

OXFORD DIOCESAN SYNOD

Vacancy-in-See Committee: closing report

This brief report to Synod marks the expected completion of the work of the Vacancy-in-See Committee for the vacancy for Bishop of Oxford which is about to arise.

I chaired the Vacancy-in-See Committee, which met on seven occasions between December 2025 and March 2026. The first and last meetings were attended by the Appointments Secretaries to the Archbishops and the Prime Minister. Each meeting was set in the context of worship and, other than the first, all were in person which allowed a rich exchange of views as we prayerfully sought to carry out the work entrusted to us.

The Committee was supported by sub-groups on the statement of needs; communications; and prayer. The prayer sub-group is continuing to meet throughout 2026 to pray for the national stages of the process, and to encourage others to do so. The Appointments Secretaries also carried out a number of consultation meetings, including an open meeting and made several visits around the diocese, accompanied by the Diocesan Secretary and me.

At the final meeting of the Vacancy-in-See Committee on 24 March, the Committee unanimously endorsed the Statement of Needs, which I would encourage Synod members to read and is available here: [Statement of Needs Diocese of Oxford](#). A summary report of the consultation (which attracted around 2700 responses, which we think is a record) has also been published and is available here: [Consult report](#).

The Committee elected the following six representatives, who join the Archbishops and six nationally-elected members to form the Oxford Crown Nominations Commission for Oxford: Revd Matt Beer, Prof Helen King, Helen Lamb, Revd Joy Mawdsley, Ven Stephen Pullin and Sir Hector Sants.

The Oxford CNC meets in June to finalise the role profile; on 9 October 2026 to shortlist; and on 9-10 December 2026 to interview the role. Assuming an appointment results, an announcement would be expected in February 2027. Please pray for the CNC as it seeks to discern who God is calling to be the next Bishop of Oxford and for those who may be discerning their potential call to lead our diocese.

Vacancy-in-See Prayer:

Almighty God, giver of every good gift:

Look graciously on your Church and illuminate our path as we seek a new Bishop.

Help us to work together for the good of your kingdom and all who live, work and study in the Diocese of Oxford.

Give wisdom and listening hearts to those who have influence.

Send out your Holy Spirit to call one who will faithfully teach, pastor, care for and equip us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Diocesan Synod is invited to note this report.

Rev Canon Geoff Bayliss

Chair of the Vacancy-in-See Committee

18 May 2026