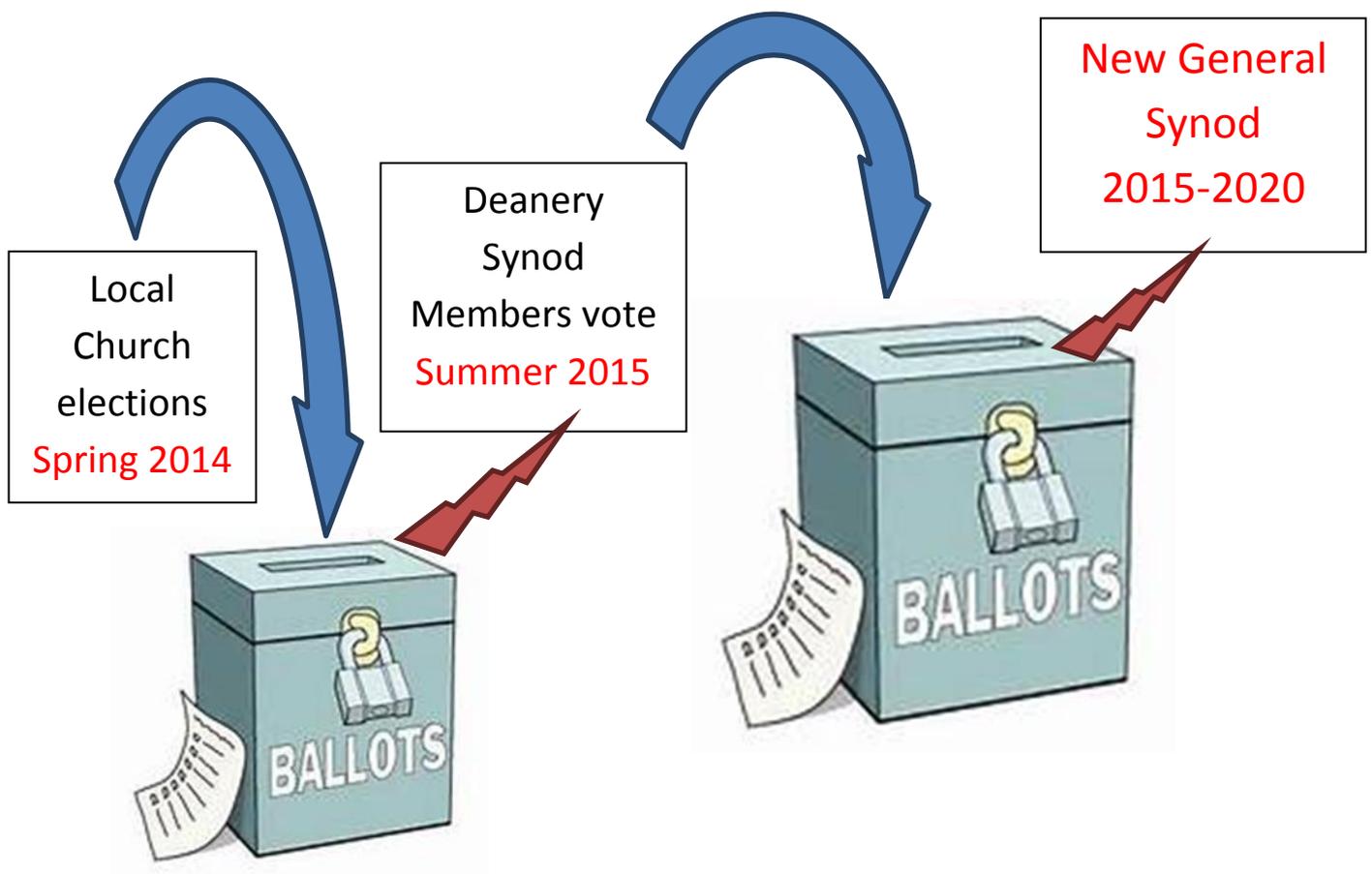




General Synod 2015
Campaign

Deanery Synod Elections Spring 2014



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PA

Church Times November 2012

Women-bishops Measure falls by six votes in House of Laity

The draft Measure for the consecration of women bishops failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds majority in all three Houses of the General Synod, when the vote for final approval was taken after a protracted debate on Tuesday, just after 6.15 p.m.

Although it was carried in the House of Bishops by 44 to 3, with two abstentions, and in the House of Clergy by 148 to 45, with no abstentions, it was lost in the House of Laity. Here, there were 132 votes in favour, 74 against, with no abstentions; the Measure thus fell by six votes. Across all three Houses, 72.6 per cent of Synod members voted in favour of the legislation.

This result came despite strong support for the Measure from the Archbishop of Canterbury and his designated successor, the Bishop of Durham, the Rt Revd Justin Welby.

Why?

2015 will see the election of a new General Synod. Going on the performance of the current Synod it is clear that much needs to be done to widen the membership of the new synod to **better represent the breadth** of the Church of England.

When?

This campaign pack sets out to effect change starting with the **Deanery Synod members**, to be elected in Spring 2014 – who in turn are the key voting members charged with electing a new General Synod in 2015.

Who?

Voting patterns in the current synod show that often the bar to change comes in the **House of Laity** so our focus needs to start there. Electing more inclusive laity to their local deanery synods in Spring 2014 will enable a broader range of lay candidates to gain places for the General Synod in 2015

What does *General Synod Campaign 2015* believe?

General Synod Campaign 2015 are working together to create the most favourable circumstances for the election of laity to Deanery and General Synods. We seek laity who will represent the will of the majority of people in the Church of England being for inclusion and opposed to discrimination. This is a joint campaign bringing together some of the key organisations in the Church of England, working together against discrimination: Inclusive Church, Women and the Church (WATCH), Group for Rescinding the Act of Synod (GRAS), Modern Church, Changing Attitude, Affirming Catholicism and the Society of Catholic Priests (SCP).

Galatians 2:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"

Christian justice has biblical justification. Jesus was an inclusive person; he crossed social boundaries of race, gender, ethnicity, religion in his society and challenged the hypocritical hierarchy of established religion of his day. Recent examples of the General Synod's decision show that they are far from inclusive.

For example, it is clear that the vast majority of the laity throughout the Church voted for women bishops and want a church that is generous, welcoming, inclusive and open. We also want to reach people outside the church who will not currently join us, and reach the many who have left because of discriminatory behaviour, which makes many of those who stay both upset and angry. Women and men, all have vocation and talents – the church needs to promote the best people for its shared mission.

"A tale of two synods"

The synod vote against the measure for the consecration of women bishops in November 2012 made the press and nation censure the Church of England. There was a groundswell against the intolerance on display at that Synod and the overwhelming vote in favour at the November 2013 session was as much a response to the will of the nation as it was to the newly drafted proposals.

In electing reps for Deanery Synods in 2014 and hence to General Synod in 2015, make sure you get clear answers from those who would seek to represent you. Do you know where they stand and how much work they intend to put in to make the Church of England a truly welcoming and inclusive place for everyone, where all may feel at home and see themselves represented in those who lead the Church?

Current Issues

- As the lead church in the Worldwide Anglican Communion, The Church of England is often behind other countries in making itself relevant to the communities it serves. Other countries are already making women bishops, fully recognising their talents in the church, and taking a strong stand against discrimination.
- The General Synod debates matters of national and international importance, engages with key ethical and social issues, decides new forms of worship, passes legislation affecting the whole of the Church of England, and approves the annual budget for the work of the Church at national level. It is often the shop window through which the nation views the Church and its priorities.
- The current position in General Synod looks favourable towards reaching the moment when women can take their full place at all levels of the church – but we been close before and all will rest on the final approval vote expected in July 2014.
- Many of the positions taken by the Church of England on gender, sexuality, ethnicity & equality reflect an earlier age.
- Often the church is seen as irrelevant and unable to give a clear and inclusive welcome to those it seeks to serve.
- Most under 35s and many over that age think that the church is simply unfair and unjust!

Why should we care about Deanery Synod Elections?

We deserve the church we vote for,
so make sure your Deanery synod
representatives vote for the people
who represent your views!

If you are a member of the Church of England who cares about its future, about its mission in God's world and the way in which it communicates and lives out the Gospel, please take seriously this opportunity to bring about change by:

- ensuring that you are on your church's Electoral Roll (or you won't be able to vote at your church's Annual Meeting)
- considering standing for election as a Deanery Synod member *or*
- encouraging someone else who would represent your church well to stand
- attending your Annual Parochial Church Meeting in Spring 2014
- voting for someone who will work to ensure that the breadth of the Church of England is fully represented at General Synod
- think about whether you or someone you know might stand for General Synod in 2015.

The Deanery Synod Election Process – Helpful Notes

When the legislation enabling women to be bishops did not get through General Synod in 2012, many people felt that the House of Laity had failed to represent the views of the majority of church attenders. If a more broadly representative House of Laity is to be achieved in 2015, the Deanery Synod elections this coming Spring are a vital first step towards that goal.

In Spring 2014 elections will take place at Annual Parochial Church Meetings which will shape the future of the Church of England. Each local church will elect representatives to Deanery Synod according to the size of the church's electoral role. Those who are elected onto their Deanery Synod will have the opportunity in Summer 2015 to elect members of General Synod for 2015-2020 sessions. Should this opportunity be missed, it will not come again for another five years.

2015 will also see the election of a new Diocesan Synod for each Diocese. So this is a double opportunity to make a difference to who leads the church for the rest of this decade.

Deanery Synod - comprising elected lay representatives of local churches within the deanery and the clergy of the deanery.

- **Elections will take place in the Spring of 2014** – during the Annual Parochial Church Meetings. Most will take place around the end of March/early April – find out now when your local church is having there's and get the date in your diary now!
- Only those on the Electoral Roll can vote or stand (so make sure you are on the newly revised list for your church!)
- Do not be afraid to stand for election even if the same people have been deanery synod reps for years – that's part of the problem!
- If you think that the balance of members is not achieved through the election process then at the first meeting of the new Deanery Synod you can request the Area/Rural Dean to make extra places for:
 - Co-opted members – up to three per house of clergy and laity
 - Clergy holding Permission to Officiate within the deanery

For more details see

<http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchlawlegis/church-representation-rules/part-iii.aspx> (Sections 24.7)

(7) The house of clergy and house of laity of a deanery synod may co-opt additional members of their respective houses, being clerks in Holy Orders or, as the case may be, lay persons who shall be actual communicant members of the Church of England of sixteen years or upwards:

Provided that the number of members co-opted by either house shall not exceed five per cent of the total number of members of that house or three, whichever is the greater.

- Deanery Synod members each hold office for three years from 1 June 2014

Sample Parish Magazine Article

A Spring of Change - in the Church of England?

Over the past few years we have seen the General Synod struggle to fully represent the view of the breadth of Anglican Churches in this country. For example, whereas the local deaneries and diocesan synods voted overwhelmingly for women bishops, this matter is still not concluded at General Synod. In the meantime the church appears more and more remote from those it seeks to serve.

If you feel strongly that change should come then please consider standing as one of our local parish deanery synod representatives.

At our Annual Parochial Church Meeting on (insert date/time) we will be voting for (insert number) of Deanery Synod reps. Those elected will not only represent this church at a Deanery level but also in Summer 2015 vote in a whole new General Synod to serve from 2015-2020.

If you would like more information about what this involves then please contact: (insert contact details)

For letters/emails

I am writing to ask you to consider standing for Deanery Synod at the elections taking place at your local church during its Annual Parochial Church Meeting this spring. I am sure that you will share my concern that over the past few years we have seen the General Synod struggle to fully represent the view of the breadth of Anglican Churches in this country. For example, whereas the local deaneries and diocesan synods voted overwhelmingly for women bishops, this matter is still not concluded at General Synod. In the meantime the church appears more and more remote from those it seeks to serve on a number of issues.

We have an opportunity this spring to put in place a broader representation at Deanery Synod who in turn in Summer 2015 will be able to vote for a broader General Synod. I do hope that you will feel able to take part.

Looking Ahead to the General Synod Elections 2015

General Synod – comprising the Diocesan Bishop and elected members from both laity and clergy across the diocese.

- **Next election Summer 2015** to serve for five years, 2015-2020.
- Number of Lay and Clergy members according to size of the Diocese.
- Elected from across the diocese. Lay people standing must be on the electoral roll of a church within the diocese, you do not need to be a member of the Deanery or Diocesan Synods to stand (but it often helps to get you known)
- The electorate is the respective houses of clergy and laity on the deanery synods but this time voting as a whole across the diocese by house
- Voting is by Single Transferable vote – so it's good for a number of people representing a similar constituency to stand as often it is the fourth and fifth... votes that make the difference
- Election addresses are allowed. If standing as a candidate make it clear where you stand in relation to women priests/bishops along with the main areas of interest that you have
- Further Campaign Material will be issued covering the General Synod elections in early 2015

For fuller information follow the link to the Church Representation Rules online

www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchlawlegis/church-representation-rules/church-representation-rules-online.aspx