



Alison Tomkins – St Matthew's Wimbledon, Merton Deanery

Nominated by:

Helen Ainsworth, General Synod 2021-2026, Tandridge Deanery Synod

Catherine Gilonis, St Matthew's Wimbledon, Merton Deanery Synod

I am standing for election to the General Synod because I would like to contribute to ensuring the Church of England remains a broad church where everyone is welcome, especially its non-members.

I believe church is a 'space cleared by God through Jesus in which people may become what God made them to be.' (former Archbishop Rowan Williams).

I value the opportunity to work together in General Synod with Christians of very different views and traditions, to discern a way forward on complex issues and recognise that something far more powerful unites us than divides us, namely the love of God for each one of us.

Why me?

- Churchwarden of St Matthew's Wimbledon (www.stmatthewswimbledon.org) an Inclusive church in the **liberal Anglo Catholic** tradition.
- Member of the congregation for 28 years, **singing in the choir** and leading discussion groups; previous roles including treasurer and secretary of the DCC.
- I led our church's Living in Love and Faith group and co-ordinated our video response to the consultation in 2022.
- My faith, church community and **sacramental worship** are central to my life.
- Member of the PCC for the Parish of Wimbledon. As **safeguarding co-ordinator** I worked with the Parish Safeguarding Officers to ensure the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is a core consideration in everything we do.
- Merton Deanery Synod for a 6 year term and valued the opportunity to share our faith and responses to the **challenges of parish life** in south west London.
- Senior Manager at the **Bank of England**, regulating banks, building societies and credit unions. I will bring my practical **governance and financial experience** to Synod discussions. I will be **human and humble** in engaging in open and constructive dialogue where all voices are heard respectfully.
- I work part-time and my children have (almost!) left home so I can devote the time and energy needed.
- My inspirations include art history, **cathedral architecture, choral singing**, canal boating and walking.

General Synod Priorities

National Governance and safeguarding - I will draw on my professional experience to contribute to governance reforms. In particular, I appreciate the value of diversity of background and thought in supporting effective decision-making. I am passionate about ensuring that the approach to **safeguarding** is straightforward, accountable and consistent, where Parish Safeguarding Officers and clergy can rely on timely support and expertise.

Funding arrangements - I will use my financial background to contribute to the debate on future funding, looking at questions of sustainability, ministry capacity and effectiveness of current funding approaches. To steward our existing resources wisely for current and future generations, aware we are 'here forever', but balancing that with the **radical decisions** needed now to support the parish system, promote growth and maintain and update our buildings. To promote generosity and **sacrificial giving** from the living church.

Clergy wellbeing - I declare an interest here as the wife of a retired parish priest! To be bold in maintaining and financially supporting clergy, mindful of the centrality of the **parish system** in supporting all and providing a radical welcome to the most vulnerable in our society.

Inclusion - To approach future debates in the spirit of Archbishop Cottrell's words – 'because of our baptism, we already belong to each other. The task therefore, may not be to unravel the twisted knots of the unity we don't have, but to reveal the unity we do have. And build on it and do something new.'

"I enthusiastically endorse Alison's nomination to General Synod. Combining exceptional governance expertise with deep compassion and a longstanding commitment to the Church at grassroots level, she brings the confidence, judgement and attention to detail needed to scrutinise complex issues thoughtfully and rigorously." Helen Ainsworth, GS 2021-2026

"I wholeheartedly support Alison as a candidate for General Synod. She has been a diligent, prayerful member of our leadership team. As warden, Alison has been very supportive of me and my ministry, brings a cool head, and a reconciliatory approach where different views are held in discussions. This, and her governance experience at work, means Alison has a wealth of experience to offer Synod, which she would offer calmly, patiently, and with compassion." Fr Alastair Newman, St Matthew's Wimbledon

Voting is open from 21 September to 13 October.

Please get in touch at ahemblow@tiscali.co.uk to say hello and tell me what your priorities are for General Synod.
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