

BRADLEY SMITH

Candidate for General Synod

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Proposed by John Booth, Chichester Deanery;

Seconded by Valerie Mighall, Battle & Bexhill Deanery.



Dear Elector,

My name is Bradley Smith. I am forty-three years old, and **I have served on General Synod since 2015**. In that time, I have engaged with numerous complex and sensitive issues, spoken in debates of national significance, and have always sought to listen deeply to those whose views, convictions and experiences are different to my own. **Now I seek your support as I stand for re-election for a further term of five years.**

I have lived, worked and worshipped in the Diocese of Chichester since 2002 when I moved south to study Theology at what was then University College, Chichester. While I always intended to return to my native Yorkshire after my studies, Sussex soon became my home, and I became actively involved in the life of my local parish and community where I have served as a **churchwarden since 2008**. I regularly lead worship at St Mary's, Barnham. I also play the organ, engage in pastoral work, organise social and fundraising events, and bake a lot of cakes!

I believe passionately in traditional parish ministry, with the Sacraments at the heart of church life. The Sacraments are God's gift to us, and they belong to the whole Church and not just to the Church of England. I will always seek to defend the seal of the confessional and uphold the Church of England's historic teaching on Christian marriage. I am unreservedly committed to the Five Guiding Principles and try to model the **commitment to mutual flourishing** in all areas of my life, work and ministry in the diocese and beyond.

I have served on numerous diocesan committees including Bishop's Council and the Council for Apostolic Life. I have a good working relationship with the clergy and senior staff of the diocese. As a member of General Synod during the last quinquennium, I am a member of the **Vacancy in See Committee**, and I have recently been elected as a diocesan member of the **Crown Nominations Commission** which will appoint our next diocesan bishop. I was awarded the Order of St Richard in 2019.

I am employed as the full-time **manager of the St Olav Trust Christian Bookshop** in Chichester. I started as a Saturday sales assistant early on in my student days, and I have never wanted to do anything else. Each day, I am in contact with Anglican Christians of all traditions, as well as with people from a wide range of denominations and backgrounds. I am deeply committed to the **missional, pastoral and ecumenical vision of the Trust**, and I find it enriching to serve, and to work alongside, people whose views are different to my own. I particularly enjoy the encounters with individuals dipping their toes into Christian belief for the first time. Many of these are younger people seeking meaning and stability in an increasingly confusing world, and it is a **huge privilege to play a small part in their journey of faith**.

In 2020, I was elected as national Chairman of The Prayer Book Society. I was re-elected in 2024 and am now half-way through my second term of office. **The Book of Common Prayer has shaped me throughout my life as a disciple of Jesus Christ**, and I am delighted that the PBS, which encompasses people of a wide variety of theological perspectives, is helping others, including many young people, to grow in their faith and in their confidence in the Gospel. I travel all over the country and beyond to promote the continued use of the Church of England's normative and permanently authorised liturgy which, I believe, has an important part to play in **mission, personal discipleship, and building community**.

The Church of England faces numerous challenges in the present day: many of our congregations are shrinking and ageing; there are too few clergy, and many of them are demoralised and overworked; ordinary parishes feel neglected, especially in rural areas, while it seems that endless sums of money can be found for new missional enterprises; and our volunteers are few in number. The *Save the Parish* movement has done sterling work in recent years, reminding the national church of its **historic commitment to our communities**. But there is much more to be done. I am standing for General Synod once more because I believe in the Church of England: it is my home, and it is where I belong. **I want to see us go back to basics and recover some confidence in our place in society.**

I bring to Synod a lifetime shaped by the Catholic tradition of the Church of England; modest theological literacy; extensive knowledge of our diocese and wider church structures; commitment to the parish system; a passion for lay ministry in all its forms; considerable experience of working with people of differing views; broadly conservative views on key theological and ethical issues; and a willingness to learn from, and be challenged by, the experiences and insights of others.

Please consider giving me your first preference vote, or a high preference vote, in this election. My prayers are with you, and with all the candidates.

Yours in Christ,
Bradley Smith

