The next Bishop of Loughborough has been announced by 10 Downing Street as Reverend Canon Gulnar Eleanor Francis-Dehqani, currently Curate Training Officer and Advisor for Women's Ministry in the Diocese of Peterborough and Canon at Peterborough Cathedral.

Announcement on 10 Downing Street Website:

Announcement from Diocese of Leicester

The Revd Canon Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani has been appointed as the first Bishop of Loughborough. The announcement was made from 10 Downing Street this morning (Tuesday 11 July).

Canon Guli Francis-Dehqani currently leads Curate Training in the Diocese of Peterborough. She is also Adviser for Women's Ministry for the diocese, a Canon at Peterborough Cathedral, and sits on the Church of England's governing body, the General Synod.

As the first Bishop of Loughborough Guli will take a full role in the work of the Church across Leicester and Leicestershire, but the post will also have a focus on supporting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) clergy, lay workers and congregations in the county.

"I'm very excited about the potential for this role which draws together several important themes in the current life of the Church," says Guli. "Whilst being a bishop for the whole diocese, it will be a particular joy and a privilege to learn from and draw out the rich resources of Christians from minority ethnic communities."

Born in Isfahan, Iran, Guli's family was forced to leave the country in the wake of the Iranian Revolution in 1980. She was 14. She attended Nottingham and Bristol Universities and was ordained in 1998, serving in Southwark diocese. Among other positions, Guli was Chaplain to the Royal Academy of Music in London for 2 years.

"Guli's rich understanding of the world Church, together with her experience of training and pastoral work in the UK, will be a huge asset to our diocese," said the Bishop of Leicester, the Rt Revd Martyn Snow. "I am looking forward to working with her as a close colleague and I know from my own experience that she and her family will receive a very warm welcome from the diverse communities of the city and county."

A mother of three school aged children, Guli is married to Canon Lee Francis-Dehqani, Team Rector of Oakham in Rutland. Before becoming a priest Guli worked as a religious programmes producer for the BBC.

Guli will be consecrated as Bishop of Loughborough by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, in Canterbury Cathedral on Thursday 30 November and welcomed to Leicester Diocese at a service in Leicester Cathedral at a later date.