



58, Harborough Road,
Rushden,
Northants, NN10 0LP
Landline: (01933) 316927
Mobile: 07943 307873

e-mail: andrew.presland.harborough58@gmail.com

September 2026

Dear elector,

GENERAL SYNOD ELECTION 2026

I am writing to you to ask for your vote in the election to General Synod. I would like to represent you there, so here is some background about me and some of my views.

I have served on General Synod since 2003, and learned that the most useful things a Synod member can do are listen carefully, ask the right questions and make sure that information reaches local churches.

I would like to serve again on General Synod as a practical, constructive voice for local churches: committed to mission, encouraging the growth of new worshipping communities, supporting our church buildings, and making sure the contribution of lay people is heard.

About myself

Aged 59 and single, I am a graduate of Leicester University and, by profession, a statistician in the civil service. I currently work on publishing planning application statistics for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, having previously worked on local government finance and homelessness/rough sleeping statistics.

I have lived in Rushden all my life, except when at university. Since my late teens, I have served on various church committees, and become involved in other charitable and community groups, currently being a trustee of Encompass (a charity supporting those who are facing poverty, homelessness and addiction in North Northants), the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust, Rushden Parochial Charities, Ridley Hall Cambridge, Peterborough Diocese Good Stewards Trust and Anglican Mainstream, a national charity. I am also a school governor in Rushden, a committee member of the Northamptonshire Industrial Archaeology Group, a volunteer at Rushden Museum and Secretary to Rushden Street Pastors.

I have been an active member of Whitefriars Church, Rushden, which meets in a local community school, ever since it was planted by St Mary's Church, Rushden in 1991. I currently lead one of its homegroups and a countryside walks group, created to bring together church members and others from the local community in walking, friendship and discussion/Christian reflection.

Other thoughts

General Synod will face many different challenges, and I would seek to approach them thoughtfully and constructively, testing each issue against Scripture, the Church's teaching and the needs of our local churches. My views on a few key issues are:

On **mission**, I support almost anything that challenges the idea that the Church of England

should be in the business of managing numerical decline. I believe the **Great Commission** at the end of Matthew's Gospel to be as relevant today as ever and that the fields are still ripe for harvest, even if the labourers are often few. I support efforts to encourage churches to become healthy and outward-looking, and for those preaching and teaching to teach about generous financial giving, whilst recognising the limited means of many of those in the pews.

I welcome the current national aim of creating 10,000 **new worshipping communities** - alongside the congregations of the existing 16,200 parish churches, and Bishop Debbie's keenness for our Diocese to play its part in this. To this end, I support steps being taken to plant new churches in or near new housing developments, and the national church's work with mapping experts to ensure that data on planned new housing development are readily available to dioceses, deaneries and parishes across the country.

Alongside this, I believe that the Synod has a key role to play in speaking up for the needs of **historic church buildings**, highlighting the burdens faced by parishes, such as stretching net zero requirements and no longer being able to reclaim VAT on repairs despite an estimated £55 billion of economic and social value being provided annually within communities across the UK. My work as a trustee of the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust shows me how local communities are willing to play their part, if the right support can be secured nationally, such as through the annual Ride, Stride and Drive fundraising day.

I strongly believe in the full encouragement and engagement of the **lay people** in the life of the church and its decisions, noting that about 99% of Church members are lay. Alongside that, I welcome the recent steps to increase **clergy** stipends and pensions provision and to prioritise **attracting and training more ordinands** to help fill the large gap that has been opening up as the large number of retirements continue.

I believe that churches should **welcome all people**, regardless of age, gender, social class, political views, race, neurodiversity category or sexuality, and should support them in their journeys to become the people that God has made them to be. I want our churches to be places where everyone is welcomed, treated with dignity and offered the love of Christ. At the same time, I believe we should remain faithful to the teaching of Scripture and the Church's historic Christian understanding of marriage, sexual relationships and Christian discipleship.

I greatly welcomed the unanimous vote of the last Synod to support **working class vocations** - as part of the Church's wider mission to reach and serve people of all social classes.

I support the principles of the **2026 Save the Parish manifesto**, particularly the responsible use of Church Commissioners' funding, a fair approach to parish share, investment in training and support for clergy, honouring voluntary service, and maintaining the parish system as a vital foundation for mission.

I would be very happy to discuss any of the issues listed above, or anything else, with any elector. I would be very grateful to receive your first preference vote or, if not, any other vote that you feel able to give me.

Yours faithfully

ANDREW PRESLAND

Proposed by: Mrs Sue Tresham, Lay Chair of Brackley Deanery

Seconded by: Mr Dudley Hughes, Lay Chair of Higham Deanery, member of Peterborough Diocesan Synod, former member of East Northamptonshire Council and Northamptonshire County Council