

Revd Robb Sutherland

Vicar of Mixenden and Illingworth.
Area Dean of Halifax and Calder Valley.

Proposer: Venerable Bill Braviner, Archdeacon of Halifax
Seconder: Fr Gary Waddington, Rector St Wilfred's Harrogate

Colleagues,

I seek your support for re-election to General Synod to continue to challenge the Church to invest in the poorest and most marginalised parts of our country that is more representative of our wider membership. I long for a church that uses its investments to ensure that our parishes, churches and chaplaincies continue to be at the heart of the mission and ministry of the Church of England. I hope that you share this vision and will give me your first-choice vote for the next five years of General Synod.

The big question: Why should you vote for me?

My commitment to the future of our church is to work to shape our common life in a way that reflects the priorities that I see in Jesus; the poor and the marginalised, and the desire to see lives and communities transformed through the hard work to which the local church is called.

My background and previous experience as a General Synod member.

As a previously elected representative from the Diocese, I hope to build upon my experience as your representative to the national church. I have deep roots here in the diocese, having been baptised in St Mary's South Elmsall, married in St Phillip's Osmondthorpe, and ordained in Wakefield Cathedral. My passion is to see low income, low wealth communities like those that have formed me and those in which I have ministered grow in mission and service.

Parish Finance: A key challenge to our daily ministry.

One of the biggest challenges facing the Church of England in the North is how we finance parish ministry. In synod's last quinquennium, the redistribution or redirecting of key assets and Church Commissioners' finances was raised on numerous occasions. It affects all forms of ministry across our Diocese whether rural, urban, estate or chaplaincy. When I was at Lambeth, parish finances were raised as a primary concern and a fruitful discussion was had with ++Sarah about reviewing how the Church of England is financed nationally. The parish is the fundamental missional unit of our Church and must be staffed and financed in a way that is sustainable across newer dioceses who do not have historic assets, particularly across the North of England. *There is a direct correlation between staffing levels and your wellbeing as clergy.* Finance is one of my main priorities as a candidate and must be addressed in the next five years of Synod so that good, missional, grass roots ministry can be found across the whole of the Diocese and beyond.

As your representative, I will continue to work for a church that:

- Funds and adequately staffs the ministry to which you have dedicated yourself to.
- Takes your wellbeing seriously so that you are able to live life in all its fullness.
- Seeks to grow the Kingdom of God across the whole nation, especially in places and communities that struggle to participate fully in the Church of England.
- Is inclusive at all levels of leadership for people from all backgrounds regardless of race, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation or socioeconomic background.
- Holds differences of theological conviction with openness and generosity with those whom we disagree.



Experience of national church governance.

Since 2016 I have served on the Archbishops' Council's 'Estates Evangelism Task Group' (EETG). In 2019, we brought the General Synod motion "to have a loving, worshipping, serving Christian community on every significant social housing estate in England" which was unanimously supported. Having served on General Synod, I understand how important it is for working groups to be *directly linked* into our overarching legislative body. Fr Alex Frost brought the private members' motion to champion working class vocations and he was able to accelerate EETG's agenda into the legislative agenda of the Church. The speech I made to General Synod in support of the motion wove both personal experience and that of my parishioners into the national conversation. More importantly, I was able to raise the sights of Synod and ++Sarah to see that inclusion must have aspiration to *all offices*, both lay and ordained.

Whether First Estates Commissioner or Archbishop, we must have vision for a church that recognises the call in all of God's people.

Through this active engagement at General Synod, I was invited to Lambeth Palace to have further discussion about the barriers that affect the full participation of working-class people in the Church of England. I took this opportunity to raise issues around ordinand finance and ensuring that candidates from social housing, both young and old are afforded the same opportunities as those who have finance from previous careers or inherited wealth.

I would like to serve as your representative on General Synod to ensure that we produce good legislation that reflects the beliefs and values that we hold as a church.

I am pleased to nominate Robb for re-election to General Synod. He comes with experience as vicar of a large housing estate, and with a deep commitment to our vocation to be a church that serves every community, which he shows through his support for the rural, suburban, urban and town centre civic churches across his deanery. As area dean Robb works collaboratively with clergy colleagues across the deanery and cares for their wellbeing. He is creative and concerned for the present and future life of the church.

Liturgical Commission

Our worship is governed by General Synod and I have served as a member of the Liturgical Commission for the last five years. I bring a wide experience of the different traditions of the Church of England and beyond to the role as well as my academic background. I came to faith in a charismatic Baptist church and trained at both Cranmer Hall and the College of the Resurrection. With a broad spirituality of my own, I seek a generous church that holds together our different forms of worship as we engage together in mission. You can see this through the Rock Mass congregation planted at Holy Nativity in 2012.

An Inclusive Church

As vicar of Holy Nativity Church, I have been proud to lead the journey that our community has been on to become an Inclusive Church. Our worshipping community lives together with neurodiversity, disability, special educational needs, differences of sexuality and gender. Over many years we have grown together through prayer, theological study of the scriptures and our shared discipleship to actively commit to equality for everyone.

Thank you for your time

I hope that I have conveyed my strong convictions about building a Church of England that reflects the glory of the Kingdom of God. I strive to hold my positions generously and seek to serve all clergy of our diocese.

Robb Sutherland

Archdeacon Bill Braviner, proposer.

Seeking Unity and the Common Good

Whilst I have much experience of leadership in the church, I am also the independent chair of Pride in Place for Mixenden and Illingworth. As a key partner in the community, I was selected to form a neighbourhood board to develop a £20 million community investment programme over ten years for our area. This comes with many joys and challenges as we hold together the tensions of chairing a board of different political persuasions including my councillors and MP.

**A Generous Church Fully Engaging
All God's People in Mission.**