

General Synod Statement

Revd Canon Dr Mark Dimond

I put myself forward to be considered as a member of the General Synod. I have been an incumbent in west Norfolk for five years, and have had wide experience in the Anglican Communion, both in the Church of England, the Diocese in Europe and the Church in Wales.

Many of the items on the agenda of a typical General Synod have some relevance to local parish life, from pensions policy to local sustainable flowers, from how to deal with the Israeli-Palestinian crisis or the introduction and limits of AI. My aim would be to bring wider issues into sharper focus at grassroots level with reference to the Diocese of Norwich, among the benefices, deaneries, dioceses and chaplaincies. I would also commit to bring parochial issues to wider, synodical attention.

I am, I believe, a good listener, and have an open mind, always healthy when entering into a debate that can reveal unforeseen truths. I would value the opportunity to debate, propose and vote at national level. I have already had some exposure at national synodical business, having been an ex-officio member of the Governing Body in the Church in Wales. I have also participated in presentations at church hustings, for example during the Brexit debate.

I would also be interested in serving on committees where specialism is required.

In terms of specialisms, I am interested in **interfaith dialogue**, what I believe to be a key area for the building of national unity. Interfaith dialogue is not in the best health, not at least since the closing of the UK's Interfaith Network, nor after the tragedies that have unfolded in Gaza since October 2023. Interfaith dialogue needs to be reinvigorated. Having been a participant on the Presence and Engagement Team at Lambeth Palace, and as the Interreligious Dialogue Adviser to the Bishop of Norwich, I am in a good place to offer more in this area.

There is a need for servicing our many **heritage church buildings**, a fair few being in the 'at risk' category. I know about the challenge of trying to maintain a large building (in my case, King's Lynn Minster). People who normally do not attend church would respond positively and participate if they see that the national church investing more in its building structures. It would also free up clergy and laity to practise the art of faith and less the business of buildings.

I am also keen to develop **pilgrimage** as a serious route to faith, in either an educational or even liturgical sense. I have experience in establishing a new pilgrimage route from Walsingham to King's Lynn (the Walsingham Way). There is greater potential in developing urban pilgrimage for those who live in towns and cities.

Joining the General Synod would be an exciting prospect. Of course, I would go with God in mind: 'be strong to grasp what is the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love' (Ephesians 3.18)