

John Bavington
Chaplain of Aquitaine



Election Address

I was first elected to General Synod in 2021 to represent Leeds diocese. I stepped down as a member of synod when I moved to the diocese in Europe. It has not been easy to decide whether to stand again, but I do now have a good understanding of Synod, and I felt perhaps my experience would prove useful. I am willing to serve faithfully and diligently as a member of Synod if chosen to do so. I would be grateful if you would read this statement and consider prayerfully whether you could give me a high preference vote. Thank you.

My background

I grew up in Pakistan where my father ran a civil engineering business he had started in the 60's. I was baptised in Karachi cathedral and have been a member of Anglican churches all my life, whilst also attending a wide variety of services in other traditions. Arriving in the UK in 1985, I have a strong appreciation of cultural difference and what it means to inhabit a culture as an outsider. I believe strongly that all are loved by God and I long for all to be included in the church.

- I began in ministry in 1991 as a church youth worker in London,
- I trained at Trinity College in Bristol and was ordained in 1999.
- Since then I have served in a wide variety of roles, both urban and rural, in parish ministry and for seven years as a school chaplain.
- For five years I was Area Dean of Inner Bradford, a place with significant challenges in relation to immigration and integration, and also with a variety of issues associated with poverty. During that time I was much involved in interfaith work and church planting work in the city, as well the implementation of Bradford's Strategic Development Fund process.
- I have been Chaplain of Aquitaine since 2025. The Chaplaincy of Aquitaine is a microcosm of chaplaincy in Europe
 - rural and urban congregations (the city of Bordeaux)
 - A seaside resort congregation in Archachon
 - A large ministry team made up of retired clergy and lay leaders.
 - Our team includes people of a wide variety of theological convictions and all have my support in their ministries.

I am deeply concerned about the decline in church membership in the western world because it seems to me that a culture which has less love for God will also have less love for neighbour. Perhaps we see this partially borne out in the polarisation we are witnessing in society. We need a renewal of mission, not simply as a call to "repentance and faith" but as a call to renew our understanding of what it means to love.

My experience at General Synod

- My maiden speech at synod was on the topic of poverty, speaking on a motion which had begun life in my own deanery in Inner Bradford.
- During my years on synod I attended every group of sessions and engaged fully with the agenda.
- There is cynicism in some quarters about the number of questions now being asked at each group of sessions, but I see this rather as a helpful expression of our right desire to hold church

authorities to account. A particularly effective expression of holding authorities to account was when we managed to restore clergy pension provision to pre-2011 levels.

- In 2024 I served on the revision committee for the National Church Governance Measure. This has helped me to have a deep understanding of the workings of the Synod committee processes, and also of the National Church Institutions, as we worked hard to simplify national processes and improve transparency and accountability. How far we succeeded waits to be seen, but the measure was granted final approval by Synod in July 2025.
- As a member of Synod I took a very active interest in the wide variety of important topics under discussion.
 - I think that the changes in safeguarding culture which have been achieved in recent years have been vital, and I supported the recent synod decision to slightly less radical (and therefore more do-able) move to independent oversight of safeguarding.
 - I participated actively in the LLF process, and from within my traditional viewpoint I have sought to be someone bringing people together rather than pushing people apart. I welcome and seek friendship and discussion, not division
 - I welcome the Clergy Conduct Measure's new tiered system for addressing complaints, but have a concern about consistency in application which was a problem for CDMs.
 - Having experienced the worst wildfires in recent French history within my own chaplaincy area this year, I am deeply concerned about climate change and the pace of moves towards net zero.

Representing the Diocese in Europe

If elected I will seek to faithfully bring the voice of the church in Europe to the ears of those who govern the Church of England.

Representatives of the Diocese in Europe bring an important voice to the General Synod. We have a different perspective on England, seeing from the outside. We live in turbulent times for International relations and bring a view of Europe seen from the inside. We serve in non-Established congregations, as immigrants. We pray for the prosperity of the cities (and villages) where we find ourselves.

It is vitally important that the diocese of Europe has good, experienced representation at GS. I believe I offer the right experience and approach to make a positive contribution, and it is in that spirit that I offer myself to represent the diocese at the General Synod. I am grateful for others who have been willing to stand for election, and I ask that you pray for all of us. If you feel able to vote for me I will seek to serve humbly and faithfully.

Please do give me your first, or a high preference vote.

You are welcome to contact me for more information on revjohnbav@gmail.com