

Candidate: Revd Canon Dr Mark Dimond

1 Describe your Anglican identity in three words.

Joyful/Liberal/Catholic

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

Ecology: recent unprecedented heatwaves are another tell-tale sign of an existential planetary crisis. A likely 'super El Nino' effect only reinforces this. More needed on stewardship at parochial level to demonstrate community leadership (ref: Jeremiah 2.7).

Interfaith dialogue: the Israeli-Arab crisis has put interfaith dialogue in jeopardy. Dialogue matters because what is at stake are stable and confident communities.

AI: the AI Revolution threatens, not just in terms of AI manipulation of IT systems that could sow disorder, but also in the invasion of the private/sacred spaces of our lives. We need to defend against the dehumanising process.

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

A positive and engaging spirit is required to be part of a healthy General Synod culture, whilst respecting and listening to the views of others. Its reputation hinges around quality statements that are theologically meaningful and pragmatically considered. It also requires creativity and ideas to be brought into the working committees and debates. In the area of communication, we can organise feedback about the General Synod's business in real time, for those who are interested, using BlueSky.

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

Proclaiming the Good News: more provision for supporting faith and wellbeing in secondary schools.

Teach, baptise and nurture new believers: produce new CofE materials celebrating baptism for educating families.

To respond to human and loving service to those who seek refuge in the United Kingdom by encouraging 'circles of encounter' in our churches.

To transform unjust structures of society by greater investment in Nightshelters and among churches who participate as a rotating Nightshelter venue.

To safeguard the integrity of creation focusing on Eco Church development, by bringing together strategic partners like local councils and trusts like the Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

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?

This year the General Synod announced a Safeguarding Structures Programme Board, independent of church hierarchy. This safeguarding system should be more independent, consistent, simpler to navigate, transparent and able to gain confidence and trust. Therefore, key steps, or main questions, are: what is the working relationship between the independent safeguarding authority and diocesan safeguarding officers? How can the new safeguarding approaches be consistently and efficiently implemented across all dioceses? How are the new structures going to be made clear at the local parish level? And how is the safeguarding standard going to be communicated to victims and the general public?

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

There is really one big answer to this question: more national support is needed in helping rural churches to look after building maintenance when often both local know-how and funding are in such short supply. It seems that shared investment in buildings by the Church of England and the Government is one big way forward, reflecting a public interest in faith and heritage.

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

The Church is doing well with our Lead Bishop on the Environment. Further roll-out of Eco Champions and Eco Chaplains across the Church of England would be useful in creating the energy and focus needed at the local level to promote the Eco cause.

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?

Christ's church is based on compassionate encounter with the stranger and the neighbour. Religious nationalism is therefore a contradiction in terms. One approach would be to reevaluate St George's Day to represent diversity (after all St George is a patron saint/celebrated saint of other nations, not just England, and in fact of other religions too).

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)?

Project Spire has committed £100,000,000 to repairing the injustices of what the UN has called the 'gravest crime against humanity'. In truth, there are other equally large-scale disasters of humans exacting a terrible toll on other humans: the Holocaust, Holodomor, Communism, Apartheid etc. The trouble with reparations is knowing where they start and finish, especially regarding the slave trade case that dates back 200 years. The whole nation was implicated: monarchs, MPs, merchants, industrialists, churches and artists. We

should draw a line by apologising as a nation, and just review whether the commitment intended is realistic. It's mainly about forgiveness.

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 personally receive the ministry of women who are priests and bishops. We are all made in the image of God, in equal and enterprising fashion. If we have a calling to work for God in ministry, that is the main discernment, and certainly not based on who we are as gender category.

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 fully endorse this Declaration, summed up by: 'We accordingly commend this declaration to all members of the Church of England so that the good gifts that God has given to all His people may be used to His glory.' I also support the point for 'those...who...are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures'.

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)?

Prayers for same-sex couples during regular Sunday services work well. Stand-alone services could become a possibility, with General Synod support, because same-sex couples may prefer this discreet approach, and would allow regular Sunday services to flow in their normal, liturgical way. Same-sex marriage is a step up and would require further mainly liturgical and legal thought.

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?

Despite legislation being unsuccessful so far, being in a same-sex civil marriage and then one or both of the two becoming ordained as priest would be acceptable in my opinion. Again, it is about godly gifts in a particular person, not about their gender or status.

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

One way of doing this is to add my contact email/telephone number here if any of the electorate have any questions regarding my putting myself forward or what I have written so far: teamrector@stmargaretskingslynn.org.uk or Tel: 01553 767090

I also intend to produce a short video for distribution, saying a few things about who I am and what I could offer at General Synod.

I plan to be at the hustings later in the month.