

General Synod Election Address 2015

Simon Baynes



Nominated by:

John Wallace,
Chairman, St Albans Diocesan House of Laity
Dunstable Deanery

Seconded by:

Christina Rees CBE,
Member, Archbishops' Council
Buntingford Deanery

Supported by:

The Very Reverend Dr Jeffrey John,
Dean of St Albans
St Albans Deanery

Background

I was elected to General Synod in 2005 and, with your vote, I very much hope to continue the work. Speaking regularly as a specialist on pensions and finance issues, I have had a major input on equality issues regarding clergy benefits. Amongst the debates in the last 10 years, I proposed the St Albans Diocesan motion on “workplace ethics” at York. Fringe meetings are an important part of Synod; I have been actively engaged with Penal Affairs, Asylum, Christian Aid and Children’s Society issues.

Having founded our Diocesan Penal Affairs Group in 2009, I organised the highly acclaimed first National Conference at Hatfield House in 2014 “*Engaging Churches in Rehabilitation*”.

I am married to Clare, a Self-supporting Priest, who first served in Hemel Hempstead Deanery and now serves at St Stephen’s Church, St Albans. We have two adult sons, Thomas (working as a government scientist) and Edwin (undertaking university research).

Family life has been strongly influenced by my father who was a Lay Reader and Church Warden and my mother who was a Presiding Member of the Mothers' Union. My brother, Matthew, is a Rector, and Canon in the Diocese of Worcester, previously serving in Berkhamsted.

After graduating with a First Class honours degree I spent thirty years in business, increasingly specialising in pensions. Having established Simon Baynes Limited in 2009, I work as an independent pensions trustee. My focus is on the charity and university sectors. My trustee appointments include the Church of England, Cambridge University Press, University of Leeds and the PDSA Pensions Schemes. I enjoy speaking regularly at pensions conferences and writing in the national pensions press. I am a visiting lecturer on the MBA course at Manchester University’s Business School.

Church activities

As a family we have worshipped at St Albans Cathedral since 1986. Currently, I am involved in many Church activities including:

- Member, General Synod (2005 – Present)
- Member, Bishop’s Council, St Albans (2007 – Present)
- Member, Church of England Pensions Board (2009 – Present);
- Member, Inter-diocesan Finance Forum (2005 – Present)
- Member, St Albans Diocesan Synod and Diocesan Board of Finance (2003- Present)
- Founder, St Albans Diocesan Penal Affairs Group (2009 – Present)

Previously, I have served as:

- Member, Crown Nominations Commission (2008)
- Member, Cathedral Finance Committee (1997- 2005 and 2010-2015)
- Chairman of Cathedral Income Strategy Group (1999-2000)
- Secretary (1993-1995) and Chairman (1995-1999) of the Abbey's Stewardship Committee
- Director of Logistics, St Albans Cathedral Flower Festival (2002)
- Member, PCC at St James' Bushey (1984-1987)
- Scout Leader, 5th Edgware (John Keble Church, Mill Hill, London) (1976-1981)

Candidature for General Synod

Over the past 30 years I have demonstrated my energy, enthusiasm and commitment to parochial and synodical government particularly in penal affairs, stewardship and financial matters. I wish to continue this service on General Synod for a further 5 years. Synod needs representatives of working age to balance the large number of retired people who are elected. We must ensure Synod is a forum of representative views – not extremist views or those elected to pursue “single issue” agendas.

With a balanced approach, and application of practical common sense, I will listen to the arguments and debates. I see the Synod as a place for respectful debate rather than squabbling and infighting. I will not be part of procedural gamesmanship or filibustering by those intent on blocking and delaying important issues being considered in Synod.

With a keen intellect and a reputation for getting things done, I am committed to see the General Synod prayerfully resolve the issues we now face. We must apply our brains and make decisions which are rooted in tradition and scripture as applied to the 21st Century:

- **Growth:** Growing the Church in numbers and depth of faith is an imperative: simply halting decline isn't enough. In a diverse church it is also vital that growth happens across all traditions, so I am especially keen to foster new initiatives and a new “growth mentality” in all our broad minded congregations. I fully support the Archbishops' vision for Reform and Renewal, and want to press for new ideas that will keep young people, particularly teenagers, actively involved in the Church.
- **Vocations and training:** Synod must take the lead and facilitate all that needs to be done to ensure we have the next generation of clergy and trained laity. This must be one of our financial priorities. Without it our entire mission is likely to fail.
- **Harmony throughout the Church:** The inclusion of all on equal terms regardless of sex, age, sexual orientation, colour or ability is what Christ requires of us and I will strive for this in Synod.
- **Respect in Society:** As the democratic voice of the Church of England, Synod must set an example to secular society. Recognising that Synod has a powerful voice nationally and internationally, I support Synod taking an outward looking approach, engaging in “political” issues, doing as Christ would have us do, demonstrating God's love and relevance to all.
- **The appointment of women bishops:** I consistently voted for women being bishops and I am delighted that they are being appointed at last. After all the difficulties, much prayer and careful consideration we showed that Synod can arrive at solutions acceptable across our broad church.

Particular interests:

Material support for our bishops and clergy is crucial. How can we expect them to do their job without this? I strongly support policies on remuneration which will allow more people to fulfil their vocations.

Nationally, as a member of the C of E Pensions Board and the Inter-diocesan Finance Forum I have gained an excellent understanding of Church financial matters. We must be good stewards of God's bounty and make the most of the financial gifts we have been given. I shall use my financial skills to challenge and question at General Synod. I shall encourage morally sound financial priorities including ethical investments.

My work over many years has given me a profound understanding of pensions and investment issues. I will continue to use my experience as a pension trustee to press General Synod to adopt appropriate long term policies for clergy pensions. Decent pensions are essential and not a “nice to have”. Clergy must have security in old age and the pensions they deserve.

Cathedrals have largely bucked the trend of decline, and I would like to see cathedrals and parishes working more closely together for mutual support and resourcing in mission.

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