To: Rural Deans & Lay Chairs
Copied to: Deanery Synod Secretaries

19 March 2021

Dear Colleagues

ELECTIONS TO DIOCESAN SYNOD 2021

The time is approaching when the three-yearly elections to Diocesan Synod need to be conducted. In this letter I have consolidated the whole process and, whilst detailed and lengthy, I hope it will be helpful in the long run.

The electorate for these elections are the members, respectively, of the Houses of Clergy and Laity of the deanery synods. Under the Church Representation Rules (CRR, or 'the rules'), the Bishop sets the timetable for the election and appoints the presiding officers. As in past elections, the Rural Dean and Lay Chairs of deanery synods will act as the presiding officers. Each will preside over the election by the other's House.

In order to assist you with this I enclose various documents for your information and use:

1. A table showing the number of clergy and lay representatives your deanery needs to elect
2. Timetable for the election
3. Specimen Notices of Election to House of Clergy / Laity of Diocesan Synod
4. Specimen Nomination Form
5. Specimen Voting Paper
6. Election results sheet
7. Specimen letter to accompany the notice of election

Confirming List of Electors

By Thursday 8 April 2021, I will send a printout of the names and addresses of the clerical electors and lay electors in your deanery to your deanery secretary. The membership print out is important as it acts as your deanery's registers of clerical and lay electors.

By Thursday 22 April 2021, the deanery secretary must certify to me in writing that the names and addresses are correct; or alternatively notify me in writing of any necessary corrections. Please email: lorna.todd@cofesuffolk.org

By Thursday 29 April 2021, I will then send you as the presiding officers a copy of the corrected list of electors' names and addresses relevant to the election you will be conducting (clergy list for lay chairs; laity list for rural deans.)

If your deanery does not currently have a secretary, please nominate someone in the deanery to act as such for the purpose of these elections and let me know his/her name and email address by Wednesday 31 March 2021 by sending an e-mail to lorna.todd@cofesuffolk.org.

The timetable thereafter is as set out in enclosure 2.

Seeking Nominations

By **Tuesday 11 May 2021,** you must send a copy of the Notice of Election, accompanied by a nomination form, to all the qualified electors in your deanery for the election you are conducting. Sadly, this has to be by post this year. We hope this will be different in three years' time. Any election expenses you incur, such as postage, will be reimbursed from diocesan funds. To do this, email: DBF.Invoices@cofesuffolk.org with the expenses details, or send by post to the diocesan office (4 Cutler Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 1UQ). All claims must be submitted by 30 September 2021.

You will note that the specimen nomination form requires nominations to be received by **12 noon on Tuesday 8 June 2021.** You may change this date, but you must specify a date not less than 21 days after you send out the notice of election. It is recommended that you adhere to the 8 June date. Completed nomination forms can be returned to you by post, by fax, or in person. If sent by fax, the original nomination paper must be received by you within three days of the closing date for receipt of nominations (ie by 11 June, if you specify 8 June as the closing date for nominations.)

We realise that due to current government restrictions, it is likely to be very difficult to ensure the signatures of the proposer, the seconder and the candidate are all captured on the one nomination form. For this year, three separate forms with the separate relevant signatures, per nomination will be accepted, as long as they reach the diocesan office by the deadline (8 June). Once received, they will be collated.

It is possible for the list of qualified electors to change between 22 April and the close of nominations. This may occur if, for example, a parish elects someone to fill a vacancy in the House of Laity at its 2021 Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). It is important that I am informed of any such changes as soon as they occur, since after close of nominations no names may be added or removed from the registers of electors until after the declaration of the election result.

Voting

If, by the closing date for nominations, there are more valid nominations than seats to be filled, you should send out voting papers to all the qualified electors. The rules require a minimum period for return of voting papers of 14 days. The timetable suggests that you send voting papers out by **Tuesday 15 June** (which gives you a week to prepare them after close of nominations) and that you require their return by **12 noon on 6 July,** ie. giving people 21 days to return them. Please note that it is a requirement of the rules that, to be valid, the elector must sign the voting paper on the reverse and add his/her full name.

The election itself is conducted by post and not in a meeting of a deanery synod. It must be completed by **Thursday 15 July 2021** and a return of the result sent to me as soon as possible and in any event, not later than Sunday 1 August 2021. At the same time, you must send a statement of the result to every candidate.

Clearly, if there are no more candidates nominated than the number of seats to be filled, those candidates will have been elected 'unopposed', and you can send me a return of the election, giving each elected member's name, address, telephone number and email address as soon as the closing date for nominations has passed. You must also inform the successful candidates.

Please contact me if you have any queries. All the necessary information is contained in the current edition (2020) of the Church Representation Rules, rules 35-42, which can be downloaded from the Church of England website:
https://www.churchofengland.org/search-results?keys=church+representation+rules.

Yours sincerely

Anna Hughes
Diocesan Secretary