

The Revd Matthew Cashmore

1. What has prompted you to stand for election to General Synod in particular, and in which ways do you think it will challenge your capacity and capabilities?

As parish priests, we know how generously our communities give. I want the Church's historic wealth to support Jesus' ministry through us, and our knowledge of the people we serve to carry real weight in decisions.

I am standing to help move money, control and power from the centre of the Church back to the parish. There are many important issues before Synod. I have strong biblical convictions and will vote in line with them, but this is where I will focus my energy.

My commercial career gave me the expertise to scrutinise complex accounts, financial reports and funding structures, and to challenge the assumptions behind them. More than a decade working in the Church, including on the Diocese of London's Bishop's Council and Finance Committee, has taught me how to apply that expertise here. I know how to turn parish needs into proposals that can be understood, funded and delivered, so our ministry is celebrated and supported.

The challenge is to secure that change through persistent, prayerful work with others. I will bring the financial understanding and practical experience to help turn words into action.

2. What do you believe the Church of England should prioritise over the next five years to support mission, Christian discipleship and the flourishing of parish and other worshipping communities?

The parish should be at the centre of the Church's life. Dioceses should serve the needs of parishes, and our wider structures should ensure that we have the money, space, and people to bring others to Jesus.

Jesus' ministry through us already takes many forms, from weekday celebrations of the Eucharist and new work with families to new worshipping communities - even biker churches! The simple and superb matter alongside the esoteric and experimental. But too often management fills the time we need for pastoral care, leaving good work without the attention and encouragement it deserves.

Practically, that means sustaining clergy posts, equipping lay people to teach and lead, and paying for administrative support. We should be free to nurture what is already happening and run to keep up with what the Holy Spirit is doing in our parishes.

Over the next five years, I want more of the Church's resources to reach that everyday work, including in places where growth is slow and faithful presence matters enormously.

3. What should General Synod do to help the Church become safer, more accountable and more trusted, ensuring that national reforms work effectively in parishes, dioceses, and cathedrals?

Survivors should not have to fight the Church to be heard. They deserve compassionate support and a fair process, independent where necessary. Nobody's position should put them beyond scrutiny, and protecting the Church's reputation must never come before establishing the truth and keeping people safe.

Synod should insist that reforms come with clear responsibilities and the funding to carry them out. We need to know whether they work in an ordinary parish, not simply whether a national policy has been approved. The same scrutiny must reach dioceses, cathedrals, and national bodies, with honest reporting of failures and the action taken.

In our parishes, we and our safeguarding volunteers need reliable professional advice and practical help. Properly funded training and administrative support are part of making people safe, not optional extras. We cannot keep adding professional responsibilities to volunteers without providing the resources to fulfil them. Accountability includes being honest about what we ask people to do and what we give them to do it.

4. How should the Church prioritise good intentional investment in mission and growth whilst also resourcing parish ministry in all its forms?

Real, sustained growth takes root in our parishes, through the Holy Spirit's work among people. Money should follow that work directly, with decisions made close to the communities concerned.

We should move away from dioceses bidding for central pots and then distributing small portions to parishes whose work aligns with a diocesan vision. Our task locally is to discern where the Holy Spirit is leading. Diocesan and national structures should help us respond, with the resources and expertise we need.

The Church's historic wealth should provide dependable support for clergy and parish life, alongside accessible funding for new work. We need time for relationships to deepen and communities to grow, without having to reshape what we do to fit the next funding round.

This requires clear accounts and honest evaluation. We should be able to see how much money reaches our parishes, what it supports, and whether it helps people come to Jesus and grow in faith.

5. General Synod must address issues on which faithful Christians hold deeply differing views. How would you contribute to honest debate, good disagreement and clear decision-making while helping the Church maintain its common life and mission?

I have strong biblical convictions and will vote in line with them. I also recognise that those who disagree with me may be praying just as earnestly and seeking to be just as faithful. We owe one another honesty, kindness, and a proper hearing.

Working across different church traditions has taught me the value of listening carefully and finding the next faithful thing we can do together. I would test arguments against scripture, be willing to examine my own assumptions, and take seriously what decisions will mean for our parishes.

Synod must make clear decisions through processes we can trust, with proper space for prayer and debate. We need to explain what has been agreed, what remains unresolved, and what happens next.

I would keep praying and working with those whose conclusions differ from mine. There is more we can do together than divides us. I want Synod to spend more of its time discerning where the Holy Spirit is bringing us together and enabling us to act on that shared calling of bringing people to Jesus in our parishes.