been a passive member as have contributed to debates and regularly asked questions. My work on finances for Save the Parish has provided the information for both myself and others to inform debates and challenge where appropriate.

4 How best do you think the National Church could use its significant financial resources to further the 5-marks of mission?

Whilst the National Church does speak out on some issues we need a greater emphasis at the bottom of the pyramid. This means ensuring that priests, parishes and people are adequately resourced, aware and motivated. Directing at least some of the money held centrally to resource parishes and increase priests on the ground would be a good start.

5 What steps do you believe General Synod must take next to ensure robust independent and transparent safeguarding practices across every level of the church?

At present we are moving to independent oversight whilst retaining day to day control. Personally, we have had too many disasters and whilst there have been vast improvements I believe that the whole of safeguarding should be outsourced

6 What is your vision for the rural church and how its life and mission should be supported?

In the current climate some church closures are probably inevitable. However, making ever larger benefices or indeed minster groups is not the answer. How can a priest minister to 8.9 or even 14 parishes? Lay people can help but the real answer is to free financial resources to adequately fund rural ministry. Both the central church and rich urban parishes have a duty to support. Deprivation in all its forms has affected many rural communities leaving just the church. This is an opportunity to build on?

7 What do you believe the church's role is at this time of climate crisis?

I come from a Silver Eco Church. Raising awareness about small things that add up is beneficial and cost effective. I am unhappy about entering the political debate and setting 2030 as a net carbon target with £40m committed now and a total of £160m over 9 years to fund initiatives/improvements. One negative change was to remove the ability of replacing a boiler on a like for like basis and to push for going green. Fine if you have lots of money. Even if you get a faculty to stay as you are you can freeze whilst the matter is considered.

8 In light of the Church of England's *From Lament to Action* report, and recognising the increasing polarisation in UK public life around nationalism, identity, and migration, what would your contribution be to fostering racial diversity and challenge discrimination in our church?

I hope I lead by example. It really does not matter to me what a person's colour, creed or race is. Perhaps I have been fortunate in that all the churches I have worshipped in have been similarly accepting. Clearly the question is premised on the fact discrimination exists. However, I do not necessarily agree that for example appointing diversity officers is the way forward. If I take Parliament as an example and looking back I have witnessed both more women and black politicians taking active roles. Is not natural evolution of attitudes a better way forward than imposing them?

9 What are your views on Project Spire (the Church Commissioners' findings about transatlantic chattel slavery and the proposal to create a fund for healing, repair and justice)?

Slavery is wrong! Concerning reparations, I had a neutral view when this was launched, however, the weight of informed opinion, the unwillingness of the Church Commissioners to answer some questions both in and out of synod and the fact they were breaking their own rules has placed me in the anti camp. For me the fundamental question is if £100m can be found for reparations why when we ask for money for parishes is there an unwillingness to help? The money the

Commissioner's administer was after all given to help poor clergy and 'the Cure of Souls.'

10 What is your view about the sacramental ministry of priests and bishops who are women, and do you personally receive their ministry in full?

I have no problem. We have women priests at my church and as a churchwarden we work together and I respect their ministry. I do, however, also respect the views of those who have a different attitude. One of the great strengths of the Church of England is it offers a ministry and a place for all

11 What is your view on the current status of the 'House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests and the Five Guiding Principles?

I am content for it to be reviewed from time to time but see no need currently for change. I believe the views held by some who prefer a male priest are sincere and should be respected. This church should welcome and find a place for all. I have indicated above in question 10 my own acceptance of woman priests. In my limited experience I have known traditionalists and women priest happily collaborating together. Blackburn Diocese is a good example of mutual flourishing.

12 What is your view about services of blessing in church after a civil same-sex marriage at (i) a usual service, or (ii) a standalone service, and (iii) same sex marriage conducted in churches (in all cases where the incumbent and PCC are supportive)?

The deanery and including my church already hold a monthly standalone service with a bring and share supper afterwards. If the incumbent and PCC are supportive then I would not object to (i), (ii) and (iii).

13 What is your view about the ordination of candidates who are in same sex marriages, and the licensing of clergy who enter same sex marriage?

My church is all inclusive and our incumbent, who I helped select, is in a same sex relationship. I chair a diocesan fund set up to help retired clergy. This has over the years been extended to cover widowed spouses, divorcees etc. I was instrumental in applying to the Charity Commission to extend the fund to include civil partners.

14 How do you plan to communicate and consult effectively with the wider electorate?

It was my intention when I was elected to Synod to write at least annually to all deanery members. Data Protection proved an insurmountable obstacle. I have given verbal reports at Diocesan Synod, verbal and written at Deanery Synod,

talks to a number of parishes and benefices, written reports after General Synod to Norfolk Save the Parish members and recently ran a conference on 'The Future of Rural Parish' with just under 100 people attending. If re-elected I will continue the above as well as making myself available to deal with questions etc.