

## **Diocese of Lichfield**

### **Vacancy in See Committee**

The nomination of a diocesan bishop is a thorough and prayerful process of discernment, involving the Diocese and the wider Church of England, which culminates in approval being given by His Majesty The King.

This detailed journey involves the Vacancy in See Committee, a central diocesan body that includes a diverse range of clergy and lay representatives from the Diocese (such as archdeacons, Area bishops, and General Synod members, and elected members). This diverse group does not nominate the next diocesan bishop but one of its primary tasks is to work together to create the Statement of Needs. This comprehensive document details the Diocese's specific spiritual, pastoral, and practical requirements, making it the foundation that underpins the entire nomination process.

#### **The Vacancy in See Committee: Role and Operation**

A Vacancy in See Committee must exist continuously in every diocese, though it only convenes when the diocesan bishop's post becomes vacant.

Once a vacancy is announced, the Committee is required to hold at least two meetings, though the reality is that many hold more. The initial meeting is held as soon as possible and is primarily an opportunity for the Committee to meet one another. At its second meeting and beyond, the Committee focuses on the needs of the Diocese. The Committee is joined by the Archbishops' Secretary for Appointments (currently Stephen Knott) who briefs the committee on the timetable and process. Following these discussions, the Committee drafts the Statement of Needs and sends it, along with any requested factual details about the Diocese, to the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC), the body tasked with nominating the next Diocesan Bishop.

The Committee also has the task of electing representatives from among its members to serve on the CNC. This election uses the single transferable vote method, following General Synod Standing Orders. Amongst other constraints, it is mandated that at least half of the elected representatives must be lay members of the Committee.

#### **Composition of the Lichfield Diocesan Vacancy in See Committee**

The Committee's composition ensures broad representation from the Diocese:

- Area and other Suffragan Bishops (four seats)
- The Dean of the Cathedral (one seat)
- Archdeacons (two seats, representing all Diocesan archdeacons)
- Proctors to the Lower House of Convocation of the General Synod (currently 6 seats)
- Elected members of the House of Laity of the General Synod (currently 7 seats)
- Chairs of the House of Clergy and of the House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod (2 seats)
- Elected Members: 2 clerical and 10 lay (12 seats in total)
- Bishop's Council Nominations: Up to four nominations. (No nominations at present)

The Chair of the Committee is Chris Gill, a lay member of General Synod. The Chair may not be elected as a CNC representative. A Vice Chair is elected from within the membership of ViS at its first meeting.

The Secretary to the Committee (Sam Rushton) is not a member of the Committee but provides logistical and other support to the Committee as required.

### **Draft Timetable**

The first meeting of the Vacancy in See Committee takes place soon after the announcement of the episcopal vacancy is made. Crafting and agreeing the Statement of Needs is expected to take around 6 months to complete and then the Crown Nominations Committee take the process forward from then. It is likely that interviews for the next bishop will take place mid-2027 and we hope that a new bishop will be installed by or soon after the end of 2027.

### **Statement of Needs**

The group tasked with drafting the Statement of Needs will be informed by consultations with a broad range of groups across the diocese to ensure that a breadth and depth of views are heard. More information regarding how parishes and other stakeholders will be able to contribute will be shared soon via deanery synods, the diocesan website and the Bulletin. To subscribe to the Bulletin, go to the diocesan website or follow this link:

<https://anglican.us2.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=acaad43ba0b06e97275112db2&id=f9cc4ac00f>

### **Prayer and Worship**

This a prayerful discernment process. The Dean and Chapter of our cathedral will support the prayer and worship life of the Committee. Everyone in the diocese is encouraged to pray for the Vacancy in See Committee, for the Crown Nominations Committee and that God will already be calling the man or woman that He has chosen to this task. Prayers for the process and for the diocese will be shared soon to help every parish to be part of this journey in faith.

**Sam Rushton**

**March 2026**