Deans of the Convocation of York

Nominations

The following candidates have been nominated for election to General Synod by the Deans of the Convocation of York:

The Very Revd John Dobson, Dean of Ripon

Nominated by the Very Revd Abi Thompson, Dean of Sheffield and the Very Revd Philip Hobday, Dean of Wakefield

(No election address supplied)

The Very Revd Dr Timothy Stratford, Dean of Chester

Nominated by the Very Revd Sue Jones, Dean of Liverpool and the Very Revd John Dobson, Dean of Ripon

DEAN
Very Revd Dr Tim Stratford

CHESTER
CATHEDRAL

2 September 2026

Dear Colleagues,

GENERAL SYNOD ELECTION ADDRESS – NORTHERN DEANS

I have thought long and hard about whether I should put my hat in the ring to be a Dean Proctor on General Synod. The main thing that has weighed on my mind has been my chairmanship of the College of Deans. I don't want to be overbearing and have been concerned about holding two national responsibilities. On the other hand, I have also been encouraged to see that having the Chair of the College on General Synod will improve our connectedness with the national church's conversations and agendas. My Diocesan Bishop has gently pushed me to consider this as he was previously Chair of the TEIs and was elected to General Synod for similar reasons. So, I put this to you, as it is rightly your decision.

I have talked this over with Sue Jones and John Dobson and am grateful for their support in nominating me.

You no doubt already know me well enough, but just so that you can be confident who you would be electing if you were to lend me your vote, I:

- …am committed to a church with a low threshold that is open to people of all shades of belief wherever they are on the journey of faith, even if they have not yet started or are on a different journey to me
- …seek to speak with a relevant and clear voice that announces the Kingdom of God in society and the public square
- …long for an inclusive church in every meaning of that word that does not "other" people, nor does it crush love
- …have been formed by the liturgy of the Church of England throughout my adult life, am committed to regular prayer, and love the music that has enriched our worship for centuries
- …believe that cathedrals have a vital place in the eco-system of the Church of England as exemplars of missional, prophetic, pastoral and liturgical practice that have the potential to lead the whole church in the ways of Christ

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- ...love the Church of England and long for it to fulfil what its Vision, Strategy, Priorities and Marks of Mission state
- ...want to support our bishops as brothers and sisters charged with the responsibility of leading us in our mission and believe that our cathedrals are important platforms for them
- ...do not subscribe to fixed party lines having been nurtured as an evangelical Christian in my local parish church and Christian Union, learning to deeply appreciate the mystery of catholicity in worship and radical social engagement, and enjoying the spaciousness that my open and liberal cathedral offers me and all who encounter God within it
- ...as a parish priest served briefly in suburban inner city and large town churches; I have spent twenty years leading two high IMD outer city council estate parishes on the edge of Liverpool; I have served as Chaplain to David Sheppard at a very formative time for me, was Archdeacon of Leicester and have now been Dean of Chester for eight years.
- ...have served on General Synod before both as a Parish Priest and as an Archdeacon, much of that time as a member of the Liturgical Commission, which has given me sufficient experience to be effective from the off.

I hope this gives you sufficient background to know whether you want to support me in this role or not. If you are minded to support me, I would like to seek your first preference vote. In such a small constituency as the Northern Deans it is only the first preferences that are likely to count in the end.

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