

General Synod has given its support to a proposal from the Diocese of Leicester to request HM The Queen to create a new See to be called the Bishop of Loughborough. It is the first such new episcopal position since the See of Brixworth was created in 1987.

The Bishop of Loughborough will support the Diocese to grow new churches specifically those that reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the area. This is part of a strategy that has already received financial support from grants as part of the national programme of Renewal and Reform, which offers a hopeful future for the Church.

Introducing the proposal at General Synod, the Rt Revd Martyn Snow, Bishop of Leicester, said: 'At the last count there are now over 100 BAME majority churches in Leicester - our issue is that only three of them are Anglican.

'If we truly want to be inclusive of all who live in our parishes, then we have to heed the cultural changes and challenges within our cities.'

'I hope that he or she will provide both a role model and a prophetic challenge to our church, which has for too long talked a good talk, but failed to act on God's calling.'

Michael Clarke, Chair of the Dioceses Commission spoke in the debate in favour of the proposal saying that it will have minimal financial impact and will further the mission plans of the Diocese.

Following the vote at General Synod, Martyn Snow said: 'Receiving such strong support from General Synod now allows me to petition Her Majesty the Queen for the creation of the See of Loughborough. It was encouraging to hear so many voices in favour of this proposal, particularly its focus on Loughborough and the role of the new bishop in growing the generosity and confidence of Christian communities across the diocese in serving their local communities.'

Background

The text of the motion: 'That this Synod approve the proposal to petition Her Majesty in Council to direct under the Suffragan Nominations Act 1888 that the town of Loughborough be taken and accepted for a see of a suffragan bishop as if it had been included in the Suffragan Bishops Act 1534.'

The Diocese of Leicester was created in 1926. It was formerly part of the Diocese of Peterborough. The diocese has never had a Suffragan See but since 1987 there have been a series of Stipendiary Assistant Bishops, three of whom were consecrated elsewhere in the Anglican Communion and one was translated from Aston. The current Stipendiary Assistant Bishop Christopher Boyle will retire in May 2017.

The Bishop of Loughborough will work across the whole diocese and the role will focus on three key areas of mission and ministry which are central to the diocesan strategy in coming years:

- Sharing faith with confidence and generosity
- Building relationships with other faith communities
- Enabling greater representation and engagement of BAME Christians

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