

GUILDFORD DIOCESAN SYNOD

BISHOP'S COUNCIL BY-ELECTION 2026

1 CLERGY MEMBER AND 1 LAY MEMBER

Following the resignations of Revd Chris Bessant and Mr Gordon McFarland from the Bishop's Council, there is now a requirement to fill the vacancies for one elected clergy member and one elected lay member.

The Bishop's Council is the Standing Committee for the Diocesan Synod, advises the Bishop and helps to form policy for the diocese. It provides oversight of the diocesan strategy and aligns resources, both financial and people, to ensure the strategy is fulfilled. The Guildford Diocesan Board of Finance is both a charity and a company limited by guarantee. The Bishop's Council members are the trustees of the charity and the directors of the company (they also become ex-officio members of the company if they are not already members of Diocesan Synod). In addition, they sit as the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee and the Parsonage Board. It is expected that the Council will meet up to nine times per year plus a Saturday away-day. Meetings (except the away-day) will normally be from 5.30 – 7.30pm. Any successful candidate will take office following the election count and remain in post until 31st December 2027.

The meeting dates for 2026 are:

Monday 12 January	Monday 23 February	Monday 23 March
Saturday 18 April (Away Day)	Monday 27 April	Monday 18 May
Monday 8 June	Monday 20 July	Monday 7 September
Monday 5 October	Monday 2 November	Monday 7 December (if required)

According to Synod standing orders, the Bishop's Council shall consist of:

Ex-officio members

- The Bishop of Guildford
- The Suffragan Bishop of Dorking
- The Dean of Guildford Cathedral
- The Archdeacon of Surrey
- The Archdeacon of Dorking
- The Chair of the Board of Finance
- The Vice-Chair of the Board of Finance

Elected members

- The Chair of the House of Clergy of Diocesan Synod (Vice-President)
- The Chair of the House of Laity of Diocesan Synod (Vice-President)
- 4 ordained persons having the Bishop's licence
- 6 lay persons on the electoral roll of a parish in the diocese or declared by the Dean to be a habitual worshipper at the Cathedral

Elected members must not be disqualified from serving as a company director or charity trustee.

Co-options

- The Council may co-opt up to 4 additional members

Nominations

- The Bishop may nominate up to two additional members.

The House of Clergy of Diocesan Synod, therefore, needs to elect 1 clergy member and the House of Laity of Diocesan Synod needs to elect 1 lay member. Synod Standing Orders require that clergy and lay candidates are elected by their respective Houses.

Each nomination must be proposed and seconded by members of Diocesan Synod **from the same House as the candidate**, and all three must complete and sign the relevant form (i.e. the candidate must complete, sign and return the candidate form, the proposer must complete, sign and return the proposer form and the seconder must complete, sign and return the seconder form).

Please note if the proposer or seconder changes after the candidate form has been submitted, the candidate form will need to be updated with the new details and resubmitted by the candidate.

Nomination and supporting papers must be received by the Presiding Officer at synod@cofeguildford.org.uk so as to arrive not later than **12 noon on Monday 2nd February 2026**

If there are more candidates than places for any election, a ballot will be held. Voting papers will be emailed to all members of the relevant House of Diocesan Synod, who are the electors.

Disclosure and Barring Service

Any successful candidate will be required to undertake a DBS check and will be contacted following the election to advise how the process will take place.