**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 and copied to 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**

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| **Name of Candidate** (please enter name in full) | **Alison Kirk** |

***Questions and Replies***

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| **Question 1:** | What are you views on the 'Future of Church Safeguarding Report' by Professor Alexis Jay released in February 2024? |
| **Reply:** 120 word limit applies | Having been a teacher for 25 years I have been through an enormous amount of safeguarding training and have had to deal with my share of disclosures. I think that the report gives a fair, if shocking, view of the state of safeguarding in the CoE at the moment and I think the steps |

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| | that are recommended to create full independence are well reasoned and in the best interests of everyone involved. We are responsible for the safety of all members of our church. An independent safeguarding body would allow all, clergy and laity alike, to know that any concerns will be dealt with fairly, properly and in a timely manner. |

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| **Question 2:** | What is your position on 'Living in Love and Faith' and on the inclusivity of LGBTQ+ people in the Church? |
| **Reply:**<br>120 word limit applies | I believe that we are fundamentally a religion of love. We can only truly proclaim this position if we are showing that love to all members of our church. I do not believe that excluding people from one of the sacraments of our faith shows love and so I believe all members of the LGBTQ+ community should be given equal access to marriage that everyone else has. Excluding LGBTQ+ people from marriage reinforces the separation they feel from the church as a whole. |

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| **Question 3:** | 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'? |
| **Reply:**<br>120 word limit applies | I am disappointed that we still have to provide for those who are unable to accept the valuable contribution that female clergy have to make to our spiritual lives, but realise that the practicalities of the church mean that this is a necessity in order for the organisation to function. I am deeply saddened that there are members of our church who feel similarly about LGBTQ+ people but accept that this may be the only way to enable us to continue for now. It is my fervent hope that through prayer and conversation the church will come to see that LGBTQ+ people deserve the same inclusion as everybody else and therefore no alternative pastoral and sacramental provision will be necessary. |

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| **Question 4:** | 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? |
| **Reply:**<br>120 word limit applies | As a secondary school teacher with 25 years experience and two teenage sons I have a good understanding of what the distractions are that keep young people and families from deeper engagement with church. I have been part of many meetings in which well meaning and thoughtful proposals are put forward but the practicalities of life are not taken into account. Young people in particular see us as old-fashioned and |

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| | judgemental. We need to be tackling the issues that are shaping their world and helping us all to find our way forward together. We should be looking outwards not calling them inwards. |