



Canon Dr Cathy Rhodes

Standing for the House of Laity · Diocese of Sheffield

Proposed by

Canon Peter Rainford

Rotherham Deanery Lay Chair, Bishop's Council

Seconded by

Mrs Vicky Vidler

Ecclesall Deanery Lay Chair

Brief CV

1971–79	'Missionary kid' in Iran
1988	Graduated as a doctor
1989	Married Matthew, who was priested in 1995
1997–2000	Cairo, worked at cathedral refugee clinic
2000–18	Birmingham, in rural and urban parishes
2005–19	Consultant Obstetrician, interests in mental health, bereavement, governance
2018	Matthew became Vicar of St John's Ranmoor, where I worship and sing in the choir
2020	Volunteered as your Diocesan Environment Officer
2021–26	Elected to General Synod
2024–29	Elected as a Church Commissioner by House of Laity
2025	Honorary Lay Canon of Sheffield Cathedral



Dear Deanery Synod member,

I am writing to ask for your vote to represent the Diocese in this important General Synod election. I was privileged to be elected 5 years ago, and have jumped into the role with both feet! It has been one of the most interesting and rewarding things I've done, and enhances my volunteer work as your Environment Officer. I'd love to have another five years to continue the role and represent you. Some of my work in the last Synod is below.

Caring for God's creation by

- Chairing and growing the General Synod Environment Group (GSEG), now 100+ members
- Organising GSEG Fringe meetings supported by the CofE Environment Team, partners include Christian Aid, A Rocha Eco Church and St Mary's Walkley school Eco Club!
- Speeches on liturgy, theology and national net zero work
- Promoting 'Eco Synod' and encouraging Synod to be greener

Social justice and inclusion

Promoting social justice as Diocesan Board of Faith & Justice member, on the platform supporting Sheffield's Diocesan Synod Motion on Food Banks. I've voted to support racial justice, and am part of the anti-racism network. I spoke in a debate using my professional experience on improving support for parents and families of children born with disability.

I've worked and voted for a welcoming and more inclusive church. In Living in Love and Faith debates I supported change, aware that LGBTQIA+ individuals and couples are deeply affected. I was saddened we've not made more progress towards equality. I'm Sheffield Diocesan representative for Together for the CofE, umbrella organisation for inclusive groups.

I am committed to **equality for everyone**, at all levels and in all roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health, or sexuality. I celebrate the appointment of Archbishop Sarah Mullally, who spoke in her first Address of the need for prayerful unity and courage in difficult conversations. We've much in common as God's people and need transparent conversations to hold us together as the body of Christ.

I pray she will lead the Church of England towards this.



Speaking at General Synod

'Stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.'

1 CORINTHIANS 16.13-14



If re-elected I will support care for God's Creation, inclusion and social justice alongside priorities below. I have the privilege of being a Church Commissioner, and continue on Assets and Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committees. I sit on the Project Spire Board as I believe racial justice needs openness, penitence and active work towards healing and repair.

My Priorities

Mission and growth

A presence in every community in our parishes is a great gift. A focus on support on the ground is key to a living and faithful church, building on green shoots of growth which we give thanks for. As we work towards warm and welcoming churches and reducing our carbon footprint, support for those responsible for our church buildings is key for the mission and future of the Church of England.

Safeguarding

I supported reform in the last Synod and want to embed independence and consistency in those structures throughout the Church. Restoring trust and listening to victims and survivors is key, and more work is needed in the next Synod.

Clergy wellbeing and support

Matthew became a priest 31 years ago and we're in our sixth vicarage. I'm very aware of pressures on clergy, lay leaders and their loved ones. We need to ask these leaders what they need to fulfil their vocation and do their work. Support is crucial for their ministry and to increase future vocations. Practical areas such as administrative and other support in parish work, housing, pensions and retirement housing must be further addressed in the next Synod. We also need to celebrate, support and value the thousands of volunteers who keep our church going!

'I've known Cathy for the last eight years, initially as the Diocesan Environment Officer and more recently as an Honorary Canon at Sheffield Cathedral. What I love about Cathy is her absolute commitment and dedication to everything she does – she's passionate, she has boundless energy and, perhaps most important, she is deeply kind. She is also brave and willing to speak clearly and confidently about things that she cares about and people who need supporting. I have every confidence that she will continue to represent the people of this Diocese with vigour and care on General Synod.'

The Very Revd Abi Thompson, Dean of Sheffield Cathedral

Thanks for reading my statement. If you plan to vote for me, thanks for your support. I hope you'll give me your **first preference vote**, with Christine Batchford, another inclusive candidate, as your **second preference**.

ANY QUESTIONS? PLEASE EMAIL
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