

General Synod Elections 2026

Rev'd Canon Vincent Whitworth

Election Address

Dear Friends and Colleagues

Having just completed a full term of serving on General Synod representing our Diocese, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you why I would like to stand again for Synod and continue to serve you in this way.

My Background

I am currently Team Vicar of St Andrew's Over Hulton (Deane Team) and Vicar of St Bede, Bolton-Le-Moor in Bolton where I have served since 2012. I have significant experience in education, through school governance, and I currently hold a number of governance roles both as a governor in an LA school and governance roles within a MAT context.



I am also a trustee of a local Christian charity; Create Bolton, which uses the arts to bring people together and form a safe place for people to explore faith.

Throughout my ministry in the Diocese of Manchester, I have always been significantly involved in the wider life of our Diocese; serving as Area Dean of Bolton (2015-19) and Area Dean of Deane (2019-21) and serving as Bolton Archdeaconry Reader Chaplain (2014-19). I have also served as a member of Diocesan Synod over many years.

I am actively involved in supporting the ongoing work of the Places Project, a renowned national church funded project which seeks to equip the local church in Bolton to reach out to children and young people and help them on their discipleship journey. I also currently serve as a member of the 'Growing Younger' Board as we pursue our Diocesan (and national) vision to grow younger across the whole Diocese, utilising the significant funding we have received from the national church.

My significant experience of ministry in both local parish contexts and ministry across the broader Diocese and wider church has equipped and enabled me as a former General Synod member over the last 5 years to share important insights in national conversations at General Synod and represent you, our Diocesan family here in Manchester, and I hope if I am elected again I can continue to serve you in this way and ensure that the Diocese of Manchester has a voice at General Synod.

Why am I standing again for General Synod?

Here are some of my priorities that I would like to push for if I am elected to General Synod this year.

I have a real heart for **mission and evangelism**, and I long to see more people across our nation come to know Jesus and for our communities to be transformed by the Gospel. I believe our local churches here in our Diocese and across our nation are integral to the mission and evangelism of the church and making disciples. As such; it is vital that we ensure local churches are properly **resourced**, in terms of clergy, lay leadership and support. If elected I will continue to campaign for national spending plans to be used to support the local church.

It is also important that the national church continues to invest in resourcing **mission and evangelism in areas of poverty**, particularly in many northern towns and cities such as exist in our own Diocese here in Manchester, and if elected I will continue to support LinC funding which is vital to us in Manchester.

Alongside resourcing the local church, I also believe we need to reimagine our approach to **vocations** nationally across the C of E. Declining clergy numbers mean that increasingly even if parishes are able to appoint a new incumbent, they cannot find candidates to appoint. How do we equip and raise up new leaders, both lay and ordained, across the church? I believe we need a new conversation at a national level around vocations and setting all God's people free.

Taking into account my own experience and ministry amongst **children and young people**, I have been encouraged by the steps we as a church have made in recent years to grow younger and enable children and young people to have a voice in the wider church. If elected, I would continue to support this work within the church, and seek to share what we are doing here in Manchester as I think we have much here in our Diocese that the national church could learn from as we seek to be a younger church.

One issue that continues to dominate discussions in the national church is the ongoing debates around **human sexuality and relationships**. Whilst I continue to support and uphold the church's current traditional position on marriage and relationships, I think it is vital that whatever our viewpoint on this issue is, that we continue to listen to one another and work together to find a way where all feel loved and welcome in the church. Whatever our differences, we need to ensure we work together in unity and pray for guidance as we seek to move forward as a church.

Please do contact me if you wish to have a further conversation with me and I would be grateful if you could give me your 1st vote in the election.

Yours in Christ

Vinny

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