

Candidate: Helen Grogutt

1 Describe your Anglican identity in three words.

Prayerful, collaborative, hopeful.

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

My priorities would be:

1. **Strengthening parish ministry** by ensuring more of the Church's resources reach local churches and clergy serving at the frontline of mission and pastoral care.
2. **Recruiting and supporting future ministers**, with greater investment in vocations, training and pathways into ordained and licensed lay ministry, especially for those from under-represented and less affluent backgrounds.
3. **Delivering independent and effective safeguarding**, ensuring transparency, accountability and survivor-centred practice that commands public confidence and reflects the Church's commitment to justice and care.

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

I would bring a collaborative and grounded perspective shaped by years of working alongside lay ministers, clergy and parishes across a wide range of contexts. I am committed to listening well, treating people with respect and seeking common ground where possible. I believe Synod works best when it combines prayerful discernment with practical wisdom and honest debate. I would contribute experience of enabling others in ministry, a passion for widening participation in leadership and vocation, and a determination to ensure that the voices of local churches are heard in national decision-making.

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

The best use of the Church's resources is to equip and sustain local mission. I would prioritise support for churches responding to human need through community projects, welcoming spaces and practical help for those facing hardship or isolation. But meeting need alone is not enough; we must also challenge the unjust systems that create it. Alongside this, we have a duty to care for creation, helping our churches become more environmentally sustainable. Faithful stewardship should enable churches to bring hope, justice and care to their communities.

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?

To rebuild trust, safeguarding must be robust, transparent and independent at every level of the Church. We need a culture that moves beyond believing "it can't happen here" and ensures safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Compliance with training and good practice must be expected of clergy, lay ministers, churchwardens and PCC members alike. Nationally, I support safeguarding being overseen by an independent body to ensure accountability, consistency and professional standards. Survivors must be heard, concerns acted upon promptly, and systems strengthened so that abuse can never be ignored, minimised or covered up.

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

Rural churches are a vital presence in communities that can easily feel overlooked. We need honest recognition of the pressures facing multi-parish benefices, small congregations and clergy responsible for large numbers of churches. Supporting and equipping lay ministers is essential, particularly during vacancies. At the same time, we should value rural churches not only by Sunday attendance, but by the role they play as places of worship, community hubs and anchors at significant moments in people's lives. My vision is for sustainable rural ministry that enables every community to maintain a meaningful Christian presence.

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

The Church's role is to be a faithful steward of God's creation and a credible witness to the communities it serves. We should lead by example, helping churches reduce their environmental impact and use their buildings, land and resources responsibly. We also have a responsibility to educate, encourage and advocate for change where needed. Caring for creation cannot be separated from caring for people, as environmental damage often has the greatest impact on the poorest and most vulnerable. This is an area where local churches can demonstrate both practical action and Christian hope.

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 believe the Church should be a place where every person is welcomed, valued and able to flourish, regardless of their ethnicity or background. The challenge of *From Lament to Action* is not only to recognise discrimination where it exists, but to address it honestly and consistently. My contribution would be to listen well, challenge prejudice whenever I encounter it, and support policies and practices that promote inclusion and equal opportunity. In a society that can seem increasingly divided, the Church should model

Christ's love, celebrating the diversity of God's people and the gifts they bring to our common life.

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?)

I support the Church's commitment to recognising and addressing the legacy of transatlantic chattel slavery. Healing, justice and reconciliation are important Gospel values. However, any significant expenditure must be transparent, accountable and demonstrate a clear benefit to the communities it is intended to serve. At a time when many parishes, clergy and local ministries face significant financial pressures, it is right to ask careful questions about priorities and outcomes. We should pursue justice thoughtfully, ensuring that resources are used responsibly and deliver meaningful impact.

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 fully support the sacramental ministry of women as priests and bishops and gladly receive their ministry in full. I believe God calls both women and men to ordained ministry, and that all are made in God's image and gifted for service. At the same time, I recognise that some hold different theological convictions and I value the Church's commitment to enabling people to remain within the Church of England. Where alternative arrangements exist, they should be transparent and respectful. What matters most is that all forms of ministry are recognised and valued with honesty and integrity.

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 support the principles behind the House of Bishops' Declaration and the Five Guiding Principles, particularly their aim of enabling people with differing theological convictions to remain together within the Church of England. I fully support the ministry of women priests and bishops and receive that ministry without reservation. At the same time, I recognise that others hold a different view and value the commitment to mutual respect and mutual flourishing. The challenge is ensuring that the Declaration continues to operate with honesty, transparency and generosity, so that all can participate fully in the life of the Church.

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)?

I am fully supportive of services of blessing following a civil same-sex marriage, whether within a regular act of worship or as a standalone service, where the incumbent and PCC wish to offer them. I believe the Church should celebrate and affirm loving, faithful and committed relationships, and provide opportunities for couples to receive prayer, support

and God's blessing within the worshipping community. I am also supportive of same-sex marriages being conducted in church where there is local agreement to do so. My view is shaped by a desire to be welcoming, inclusive and pastorally responsive, reflecting God's love for all people.

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?

I am fully supportive of the ordination of candidates who are in same-sex marriages and of clergy who choose to enter a same-sex marriage remaining licensed for ministry. In my view, commitment, integrity, faithfulness and the gifts for ordained ministry are not diminished by the gender of a person's spouse. I believe the Church should encourage open, honest and loving relationships, rather than creating situations where individuals feel unable to live authentically. The demands of ordained ministry can be significant, and the companionship, support and mutual care offered within a committed relationship can be a source of strength and wellbeing. I therefore see no reason why faithful, married same-sex couples should be excluded from ordained ministry.

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

If elected, I will seek to communicate openly and engage as widely as possible with the electorate. My election address and responses to the questions will be circulated to all those eligible to vote, and I will attend the diocesan hustings to listen, respond and engage in conversation. I also plan to contact members of the electorate by email and would actively encourage anyone with questions or concerns to get in touch. I am very happy to correspond by email or arrange a phone conversation, recognising that people engage in different ways. My aim will be to foster a spirit of openness, accessibility and respectful dialogue throughout the process.