General Synod Elections 2026 – Key Information and Timeline

The elections for Diocesan representatives to the General Synod will take place later this year. As in previous elections, the allocation for our diocese is three clergy and three lay representatives to represent the Diocese at General Synod for the next 5 years.

What is General Synod?

General Synod is the national assembly of the Church of England. It shapes and approves laws that affect the whole of the Church of England. It agrees new forms of worship, debates matters of national and international importance, and approves the annual budget for the work of the Church at national level. Members are a mixture of bishops, clergy and lay people.

Who can stand for election?

Almost anyone who attends church regularly is likely to be eligible to stand as a lay member. You don't need to be a member of a PCC, Deanery Synod or Diocesan Synod. Most clergy in the diocese are eligible to stand. Further detail as follows:

Lay candidates: be eligible to stand for election to the House of Laity, a person must meet each of the following conditions:

- The person has received Holy Communion in accordance with the practice of the Church of England, or a Church in communion with it;
- The person is confirmed (or ready and willing to be) or is a communicant member of a Church which subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity;
- The person is aged 18 or over on the date of the dissolution of the General Synod.

A candidate for the House of Laity must also meet one of the following conditions:

- The persons name is on the roll of a parish in the diocese
- The leader of a mission initiative in the diocese has declared the person to be part of the worshipping community involved in the mission initiative.

Clerical candidates: to be eligible to stand for election as clergy in a diocese a person must have been ordained priest or deacon, but must not be in episcopal orders, and must be in one of the following categories:

- A person who is a qualified elector in the diocese or other electoral area;
- A person who has written permission from the bishop to officiate in the diocese and who would be a qualified elector in the diocese or other electoral area if the person was a member of a deanery synod
- A person qualified to vote in the universities and TEIs constituency and who

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- would be a qualified elector in the diocese or other electoral area but for being qualified to vote in the universities and TEIs constituency, and
- is beneficed in, or licensed to, a parish in the diocese or other electoral area or is licensed to serve as a vicar in a team ministry in a benefice in the diocese or other electoral area, and has chosen to stand in the diocese or area rather than in the universities and TEIs constituency.

Who can vote?

Lay members of deanery synod and most clergy are eligible to vote for their respective houses. More details as follows:

Lay electors

The lay electors in each diocese are the members of the house of laity of each deanery synod on the date of dissolution of the General Synod (6am on 14th July 2026. They do not include anyone co-opted to a deanery synod.

Clerical electors

The clerical electors in each diocese are as follows:

- assistant bishops in the diocese (but they are not eligible to stand for election);
- archdeacons of the diocese;
- beneficed clergy of the diocese;
- clergy holding office in a cathedral in the diocese (including residentiary canons and other cathedral clergy who are appointed to work at the cathedral but not non-residentiary/honorary canons);
- clergy licensed under seal by the diocesan bishop (including any clergy resident outside the diocese but holding the licence of the bishop of that diocese);
- and clergy with permission to officiate in the diocese who are members of a deanery synod in the diocese (including clergy retired from full-time ministry and not licensed under seal);

The Election Process

The elections to each House of Synod (clergy & laity) are conducted online using an elections portal (a paper based system is also available to voters) which is run by the presiding officer with support from Civica Election Services.

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Key supporting roles in the election process

- **Diocesan Electoral Registration Officer (DERO): Kyrinn Gill**
  Responsible for maintaining the registers of electors (both clergy and lay), including names, addresses and contact details. The DERO issues the registers to deanery synods, manages corrections, and provides the final, accurate registers to the Presiding Officer ahead of nominations.
- **Presiding Officer: Chris Elder (Diocesan Secretary)**
  Responsible for overseeing and administering the election process. This includes issuing key communications (such as the initial letter, nominations and voting invitations), ruling on the validity of nominations and votes, managing the voting process (including the online system), supervising the count, and formally declaring and publishing the results.
- **Deanery Synod Secretaries:**
  Responsible for checking the accuracy of the electoral registers within their deanery. On receipt of the registers from the DERO, they must confirm details or return any corrections within the statutory timeframe, ensuring the lists of electors are accurate before the election proceeds.

Key Dates and Deadlines

Stage	Deadline	Notes
Dissolution of General Synod	**14 July 2026 (6:00 a.m.)**	Elector qualification fixed at this moment
Registers issued to deaneries	**14 July 2026**	DERO sends clerical & lay registers to Deanery Synod Secretary
Deadline for deanery corrections	**20 July 2026**	Six-day statutory window
Final registers to Presiding Officer from DERO	**27 July 2026**	Must be complete and corrected
Initial letter to electors	**29 July 2026**	Physical letter sent by post
Invitations to nominate	**14 August 2026**	Sent by Presiding Officer
Close of nominations	**7 September 2026**	No late nominations permitted
Invitations to vote	**21 September 2026**	Online and paper as applicable
Close of voting	**Paper: 12 October 2026 (5:00 p.m.)** **Online 13 October 2026**	Close of voting
Results declared	**19th October 2026**	

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A dedicated diocesan webpage has been created with further information:
https://newcastle.anglican.org/news/stand-for-synod-campaign-launched.php