



# SYNOD

## AN INDUCTION LEAFLET

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**“I have come that they may have life,  
and have it to the full”**

(WORDS OF JESUS FROM JOHN 10:10)

## A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP RACHEL

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Welcome to Diocesan Synod for the Diocese of Gloucester. I look forward to participating with you over the next three years as we live out our vision of LIFE Together sharing information and stories, and ensuring we continue to understand and shape the big picture across the Diocese in the discussions we have and the decisions we take.

As a Synod member you will bring into the room not only your voice, but all those you represent from across your deanery, local contexts and communities as we continue to discover what it means to be one diocese, and members together of the Body of Christ, called to live and share the transforming gospel of Jesus Christ.

Your role in communicating the work of Synod, the challenges and the good news stories, will serve to keep us even more connected, not only across our parishes, chaplaincies, schools, and various different expressions of Church, but also across our wider communities and partnerships.

In all of this we will be keeping abreast of the work of the National Church and will have regular updates from our General Synod members. We will also be attentive to how our vision for LIFE Together resonates with the Vision and Strategy for the Church of England in the 2020s.

So I want to Thank You for your commitment in being part of this. Thank you for your time, energy, prayer and imagination. Thank you for your willingness to work collaboratively with other Synod members, people across your deanery, and with diocesan staff, to forward the vision, mission and ministry of our Diocese and the wider Church as we seek to join in with what God is doing.

‘Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen’. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

+ Rachel

## SYNODS IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Synodical governance was set up to give the Church of England authority to govern its own laws through a special arrangement with Parliament. There are three tiers of Synods of the Church of England:

### General Synod

General Synod consists of bishops, clergy and laity who meet three times a year to make decisions on the doctrine and practice of the Church of England and to make ecclesiastical law. As well as matters of worship and discipline, it also addresses wider concerns, both national and international. Elected members serve for five years.

### Diocesan Synod

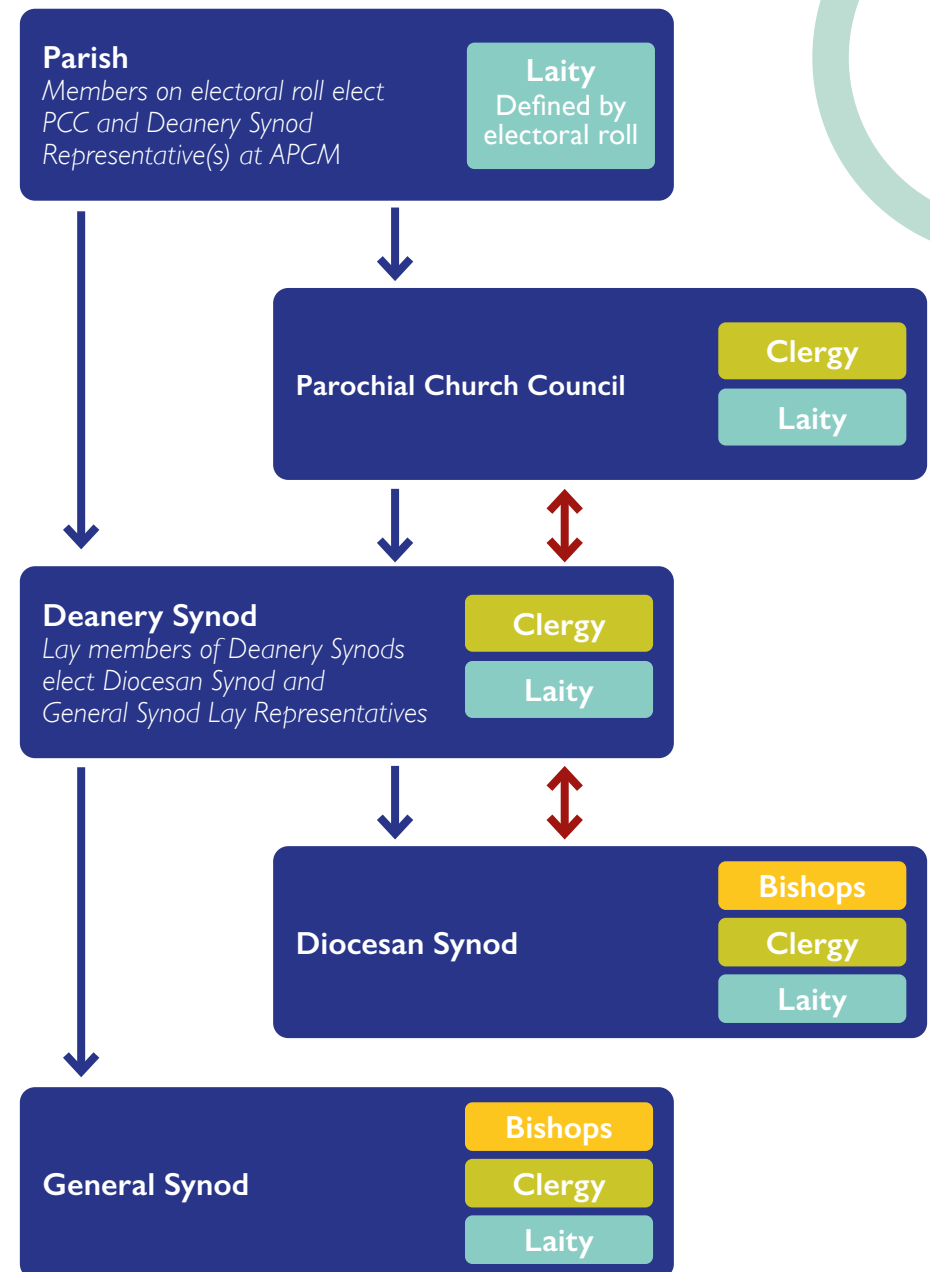
The Diocesan Synod for the Diocese of Gloucester considers matters sent to it from General Synod and from deaneries. It formulates diocesan policy advice, debates important local and national issues and advises the Bishop as appropriate. Members also agree proposals for the annual budget and approves or disapproves them; and receives the Annual Report and Accounts of the DBF. Elected members serve for three years.

The Gloucester Diocesan Synod is held three times a year usually in February, July and November and has roughly 130 elected members.

### Deanery Synods

Each deanery has its own synod which reflects on issues of concern to the local church and community. Matters can be sent to Deanery Synods from PCCs or Diocesan or General Synods. Resolutions passed by a Deanery Synod can be sent for discussion at higher levels. Elected members serve for three years and are the voters in elections for Diocesan and General Synods.

## SYNODS AND HOW THEY RELATE TO EACH OTHER



## WHAT DOES DIOCESAN SYNOD DO?

Diocesan Synod considers matters referred from General Synod and Deanery Synods, and from individual Diocesan Synod members. It agrees diocesan policy on a wide range of issues, assists the Bishops and their staff to support and oversee the vision and work of the diocese, approves the budget, and debates important local and national issues affecting the Church. Members of the Diocesan Synod are also members of the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance (GDBF), the legal charity and company that manages the affairs of the Diocese.

- Considers matters concerning the Church of England and makes provision for these matters in relation to the diocese.
- Considers and expresses an opinion on matters of religious or public interest and on any matters referred to it by General Synod.
- Offers advice to the bishop on matters they may wish to consult on.
- Considers and expresses their opinion on any matters referred to them by the General Synod and, in particular, to approve or disapprove provisions referred to them by General Synod.
- As the GDBF, considers proposals for the annual budget and to approve or disapprove them.
- As the GDBF, receives the annual report and accounts of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

The Diocesan Synod may not make any statement purporting to declare the doctrine of the Church; this role is reserved for the General Synod. It is important to note that Synod members' roles are strategic; more detailed decisions fall under the responsibility of the Bishop's Council and other diocesan committees.

Members occupy a pivotal role not only in taking decisions but also ensuring good quality communication throughout the Diocese.

## WHO'S WHO



### President

The Bishop of Gloucester



### Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance

Canon Karen Czapiewski



### Chair of the House of Laity

Mrs Carole O'Donnell, Elected by and from the House of Laity



### Chair of the House of Clergy

The Revd Canon Katrina Scott, Elected by and from the House of Clergy



### Secretary

Canon Benjamin Preece Smith, The Diocesan Secretary

### Diocesan Registrar

### Synod Planning Group

Bishop of Gloucester, Bishop of Tewkesbury, Chairs of House of Clergy and Laity, Chair of the DBF, Secretary to the Synod.

## WHAT A SYNOD MEMBER IS EXPECTED TO DO

Most people serve on the Diocesan Synod as deanery representatives and so represent the deanery and communities they serve. They also ensure that a good two-way flow of communication happens with their Deanery Synod, keeping people informed and updated on the work of the Synod, the GDBF and the vision of the Diocese. Members are there to work in collaboration with each other and with the officers of the Diocese to forward the vision, mission and ministry of the Church.

This involves seeking to:

- ① Live and grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ, sustained by word and sacrament within the fellowship of the worshipping Church.
- ② Represent the perspectives of their deanery and its parishes on the Diocesan Synod.
- ③ Be a point of contact both ways between the Synod, the deanery and its parishes, participating fully in the life of all three.
- ④ Work to grow cultures of generosity and genuine stewardship within the Church which honour and develop the gifts and ministry resources of all.
- ⑤ Inform themselves about the work and enterprise of the various diocesan boards, committees and councils and consider standing for election to them. Also consider, or encourage others with particular expertise to explore membership of diocesan boards, committees and councils.
- ⑥ Support the vision and mission of the Diocese by prayer and personal example and seek to promote honest and harmonious working relationships throughout the Diocese and the Church of England.
- ⑦ Inform themselves of issues under discussion at diocesan and national levels and celebrate and share the good news stories widely.
- ⑧ Commit to and seek to further the Diocese of Gloucester's vision: LIFE Together.

In carrying out the role of Diocesan Synod representative all members are asked to:

- Actively participate in discussions - the more people participate, the greater the legitimacy of the Synod and the more life it cascades out into the life of the diocese
- Always consider issues prayerfully
- Be punctual, graciously attending three meetings each year
- Send apologies promptly when you are unable to attend
- Share strategic and creative agenda ideas
- Put forward questions, tabled in good time
- Be strategic and focused
- Offer solutions (not just problems), options and choices in the way ahead
- Listen to others attentively
- Speak kindly, clearly, and succinctly
- Vote and make decisions for the good of the Diocese as a whole
- Offer feedback so we can learn and improve

For their period of office, members of Diocesan Synod are also ex officio members of their Deanery Synod and PCC, which implies a further commitment of time above and beyond the meetings of Diocesan Synod itself. They also become eligible for election to a range of other bodies (such as the Bishop's Council) which assist in the running of the Diocese.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR MEETINGS



### Pray

Although Synod is a formal business meeting, its ultimate task is to assist in the sharing of the Gospel and furthering the Kingdom of God.



### Read the papers in advance

Items are presented at Synod meetings on the assumption that members will have read the background material beforehand.



### Consult colleagues

Elected members provide views and raise concerns from their deaneries and parishes. Ask colleagues on Deanery Synod if they have any issues they would like you to raise in meetings – this should be done well in advance so that you have time to submit questions which allows for answers to be prepared.

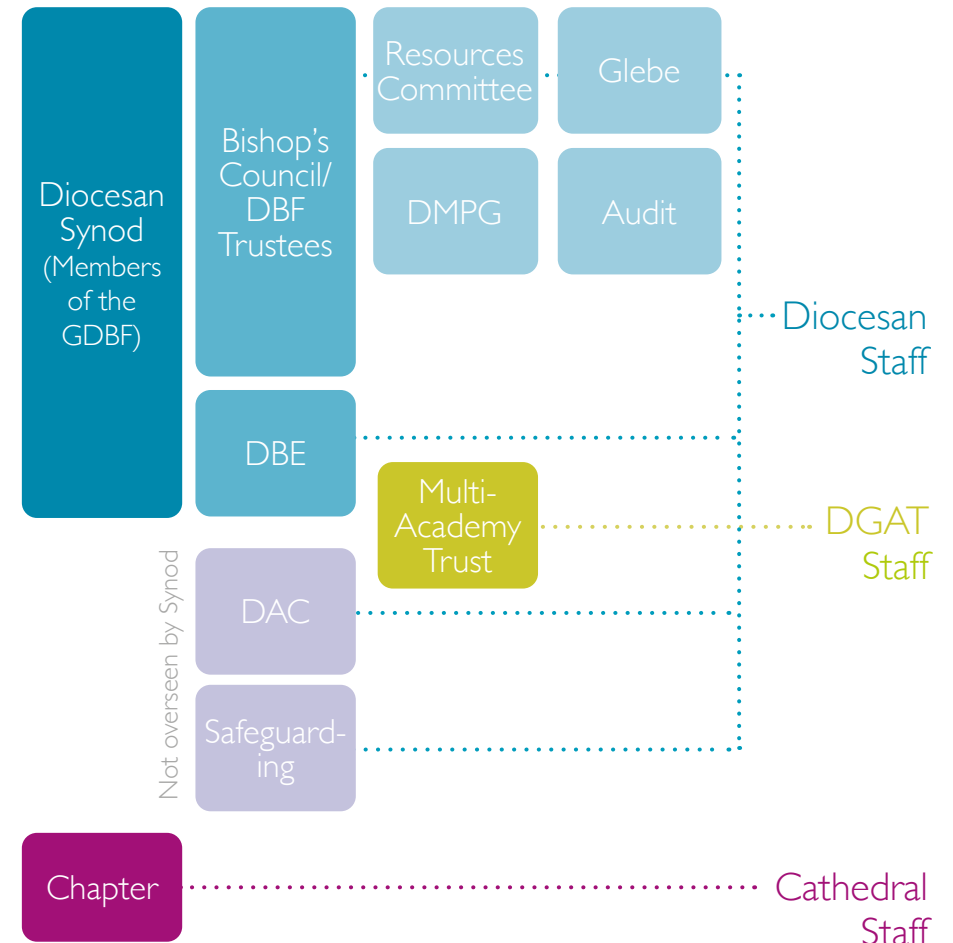


### Communication

Members are encouraged to actively and positively report back to their PCCs and Deanery Synods, strengthening communication within the Diocese.

## HOW DOES THE DIOCESAN SYNOD RELATE TO THE OTHER GOVERNANCE OF THE DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER?

The Diocesan Synod is supported in its work by a number of other committees and boards. Members of Diocesan Synod often act as the electorate for these committees:



## **Bishop's Council and Standing Committee**

The Bishop's Council is the main policy making body of the diocese and is the Standing Committee of the Diocesan Synod. The council meets five times a year. Its main functions are:

- To initiate proposals for action by the Synod and to advise it on matters of policy
- Subject to the directions of Synod, to transact the business of the Synod when it is not in session
- To act as the Board of Directors of the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance, a Company Limited by Guarantee
- To act as Trustees of the Board as a registered charity
- To examine issues concerned with the Diocese's finances in detail and to make recommendations
- Under the Pastoral Measure 1983 to make recommendations to the Bishop in connection with a range of topics ranging from pastoral care to the organisation of benefices and parishes.

## **Resources Committee**

This committee reports into Bishop's Council and oversees delegated financial and housing matters. This includes the preparation of the proposed annual budget for the GDBF, and overseeing the work of the Director of Finance, Property and Giving, the Diocesan Surveyor and other officers. The Committee meets five times a year.

## **Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Group (DMPG)**

This Group reports into Bishop's Council on recommendations following review and wider processes regarding parish and benefice changes; pastoral reorganisation and deanery plans. It also considers schemes for where communities are exploring churches to be/are closed for public worship and how new uses, and developments can be championed. The Group meets five times a year.

## **Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC)**

The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) is a group of formal members and consultants all of whom volunteer their time and professional knowledge to assist parishes in looking after and appreciating their church buildings. From stained glass and sustainability to lighting, heating, access and landscape every aspect is covered; and there is support, advice and guidance to navigate the faculty systems and processes. The committee meets roughly every 6 weeks to consider faculty applications and informal proposals, and members regularly attend site visits throughout the diocese.

## **Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee is concerned with advising the directors' (i.e. Bishop's Council's) on risk management, dealing with the external auditors (including their remuneration and advising on their suitability and independence) and preparation of the financial statements. The Committee reports directly to Bishop's Council and meets at least three times a year.

## **Glebe Committee**

The main purpose of the Glebe Committee is to review management of the Diocese's portfolio of Glebe land. This includes about 500 acres of agricultural land and about 70 acres of land with possible future development potential. The Glebe Committee meets five times a year.

# HOW ARE SYNOD AGENDAS DRAWN UP?

## How are Synod agendas drawn up?

The agenda is drafted and agreed by the Synod Planning Group. Potential items of business are developed and agreed by the Planning Group with topics that need to be discussed and with items and motions brought forward by Synod members.

## How can I bring a proposition or motion to Synod?

Ways that a member of Synod can have an item of business included on the agenda include:

- a) Submit a question in advance. Although questions are not formal propositions, they can bring important matters to the attention of Synod.
- b) Suggest a motion to the Diocesan Secretary and the Synod Planning Group will consider whether to bring the motion in its name.
- c) Raise the issue at your Deanery Synod; if colleagues agree, then a deanery motion can be considered for discussion at a meeting of the full Diocesan Synod. Ultimately, the Diocesan Synod has the ability to pass such a motion to General Synod for discussion at a national level.
- d) Please contact the Diocesan Secretary as soon as possible for advice on preparing and wording the motion to ensure it does not contradict Standing Orders, overrule existing legislation, or other technical issues. Deanery Synods should authorise their Standing Committee to agree the final wording of any motion to ensure minor amendments can be properly approved before the matter is taken to Diocesan Synod.

## What is the normal format for a debate to follow?

There are normally five steps:

- a) The motion is put forward by a member of Synod;

- b) The Synod will discuss and debate the motion;
- c) Any amendments to the motion (duly notified in advance) are proposed & voted on;
- d) The final motion, with any successful amendments, is formally proposed;
- e) The Synod votes.

## How can I submit a question in advance?

Any member may ask a question of any officer or office holder of Synod, provided that it is relevant to their duties. A written answer will be provided at the Synod meeting. Once a question has been submitted and the answer given, the questioner is entitled to ask a supplementary question on the same subject. Questions should be asked at least seven days before the meeting.

## Speaking at Diocesan Synod

Any member can request to speak on any item of business, but they can only speak once per item. Members are requested to let the Secretary know in advance if they wish to speak in a particular debate, but this is not a formal requirement.

## How are Synod members elected?

Members of the House of Clergy and House of Laity are elected for a term of three years by the Deanery Synods. Numbers are determined by total clergy numbers and electoral rolls numbers in each Deanery.

## What is the procedure for filling a casual vacancy on Diocesan Synod?

As soon as a vacancy occurs on Diocesan Synod, the diocesan office should be informed. Casual vacancies can be filled by holding an election at a meeting of the relevant House of the Deanery Synod.

## What is the procedure for voting at Synod meetings?

Depending on the issue, voting will usually be by a show of hands. If the meeting is held via Zoom, this is done using an electronic voting system.



## What is the quorum for a meeting?

One Bishop of the House of Bishops and at least one third of each of the Houses of Clergy and Laity must be present. However, the quorum is only really relevant when there is a need to take a vote.

## The Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance Limited (GDBF)

Diocesan Boards of Finance were set up to promote and assist the work, objects and purposes of the Church of England for the advancement of the Christian religion in dioceses. In the Diocese of Gloucester, departments serve our worshipping communities in a number of different ways. To find out more about the different Teams and what support, resources and guidance they provide, please visit the Diocese of Gloucester website.

[www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/whos-who/departments-and-committees](http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/whos-who/departments-and-committees)



We hope that this is a helpful guide, but if you would like any further information or you would like to offer any feedback, please don't hesitate to contact the Diocesan Secretary:

**[diocesan.secretary@glosdioc.org.uk](mailto:diocesan.secretary@glosdioc.org.uk)** Tel: **01452 410022**