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

Name of Candidate (please enter name in full)	**Jeremy Lasman**

Questions and Replies

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	Full disclosure; this question prompted me to read this report! It makes eminent sense to strengthen the safeguarding culture of the church – both operations and policy/scrutiny- by eliminating the self policing elements in our current approach . Especially so, given the

	serious weakness identified in Professor Jay's report, with the Church judged well below the standards set by many secular organisations. Extreme care must be taken during any transition to what may be a more centralised model to ensure that we do not dilute the mindset that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We will also need to develop clear procedures to maintain a strong link between the two charities proposed and all those impacted by safeguarding issues 'on the ground'.

Question 2:	What is your position on 'Living in Love and Faith' and on the inclusivity of LGBTQ+ people in the Church?
Reply: 120 word limit applies	I have learned the hard way that if you try to suppress any aspect of who you are, it will eventually surface, with potentially destructive consequences. I did not choose my sexual orientation, and I don't believe that same sex relationships are sinful. I believe that sex within a healthy relationship is a God given gift, and that such relationships should be celebrated. Jesus's example of love and acceptance for all and His commands to love frames my response. I fully support the agreed position on LLF, and will seek to encourage inclusivity (in every respect) within the Church. However, I will also always seek to understand those who do not share my views, and to walk alongside them.

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: 120 word limit applies	The 5 guiding principles provided a directional statement on the policy of the Church as well as framework within which to affirm those holding differing views. I think they were less effective in terms of practical implementation, when seeking to avoid fragmentation within the Church. They are potentially confusing to those outside seeking a clear statement of policy. As such, I think an equivalent set of principles for LLF would be helpful, provided we are clear about their purpose. In tandem, the church needs to consider how to re-engage with those who have been alienated by its historic stance. However, we must not expend disproportionate energy to progress this to the detriment of other pressing policy issues.

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: 120 word limit applies	I am Chair of Governors of two Church schools, and have overseen curriculum development, including RE, as well as leadership input into the preparation and successful conclusion of SIAMS inspections. Both impact on all within the school communities by encouraging the development of personal spirituality and exploration. As part of a Ministry Team, I support the work of our Schools and Youth worker as well as a Diocesan Church plant project on a large new housing estate. We seek to meet people where they are, walk alongside them and allow them to explore at their own pace. I hope this practical experience would prove of value to General Synod as the church develops relevant initiatives in response to this resolution.