

\*\*\*\*\*CONFIDENTIAL\*\*\*\*\*

## CEEC/EGGS

### General Synod 2021 Elections

#### GUIDANCE NOTES FOR LAY & CLERGY CANDIDATES

The purpose of these notes is to help you to position yourself in the best possible way to be successful in being elected by your diocesan electors to the General Synod.

#### ELECTORS

From the outset, ensure that your focus is solely on those who will be voting – hopefully for you!

- **Clergy** - all clergy in your diocese who are (a) licensed by the bishop, or (b) have permission to officiate and are members of a deanery synod.
- **Laity** – all lay members of the deanery synods within your diocese

#### NOMINATIONS

In late July, your diocese will issue details of how the elections will be managed in your diocese, including the deadlines for the submission of nomination forms and whether election hustings will be held in your diocese.

The nominations process requires the following:

- Completion of a straightforward nomination form which needs to be signed by you, a proposer and a seconder
- The submission of an election statement with the nomination form.

NB to be a lay candidate, you **MUST** be an actual communicant, who is aged 18 years or older, and whose name is on the electoral roll of a parish in the diocese. *You do NOT need to be a current member of a PCC or a deanery synod.*

#### PROPOSER & SECONDER

Your proposer and seconder must be registered members of the clergy or lay electorates in your diocese for clergy and lay candidates respectively.

We recommend that, in consultation with your diocesan election team, you identify a proposer and seconder who may be from different traditions and/or who are better known across deaneries and the diocese.

#### ELECTION STATEMENT

Your election statement is **CRITICAL** to your candidacy. For the majority of your electors, they will determine their voting preferences based solely upon your statement.

In preparing your 'manifesto' please think "middle ground". You're not writing a manifesto for your friends – we hope they will vote for you anyway! Conversely, it is unlikely that you will sway many of those whose theological position is at odds with yours. Think the 'middle ground persuadables'.

We hope that, based upon all of the planning for these elections, your diocesan election team will be in a position to ensure that clergy and lay electors across the diocese who are orthodox evangelicals will know that they need to vote for you, ie to give you a high preference vote under the Single Transferrable Vote system.

Therefore, your election statement should be winsome and focussed on the 'middle ground' voters within your diocese, as follows:

- **DO's**

- Read very carefully the diocesan rubric about election statements and make sure you follow the guidelines.
- Include a good, smiling photo of yourself which prints well in both colour and black&white
- Include as many contact details as you feel comfortable – home address, email address, mobile number – to demonstrate that you are open to be contacted and questioned by your electors
- Think about the format of your statement – it is a marketing document! Avoid long paragraphs of prose that are difficult to digest – consider the use of tables, columns, bullet points, etc
- Provide an engaging story of your background, inc work and church involvement.
  - The church which you attend and how long you would have been there
  - If you are/have been a churchwarden, PCC member, Deanery Synod member, then say so.
  - Similarly, give details of all ministries with which you have been involved – youth/seniors; bereavement counselling; etc
- As much as possible, sound as if you are a practising member of the Church of England, that you are an Anglican!
- If possible, demonstrate your engagement with your local community in terms of social outreach, foodbanks, supporting disadvantaged groups, etc
- Explain why you feel called to serve on General Synod, eg:
  - you want to help build unity and consensus where possible
  - you want to contribute to developing specific policies or actions by the national church.

Try to link your skills and experience to ways in which you could contribute
- Demonstrate some understanding of what the General Synod does:
  - It is PRIMARILY a legislative body – the Measures passed by General Synod become part of English law
  - It is a debating forum which helps to draw government, media and national attention to matters of social and Christian importance (eg housing, racism, etc)
- Demonstrate some understanding of one of two of the current issues facing the new elected Synod:
  - *Financial stress* – with declining attendance in many dioceses, coupled with the impact of the COVID pandemic, the Church nationally and at diocesan level is facing significant financial stress which may require reductions in expenditure, reductions in headcount, organisational change, etc
  - *Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM)* – this Measure is being reviewed following many complaints from clergy concerning the considerable stress that the present system generates due to vexatious complaints and the glacial speed, together with lack of transparency, with which many complaints are dealt with by dioceses
  - *Living in Love & Faith* and matters relating to the Church's teaching on gender and human sexuality
  - *Vision & Strategy* – this is a major national initiative being led by the Archbishop of York <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/emerging-church-england/vision-church-england-2020s>

- *Climate change* – the current Synod voted that the Church of England should be carbon-neutral by 2030!
- *Ethical investment* – the Church Commissioners, the Church of England Pensions Board, The Archbishops’ Council and many dioceses have significant portfolios of investments.
- *Archbishops’ Commissions* – two Commissions have recently published significant reports concerning housing <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/priorities/archbishops-commission-housing-church-and-community> and race <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/news-releases/lament-action-archbishops-anti-racism-taskforce-calls-urgent-changes>
- State that you will seek to represent all clergy/laity
- State that, if elected, you commit to being available to your electors and to providing feedback to them
- If you are a trustee or officer of any Christian organisation, it would be wise to reference this in your election statement to avoid the risk of being challenged that you are hiding a relevant piece of information or even misrepresenting yourself to the electorate
- Be specific in asking at the end of your statement for people to give you their first, or a high preference, vote
- **DON'Ts**
  - Don't write more than two sides of A4 – check the length/number of words guidance from your diocese very carefully
  - Don't focus on controversial matters such as:
    - same-sex relationships/marriage, transgender, etc
    - women priests/bishops
    - abuse within the Church

If electors wish to understand your views on these subjects, they can contact you or ask you at the hustings (see further guidance below)

The issue of human sexuality is obviously important – but you need to take a view as to whether it's helpful to reference this in your statement or not. It might be that it is wiser not referred to. As an alternative – it might be helpful to talk about listening positively to and respecting the views of others, even when we find ourselves disagreeing.

- Avoid evangelical jargon – use plain English and the language of liturgy

## **SUPPORT FOR YOU**

In addition to the support that you will receive from your diocesan election team, the National CEEC/EGGS Election Team is committed to supporting you in your candidacy. Please make reference to our dedicated website at [www.ceecqs2021.co.uk](http://www.ceecqs2021.co.uk). You will be able to obtain the password to access the private resources section from your diocesan election team.

The resources section will include:

- examples of winsome election statements
- list of mentors to work with you and help edit your election statement (if you so wish)
- suggested answers to difficult questions (see further guidance below)

The National Election Team is also intending to arrange Zoom briefing calls for clergy and lay candidates during August as an opportunity to ask questions, build a sense of united purpose across the dioceses and to pray together.

### **ENGAGING WITH YOUR ELECTORS ('Campaigning')**

From now, make every effort to engage with your electorate at deanery and diocesan levels!

Once your nomination has been accepted in September, you are entitled to receive contact details of all of the members of your electorate. Lists of electors are NOT sent to you automatically - **you will need to request a list of your electors, together with their contact details, from the Presiding Officer/Returning Officer** responsible for the GS elections in your diocese.

Under the GS election rules agreed by General Synod - Rule 25(8) of the Clergy Election Rules 2020 and Rule 6(8) of the House of Laity Election Rules 2020 - you have a right to this information. Supplying the data is justified under GDPR as it is pursuant to a legal requirement.

The extent to which you decide to set aside the time to engage with your electors, beyond your election statement which they will have received from your diocese, is clearly up to you.

However, we know from past elections that you are MUCH MORE LIKELY to be elected if people see that you have been willing to make an extra effort to engage.

Existing members of General Synod have used a whole variety of approaches to engage with electors – please be innovative! You need to select an approach with which you feel comfortable. Examples of what you might do as follows:

- write to each elector introducing yourself personally and adding something new beyond your election statement – you could do this by email, letter, postcard, etc. You might wish to tailor this communication, with one version for the orthodox evangelical voters and another for everyone else
- record a video of yourself (max 60-90 secs!) and post this on an appropriate social media / internet platform and then email a link to you electors to give them access to it
- visit your electors – knocking on doors

Whatever you decide to do, **ACT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** after you receive the list of electors. This year's elections will, for the first time, be electronic, so it is likely that many people will vote soon after they receive the voting email. Thus set aside time in early September to engage!

### **HUSTINGS / QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS**

Many (but not all) dioceses will hold election hustings whereby your electors can ask questions directly of the candidates. Hustings may be virtual (by Zoom) or in-person.

A key principle of hustings is that you can **ONLY** be asked questions that everyone can answer – this should help avoid the targeting of particular candidates. In addition, once a question has been asked, all candidates have to be given the opportunity to answer the question.

You may also receive questions relating to your stance on particular issues from electors by email or by phone

It is likely that some of the questions from your electors will focus on controversial matters such as:

- *women's ministry within the Church* (do you agree with the ordination of women as priests/bishops?)

- *gender and human sexuality/LLF* (do you agree that the Church of England, like the forward-looking Methodist Church, should make provision for the blessing of same-sex relationships/'marriages'?)
- *safeguarding, power & abuse* (do you agree that there is a systemic issue in the leadership of evangelical churches as evidenced by the cases of Revd Jonathan Fletcher/John Smyth?)
- *diversity* (are you committed to us being a more diverse church in all ways (including LGBT+?))
- *emerging from COVID* (what long term impact does the pandemic have for the Church and church attendance, and what actions do you think churches should be taking now?)
- *limiting factors* (as quoted in the *UnHerd* blog, John McGinley of *New Wine* recently said that: "*Lay-led churches release the church from key limiting factors. When you don't need a building and a stipend and long, costly college-based training for every leader of the church ... then we can release new people to lead and new churches to form. It also releases the discipleship of people. In church planting, there are no passengers.*" Do you agree that our clergy and church buildings are limiting factors to the growth of the Church of England?)

Clearly you need to beware of people trying to trip you up and then accuse you of being homophobic or such like. Our general advice in addressing such questions is quite simple:

- Be positive (say what you are for, not what you are against)
- Be honest (don't dodge)
- Be winsome (don't aggravate)
- Be calm (don't fluster)
- Be brief (don't jabber)

In order to assist you in how you might address such questions, please refer to the Q&A section of resources on the election website [www.ceecgs2021.co.uk](http://www.ceecgs2021.co.uk). You will be able to obtain the password to access the private resources section from your diocesan election team.

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We pray that these resources will be a blessing to you and will assist you in being elected to serve on the General Synod.

CEEC/EGGS National GS21 Elections Team  
July 2021 (updated Sept 2021)