

## **Dr Felicity Cooke: statement for election to the House of Laity of General Synod 2021 in the Diocese of Ely**

I am standing as a candidate for election to General Synod with a commitment to the synodical structures in the Church of England, and the upwards representation of parishes, deaneries and dioceses in its governance.



The challenge is for General Synod membership to reflect fully the diverse character of mainstream open, forward looking and inclusive Anglicanism, which prevails in the Church.<sup>1</sup> I am therefore standing as a candidate sponsored by the Inclusive Synod Campaign (<https://www.inclusive-synod.org/>). I am currently a Vice Chair of Women and the Church (WATCH) (<https://womenandthechurch.org/>) which supports the Inclusive Synod Campaign.

The new General Synod will have many important decisions to consider and issues to resolve in a context of falling numbers of church worshippers and challenges about finance, resources, pastoral reorganisation, the future of the CDM, ongoing safeguarding concerns and, not least, the environment. I am committed to engaging with all these issues, and others, as a member of General Synod.

Now retired, my professional role was in university administration specialising in equality, diversity and inclusion. My last appointment was as Head of Equality and Diversity at the University of Oxford (2007-2010). From 2010 to 2017 I ran my own consultancy, Equality Practice.

I have a daughter in a same sex marriage who no longer finds the church a safe or hospitable place to be. This is a matter of sorrow to me and I am committed to the full inclusion and equality of LGBT+ Christians.

As a lifelong deaf person I experience exclusion in church as much as in other contexts, unable to participate fully in a range of aural interchanges.

As a member and Vice Chair of WATCH I am committed to the full integration of women's ministry into the life of the Church, and to the end of the many occasions of detriment

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<sup>1</sup> Only 4% of parishes have passed Resolutions which seek alternative oversight from 'non-ordaining bishops' (bishops who will not ordain women). These are parishes which espouse male headship and complementarianism, and hold that same sex relationships are sinful. The vast majority of parishes do not seek such oversight and do not hold these views. General Synod membership should properly reflect the proportions of inclusive and non-inclusive churches.

which women experience as a result of the tensions which arise from a situation where people are both expected to accept the ordination of women and permitted to deny it.

In my parish of St Andrew's Stapleford I have been, variously, PCC member and Secretary, Churchwarden (five years in total), and assistant warden. I am a Deanery Synod representative (member of the Standing Committee), and have recently been elected to Diocesan Synod. I act as an intercessor, a welcomer, help to clean the church, and ring tower bells.

If we are to be successful in addressing the many challenges facing the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we need to be a welcoming church for all. I have therefore signed up to the Inclusive Synod statement:

**I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality.**

I can be contacted via email at:  
[felicitycooke@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:felicitycooke@hotmail.co.uk)

My proposer and seconder are:  
Mary Talbott, St Mary the Virgin, Great Shelford  
Andrew Gore, St Mary the Virgin, Linton

I will take part in the hustings for the House of Laity elections to be held on Zoom on Thursday 29 September from 7.30 pm.