

**Diocese of Oxford  
General Synod Casual Vacancy Elections 2024**

**Questions to Candidates**

Voters were given the opportunity to pose questions which might be put to the candidates, relating to any matters on which they believed a representative of the diocese on General Synod might wish to express a view.

Several suggestions and suggested themes were received, and I have selected Four, as set out below.

I am now inviting all candidates (clergy and lay) to consider the questions and, if they wish, to submit written responses. No candidate is obliged to provide answers to any or all of these, but any written responses any candidate wishes to make will then be posted on the diocesan website.

Please note that if a candidate does not provide any answers, the relevant part of the website will be marked “none provided” and if a candidate chooses not to answer every question, the words “no answer provided” will be inserted for that particular question.

The website will also make clear that this is entirely optional. It is an additional opportunity for you to engage with voters if you wish to do so. I reserve the right to remove any response which might reasonably be considered offensive or prejudicial (though I do not expect that I shall need to do so).

A word limit has been set for your replies of **120 words per question**. Additional words will be cut from the final submission but you could, of course, give a shorter answer.

Please return your completed form to [doliver@wslaw.co.uk](mailto:doliver@wslaw.co.uk) and copied to [sleader@wslaw.co.uk](mailto:sleader@wslaw.co.uk), by **5pm on Tuesday 14 May 2024**. Your submissions will be posted on the Diocesan website, with your Election Address and Video Presentation, on Thursday 16 May 2024 at 5.00 pm.

**Darren Oliver**  
**Presiding Officer for General Synod Election**  
**9 May 2024**

<b>Name of Candidate</b> (please enter name in full)	Helen Lamb
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**Questions and Replies**

<b>Question 1:</b>	What are your views on the ‘Future of Church Safeguarding Report’ by Professor Alexis Jay released in February 2024?
<b>Reply:</b> 120 word limit applies	A brief answer to a huge question. I welcome Professor Jay’s report and would like to see the recommendations implemented as soon as possible. However, I do not believe this will be sufficient. An effective safeguarding culture at parish level is not created by two national, independent bodies, and support for PSOs, clergy and

	<p>many involved in pastoral care is about communication and relational connections, as well as structures.</p> <p>The report also highlighted a range of issues as being escalated inappropriately under safeguarding. Addressing where these are nevertheless legitimate issues, or where they are a symptom of different problems, will be part of improving our safeguarding practice, and help us grow healthier church cultures more generally.</p>
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<b>Question 2:</b>	What is your position on 'Living in Love and Faith' and on the inclusivity of LGBTQ+ people in the Church?
<b>Reply:</b> 120 word limit applies	I believe that the gospel is the most inclusive news there is – God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Whoever is such a brilliantly inclusive word. My election address outlines more detail on where I think we go now in regard to LLF than I have space for here.

<b>Question 3:</b>	Noting the Five Guiding Principles in the House of Bishop's 2014 Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (under which the diocesan bishop can make arrangements for pastoral and sacramental provision for churches who cannot accept the ministry of bishops and priest who are women), would you support similar arrangements being made for clergy and churches on matters arising from 'Living in Love and Faith'?
<b>Reply:</b> 120 word limit applies	<p>In short, no. And I'm hoping there will be a better way.</p> <p>I think one of the results of the Living in Love and Faith conversations has been to clarify the level of disagreement at conscience level – over how we know the will of God, how we are to understand what He blesses and what He judges and what His purpose is for His people. The Five Guiding Principles already do not enjoy the support of the whole Church of England – WATCH most vocally. I do not believe we should set up such a parallel arrangement to handle a deeper disagreement.</p>

<b>Question 4:</b>	Bearing in mind the Diocesan Synod's March 2024 resolution endorsing the need to significantly increase our engagement with young people, families and schools, how would your membership of General Synod help with this?
<b>Reply:</b> 120 word limit applies	<p>I believe the needs of our children are common to all humanity – unconditional love, purpose, meaning and security. Their generation perhaps expresses awareness of these more than previous ones have done. Jesus uniquely offers satisfaction for these needs: unconditional love that reconciles God to us; meaning and purpose in following Him that holds firm through valleys as well as mountain tops; the security of being with God, face to face for all eternity.</p> <p>I think the role of GS is to enable this good news to get to where young people are -</p>

	supporting excellent work that schools and chaplaincies already do and encouraging churches to support parents as they teach their children.
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