



Grahame Woods For General Synod

Charlton Deanery

Proposed by Wendy Foreman, Charlton Deanery Lay Chair

Seconded by Paul Waddell, Croydon Addington Deanery

Where I Serve

- Diocesan Council of Trustees
- Southwark Diocesan Synod
- Charlton Deanery Synod
- St Alfege Church, Greenwich

About Me

- 27 year old New Zealander
- Work in Public Affairs and policy for a large infrastructure company
- Based in Lewisham, SE London

You can watch my introduction video by clicking the link [here](#).

We don't seem to hear it often, but the Church of England is a great thing. 16,000 churches in every community throughout the country, worshipping Christ and enabling people to encounter the love of God. All this while also providing community to people who attend, and a shoulder for local people to lean on when they need it. Like you, I have benefited from this community directly: when I moved to the UK four years ago, I was 23 and knew nobody. It was a CofE church in Greenwich that took me in and gave me that first place to stand.

And there is real hope for our church. Attendance has now risen four years running, and the worshipping community is back above a million people. After a very hard decade, it feels like things are really starting to change for the better.

That change is fragile, though. Congregations remain far smaller than a generation ago, and too many churches struggle to keep the lights on, at the very moment that our communities need us most. Loneliness, families under strain, young people growing up with less belonging than those who came before them: these are exactly the things that our church, and our God, can help to answer; to give them the same place to stand that the church gave me.

By 2060, God willing, we could turn the tide, and have our church at the heart of our communities again, and enable people to encounter Christ every day.

My Commitments to You if Elected:

1. Parishes Resourced for Mission

General Synod exists to serve our parishes, not the other way around. While there are difficult decisions to make, I will always argue for parishes and priests to be trusted and resourced to do what they do best: keep the door open to serve their current congregations, and to invest in building children and young people's ministry.

2. A Focus on Long-Term Decision Making

Day-to-day, I work in public affairs and policy, working with government and large institutions to create policy that won't just help the UK now, but for decades to come. The Church of England needs to do the same. If elected, I will use my skills to ensure that church legislation supports us to become a larger church by 2060 - rather than focusing on what is topical at the time.

3. A Church that is Genuinely Inclusive

I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of disability, economic power, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality: a church that is genuinely inclusive at every level.

4. A Representative You Hear From

I will answer every email, come to any Deanery Synod that invites me, take any question, and tell you how I voted and why, including when we disagree. You should never be left wondering why I make the decisions I do when at Synod.

My Priorities on Synod

1. Sexuality and Inclusion

In July, a motion affirming that committed, faithful same-sex relationships are compatible with Christian discipleship and ministry was carried by both the clergy and the laity. It fell only in the House of Bishops, by three votes. Conversations on what the future of LGBT inclusion in the church looks like won't be going away for the term ahead, and if elected, I will always vote for a fully inclusive church.

2. Money and Parishes

The review of national funding for diocesan ministry is underway with a recommendation due to be debated by General Synod in July 2027. Done well, this review presents the best possible opportunity to have national money directed to where the mission happens, including in our own parishes in Southwark. I will also never shy away from hard decisions between what we want to do with our money, versus what we can afford to do with our money.

3. Governance

Reform of our national church institutions stalled in July when the National Church Governance Measure was withdrawn from consideration due to concerns from MPs about safeguarding, delegated powers, financial accountability, and charitable structure. Despite this, there is still a strong case for change, and it is vital that our institutions are structured to enable growth over the coming decades – rather than act as managers.

What do I bring to Synod?

- **Through my work on the Southwark Council of Trustees and Diocesan Synod**, I have seen the impact national decisions have on local churches. I will always advocate for a General Synod that works for parishes, and not the other way around.
- **My working life is spent influencing decisions within Westminster and Whitehall**, giving me the same skills needed to influence decisions at General Synod.
- **I am not a single-issue candidate.** Inclusion in the church may be non-negotiable, but clergy wellbeing and safeguarding are vital issues too.

Let's Meet.

From 21 September to 12 October, I am holding a couple of online sessions to meet voters and hear from them, and I'd love to see you there. The links for both are below, and you should be able to copy and paste them into your browser.

Wednesday 23 September, 7:30pm – 8:30pm
<https://meet.google.com/tww-njme-rhb>

Tuesday 29 September, 7:30pm – 8:30pm
<https://meet.google.com/ocs-dbnv-eeh>

Please make me your first preference.

Under the single transferable vote the first round counts most, so rank the candidates you genuinely want, and fill in as many preferences as you can. Thank you for everything that you already do for our church and I'd be incredibly grateful for your support.

Want to get in touch? Feel free to reach out:

Email me at woods.grahame@gmail.com or call 07498 255716