



## Nick Moir

*Vicar, St Andrew's Chesterton*

*Ministry Training Officer for the diocese*

*Member of Diocesan Synod & Bishop's Council*

### Diocesan & national experience

I have been in the Diocese of Ely since 1994 (when I became chaplain of St John's College) and have been an incumbent for 23 years. I have served on the DAC and the Spirituality Advisory Group; been a Subwarden of Readers and involved in Reader/LLM training for 22 years (and been responsible for it for the last eight); been a Rural Dean three times, and an Honorary Canon since 2012. I have been involved with training local contextual ordained ministers and am a senior reviewer (for the House of Bishops) of TEIs (theological colleges & courses). I was elected to the General Synod in 2015 and therefore am standing for a second time.

### Special interests

Given my cv it is perhaps not surprising that my twin passions in church life are **parish ministry** and **ministerial formation**:

- Those involved in the *Save the Parish* campaign are perhaps not my natural allies and bedfellows, but I have some sympathy with the desire to re-assert the centrality of the parish to the Church of England's ministry (as well as chaplaincy and other missional settings where there is a strong pastoral engagement with those outside the bubble of the church). I value enormously having been formed in a church tradition that has mission and evangelism at its heart, but I have always ministered in the 'middle ground' of the Church of England that has given me a greater breadth of sympathy, an instinct for meeting people where they are, and a theology that is pastoral as well as missional. I love the diversity of the Church of England and for seven years have supported one of the most anglo-catholic parishes in the diocese (St Clement's, Cambridge) as it has, under God, rebuilt its vision, transformed its buildings and drawn in a new generation of worshippers.
- I believe that the future health of our 303 parishes and other mission/ministry contexts depends on (a) the Holy Spirit and (b) widening the pool of lay and ordained ministers through imaginative strategies and well-resourced training/formation. I am passionate about finding and equipping new, larger and more diverse cohorts of ministers – lay and ordained – who are both confident and humble in faith and are shaped by a theological formation that has academic rigour but is also prayerfully attuned to the needs and longings of contemporary culture. I co-ordinate Licensed Lay Ministry training in the diocese (with and through ERMC) and host a Tuesday evening centre where (until Covid confined us to Zoom) LLMs and ordinands train together with a Benedictine-cum-Alpha model of eating, praying and studying together.

## Issues & alliances

- When I joined General Synod six years ago I found I didn't really fit into any of the party groupings. Though I increasingly value the sacraments and catholic elements of our tradition, I have too many blue shirts (various shades) for Catholic groups and I found the Evangelical Group's line on sexuality too hostile; the Open Synod group runs great quizzes but I need more orthodox theology than that.... I have been part of the recently formed Evangelical Forum and have valued their non-judgmental commitment to exploring thorny issues.
- Generosity and inclusion are high up on my list of important words and I am happy to affirm the core statement of Inclusive Church: 'We are committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality.'
- I voted against taking note of the 2017 House of Bishops report on sexuality as I thought its tone was wrong and it lacked generosity. The loss of the vote in the House of Clergy led the bishops to some fresh soul-searching and to the *Living in Faith and Love* process. I am not sure that the Church of England is ready for 'equal marriage' - and there is a way to go in discussing the ethics of what goes on in the bedroom – but I believe the failure to welcome and bless those in loving relationships in any way is rightly seen by many as mean-minded, and is missionally disastrous.
- Though it had the danger of being a 'kicking into touch' exercise I think the *Living in Faith and Love* approach has been excellent – and a model of how we should be engaging with the difficult issues that face both the church and the world. When the General Synod has moved into LLF mode in its conversations the quality of interaction has increased many-fold: it has been a privilege to be part of it.
- I confess to voting against the 2030 deadline for the Church of England becoming carbon neutral – not because I thought it a wrong aim but because I'm not sure it's attainable and may just leave many parishes dispirited. But we have voted for it and at least it gives us a clear target to aim for. Climate change is the most important issue of our age and every level of church government must now have the 2030 target as a highest priority.
- The third big issue for the next Synod will be tackling racism and working for a greater inclusion in the light of the recent report *From Lament to Action*. The Synod has actually been quite good in widening the pool of those who, for instance, chair debates. I hope and pray that the new Synod will include an even greater diversity and help us to be the Church of England and not just the Church of Middle-England.
- But while I would warmly welcome a greater representation from this diocese of women, ethnic minorities, younger people and others, I hope that there might be still be room for one middle-class, Oxbridge-educated, white, grey-haired male. So please vote for me too!

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