

**GENERAL SYNOD
HOUSE OF LAITY**

Briefing Paper on Casual Vacancy in the House of Laity

Context

1. In June 2020 the House of Bishops agreed to the creation of an Archbishops' Taskforce, as a precursor to the creation of a Commission, to implement cultural and structural change on issues of racial justice within the Church of England. The Taskforce produced the Report '*From Lament to Action*', published in April, 2021. This recommended the co-option of five UKME/GMH candidates to the House of Laity which was supported by the House.
2. Before the July 2022 group of sessions, the House met to confirm the co-option of five UKME/GMH people. The co-opted members were Mr Abishaq Leel, Mr David Hermitt, Mr Jesvin John, Mr Kenson Li and Mrs Wendy Kasenene. In January 2024, Mrs Wendy Kasenene resigned and Mr Piyush Jani was co-opted.
3. Since then, Mr Kenson Li has informed the Standing Committee that he will cease to be eligible as a member of the House of Laity when he is ordained on 29 June. This means there will be a vacancy for a UKME/GMH co-opted member as of 30 June 2025.
4. The usual process for casual vacancies within two years of an election is that the existing results are recounted with the individual who has resigned removed from the count. It has been agreed by the Standing Committee that this approach be taken rather than a process starting from scratch.
5. When seeking to co-opt five UKME/GMH members, there were 29 UKME/GMH people who expressed an interest in joining the House as a co-opted member. The process followed in 2022 was that members of the House were invited to express their preference from among those that stood for nomination and a shortlist was provided to the House of the five individuals selected using the STV process.
6. Staff have rerun the STV process, removing Wendy Kasenene and Kenson Li. The next person was Debbie Parkes. However, she no longer wished to be considered for co-option. Therefore, the process was rerun removing her name as well and the result is that the next person to be selected would be Josile Munro. The Standing Committee support the proposal that Josile Munro should be considered as the selection for the casual vacancy when it comes into effect. Her statement is attached below.
7. The procedure for co-option to the House is set out in Standing Order 8 and rule 48 of the Church Representation Rules:

- The House of Laity may co-opt a lay person aged 18 years or over who is an actual communicant.
 - The number of co-opted members of the House may not exceed five at any one time.
 - At least two-thirds of the Standing Committee must first consent to the named individual(s) being co-opted.
 - Fourteen days' notice must then be given to the whole House on the motion(s) to co-opt the named individual(s). Each proposed co-optee must be voted on in a separate motion. No motion shall be acted upon unless not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting are in favour.
 - A co-opted member serves until the dissolution of the Synod, save that the House may impose a shorter term of membership than would otherwise be the case.
 - Co-opted members have the same rights and are subject to the same requirements as an elected member.
8. The motion to consider the co-option of Josile Munro will be presented to the House at the online meeting on 9 June 2025 at 6.30pm. It is hoped that if the House is in favour of this co-option, Josile will be invited to attend the July 2025 group of sessions.

**Dr Jamie
Harrison Chair,
House of Laity
May 2025**

Dear House of Laity Member

I have been encouraged to apply for co-option to House of Laity of the General Synod due to my experience and commitment to synodical government. I have more than 25 years of experience of representing the concerns of lay people in church government. As an active member of various synods, councils and committees, I have listened and worked with people from a variety of traditions to reach good decisions which are Christ centred.



As a lay member I would work for the following :

- a church which is bolder in proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. I would like us as a synod to improve our discipleship and the discernment of ministers. I would as a member be aiming to that our Lord is always central to any of the decisions we make in General Synod.
- a simpler, humbler, inclusive, safer and younger church which is bolder in addressing unjust and unfair practices. I want the synod to help our church to actively undertake and promote actions which will address the environmental crisis and the climate change emergency.
- a Christ centred church which is focussed on the five marks of mission, outward looking and is relevant to all those who live in this country.
- a Church that is welcoming, open minded and has a generosity of spirit which is encouraging and values different traditions that make up our Church and the contributions they make.

Who is Josile?

- I am an active 58-year-old committed Anglican worshipping at the United Benefice of Holy Trinity with St. Philip, Dalston and All Saints', Haggerston in the London Diocese.
- I regularly participate in worship which includes reading and leading Intercessions, psalms and occasional devotional study (e.g., Stations of the Cross).
- I undertake Sacristan duties and have trained a team of servers which include children and adults.
- I am a member of the London Diocese's Cursillo movement.
- I hold a science degree, a professional qualification in consumer protection and a post graduate management qualification. I have had previous experience of managing a number of services and a large budget. I currently work professionally in consumer protection and business regulation. I have a sense of humour, enjoy reading and keeping fit.

What experience can I offer?

- I have participated in general synod debates, presentations, committees, and represented General Synod on other committees.
- I chaired the steering committee for the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 2018 and presented the measure to General Synod during a debate and answered questions. I also presented this measure to the Ecclesiastical Committee in Parliament and answered questions.

- In the previous quinquennium I was elected to the Mission and Public Affairs Council. I actively participated in all of the councils' meetings. I also promoted its work and decisions during synod. As a member of this Council, I was appointed to the Clewer Project Board. The project board supports the work of the Clewer Initiative which is responsible for raise awareness of modern slavery as well as working with others to reduce the incidence.
- I have been a member of the Fees Advisory Commission for more than 3 years.
- I am one of two trustees of the Whitelands College Foundation (a constituent part of Roehampton University) who has been nominated by the Archbishops' Council.

What is my experience of other church roles ?

- I am a member of the Diocesan Bishop's Council and the Diocesan Finance Committees.
- I am the Lay Chair of Stepney Area Council which supports the Bishop of Stepney in decision making.
- I am the chair of the Diocesan Board of Patronage and have been involved in interviewing priests for three parishes of different traditions in the Diocese.
- I have held other church leadership roles which includes : Lay Chair of Hackney Deanery Synod (1996-2002), Lay Chair of my PCC during two interregnums most recently in 2017-2018 and now currently its vice chair.
- I helped set up my parish safeguarding working group and I chair my parish finance working group.
- I am an assessor (examining chaplain) for those involved in discerning their vocation. I was previously a Bishop advisor panel member. I have interviewed clergy applying for the strategic leadership development programme discernment process.
- Most recently I was member of appointment panel for the new Archdeacon of Hackney and the new Dean of St Pauls.

I aim to use both my church and professional experience an active member of the House of Laity.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need to know more or have any questions.
Thank you very much for all your support.

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