

General Synod Election Statement

Dear Fellow Clergy,

Thank you for taking the time to read this statement. I begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to those who supported me in the General Synod by-election in February 2025. I remain deeply thankful for the trust you placed in me.

Serving on General Synod has been both a privilege and a formative experience. I am now seeking election for a full term, with a deeper understanding of Synod's responsibilities and a stronger commitment to represent the Diocese of Hereford faithfully, prayerfully and constructively.

My first experience of General Synod began, as Synod does, in worship. During worship in the chamber, I was struck by a profound sense of the presence of God and reminded of his faithfulness and love for his Church. I found myself recalling Jacob's words: "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." *Genesis 28:16*

That conviction has stayed with me. Amid debate, legislation, disagreement and significant decisions about the future of the Church, we must continually remember whose Church this is and seek God's wisdom together.

Bringing the Rural Voice to General Synod One of my earliest contributions in the Synod chamber was during a debate on poverty and the Church. I spoke because poverty is not an abstract issue in the communities I serve.

I spoke particularly about rural poverty and hardship often hidden behind hedgerows and closed doors: families struggling with the cost of living, inadequate transport, isolation and limited access to services. That first contribution reflected something central to why I want to continue serving rural voices need to be present when national decisions are made.

I am Rector of the Benefice of Highley, with Billingsley, Glazeley, Deuxhill and Chelmarsh, and have served in rural ministry for nearly a decade. My vocation has been shaped by its realities: geographic isolation, limited resources, ageing congregations, increasing administrative demands and social and economic pressures — but also remarkable faithfulness, resilience, generosity and a deep sense of local belonging.

Rural ministry is not peripheral to the Church's mission; it is integral to it. I want to continue ensuring that national policy and strategy are informed by the lived realities of rural parishes, clergy serving multi-parish benefices, and the communities entrusted to our care.

The Perspective I Bring Alongside rural ministry, my perspective has been shaped by my lived experience as a former child refugee, a woman of colour, and someone who worked in business and entrepreneurship before ordination. These experiences have taught me to listen carefully to voices that can easily be overlooked and to recognise that the Church is strengthened when the breadth of the Body of Christ contributes to its discernment. If elected, I would particularly seek to contribute in four areas:

Rural Ministry and Mission I will continue to advocate for rural churches and communities, particularly clergy and congregations serving across dispersed multi-parish benefices. Our

churches may often be small, but their presence and ministry within their communities are significant. National strategies must understand their challenges while recognising their extraordinary contribution to the Church's mission.

Representation, Inclusion and Racial Justice I am committed to a Church whose common life reflects the breadth of the Body of Christ. Representation is not simply about who occupies a seat; it is about ensuring that different experiences genuinely shape our discernment and decision-making.

I want to contribute constructively to the Church's continuing work on racial justice, inclusion and accessibility, including addressing barriers experienced by disabled people, so that our structures and culture increasingly reflect our Christian commitment to dignity, justice and mutual responsibility.

The Flourishing of Women in Ministry I am committed to the flourishing of women throughout the life and ministry of the Church through good formation, encouragement, appropriate support and a culture in which women can exercise the gifts God has given them faithfully and confidently.

The flourishing of women is not simply a matter for women; it contributes to the health, unity and mission of the whole Church.

Mission Beyond the Church My experience in business and entrepreneurship continues to shape my understanding of Christian vocation. Much of the Church's mission happens beyond our buildings in workplaces, businesses, schools, farms, homes and communities.

I want to contribute to Synod's thinking about work, economics, discipleship and our engagement with wider society, helping the Church equip Christians to understand their everyday lives and work as part of God's mission.

How I Hope to Serve I am not seeking election simply to make noise in General Synod. I want to listen carefully, contribute thoughtfully, ask necessary questions and help the Church become more faithful and effective in God's mission.

My first year has taught me that Synod needs people who can hold conviction together with listening, difference with generosity, and decision-making with prayer. I will not always have all the answers, but I will prepare carefully, listen to the clergy and communities I represent, speak when I believe a voice needs to be heard, and seek to keep the realities of our parishes before the wider Church. Above all, I want my service to remain rooted in the conviction with which my experience of Synod began. This is God's Church, and our task is faithfully to discern and participate in what God is doing among us. If this resonates with how you hope Hereford might be represented at General Synod, I would be honoured to serve for a full term and grateful for your first or high-preference vote.

With prayers and thanks,

The Revd Kina Robertshaw

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