

General Synod Election – Questions for House of Laity Applicants

David Hutchinson – September 2026

(St Andrew, Ringstead)

- 1 Describe your Anglican identity in three words.
 - a. Respectful and inclusive
- 2 What would be your top three priorities for this coming General Synod if you were elected?
 - a. Help to plan for the long term future of the Church of England given the various pressures it faces to ensure that it thrives not just survives
 - b. Improve communication of the relevance of Anglican values to the wider community
 - c. Ensure that General Synod can provide effective governance and leadership for the Church of England
- 3 What would you bring to the General Synod which will enhance its culture, reputation and work?
 - a. Extensive business and leadership experience
 - b. A strong sense of purpose and values
 - c. Previously a churchwarden and now Chairman and Treasurer of a rural Norfolk parish
 - d. Extensive governance experience in companies, pension schemes, a trade association and a secondary school
 - e. Financial understanding and expertise including a formal qualification (Chartered Accountant)
- 4 How best do you think the National Church could use its significant financial resources to further the 5-marks of mission?
 - a. Use all communication channels – utilizing effective and enthusiastic people to speak positively about the Christian faith and its teaching
 - b. Nurture new believers – through welcoming people into the Christian community
 - c. Live one's life in a manner that shows commitment to the wellbeing of others
 - d. We need to defuse violent behaviour and toxic environments through peaceful and respectful dialogue and actions and stand up peacefully when action is required rather than walk away
 - e. The world, its life forms and its environment face a variety of significant pressures and we should all share the responsibility for addressing these challenges and mitigate against them in our personal and work lives. Even small steps can have collective impact

- 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?
 - a. Be clear in its commitment to robust independent and transparent safeguarding practices
 - b. Potential safeguarding issues should be investigated thoroughly and fairly with appropriate action taken when issues arise
 - c. Provide excellent training for all those with safeguarding responsibilities and for those who would benefit from it
 - d. No exceptions with regard to accountability
- 6 What is your vision for the rural church and how its life and mission should be supported?
 - a. The rural church should be at the heart of village communities
 - b. Rural clergy do need the active and engaged support of the local community given the number of parishes that they often have responsibility for. Clergy may need training in leadership and engagement if they are to secure that local support
 - c. A narrow interpretation as to the manner in which services are conducted is likely to limit the number and character of congregations. Breadth and inclusivity are important to the promotion of a caring and welcoming church community
- 7 What do you believe the church's role is at this time of climate crisis?
 - a. To manage its affairs, buildings and activities in a manner that, in a reasonable, sensible and practical manner, minimises adverse impact on the environment
 - b. To avoid making controversial statements on a subject that relatively few UK citizens would feel that the church has particular subject expertise to contribute meaningfully to the national debate
- 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?
 - a. The Church's teaching is that we should treat others as we would wish to be treated ourselves and we each have a responsibility to live our lives accordingly
 - b. We should promote tolerance and inclusivity
- 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?)
 - a. Transatlantic chattel slavery was clearly an abominable stain on our history

- b. The UK did lead the world in helping to abolish slavery and, whilst that clearly does not adequately recompense for the practice, the abolition would not have happened when it did without that leadership and significant financial contribution
 - c. The extent to which the church was responsible, as opposed to other organisations, especially the UK state, is not especially clear
 - d. In the main I think the church's role should be to inspire and support all people through the teachings of Christ and strong moral leadership
- 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?
 - a. I receive the ministry of women in full
 - b. Women priests, bishops and, indeed, archbishops are a great asset to the church and broaden the appeal of the church to the wider community
 - c. On a practical note, we would have an even greater number of vacancies if we did not have women priests
 - d. God created us equal
- 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?
 - a. Commitment to all orders – considerable progress has already been made with regard to this principle, most recently through the appointment of a female Archbishop of Canterbury. This should help to increase acceptance of the key role that ordained women can and already do make
 - b. Acknowledge clear decisions – I agree but I also respect those who have concerns.
 - c. Broader discernment – there should be respect for traditions that only ordain men, but I believe that the majority of both church and secular society feels that having both male and female clergy is appropriate
 - d. Provision for traditionalists – point c above
 - e. Ongoing pastoral care – very important but increasingly difficult to maintain.
- 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)?
 - a. Usual service – probably not, as not universally acceptable and therefore potentially divisive
 - b. Standalone service of blessing – I am supportive of this whilst recognising that it is not universally accepted. I ask myself “what would Christ do if he were on earth” and I think he would have been supportive
 - c. Same gender marriage – I think this will happen in time but would have even greater sensitivities than the standalone service of blessing. I am not

opposed but I do respect and understand the views of those who are opposed

- 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?
- a. I understand and respect the views of both those who are supportive and those who are not.
 - b. I appreciate that views are strongly held both for and against
 - c. In practice we face the dilemma that it is already the case if not always clearly so and we could be seen as hypocritical in not recognising that reality
 - d. Christ was inclusive and God loves everyone
 - e. The pace of change may need to be measured and gradual – but I think that the ordination of candidates who are in same sex marriages, and the licensing of clergy who enter same sex marriage, will come about in time
- 14 How do you plan to communicate and consult effectively with the wider electorate?
- a. I am very open to suggestions on this as to what would work best for the wider electorate and I appreciate that different communication channels will be needed to be as inclusive as possible – emails, online meetings, in person at Deanery Synod meetings etc etc.
 - b. I welcome input and feedback – it helps stimulate one's own thinking and ensures that input that I provide to General Synod (if elected) is representative of the wider electorate

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