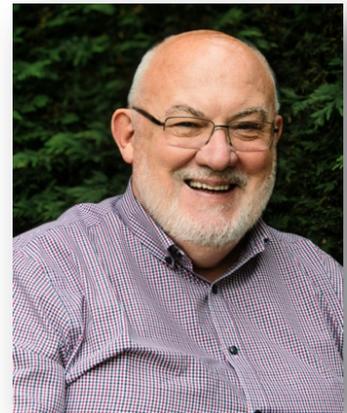


## General Synod Elections 2021

### DR ALAN DOWEN

[alan.dowen@me.com](mailto:alan.dowen@me.com) | 07715 564975

17 Brookside | Ashton Hayes | Chester | CH3 8BZ



**Nominated by: Canon Dr John Mason** (*Retiring Lay Chair of Chester Diocesan Synod and General Synod Member*)

**Seconded by: Canon Dr David Blackmore** (*ex-Lay Chair of Chester Diocesan Synod and General Synod Member*)

### Summary

I am a retired chemical engineer who has studied applied theology at post graduate level. I have been married to my wife, Yvonne, for 48 years and we have two adult daughters and five, amazing grandchildren.

I was born in the heart of the industrial Black Country but moved to Ashton Hayes, near Chester, with my wife in 1976 at the start of a varied career with ICI. On arrival we joined our local church and during my time in the parish, I have served as:

- a Churchwarden for ten years;
- a Reader (for 25 years and counting); and
- a member of Chester Deanery Synod, of which I have been Lay Chair for the last four years.

I was recently re-elected to Diocesan Synod and I have served on Bishop's Council since 2012. I was also a member of Chester Diocese's team which took part in the joint discussions regarding 'shared conversations on scripture, mission and human sexuality' along with teams from the Dioceses of Liverpool and Manchester.

If I were to offer a label for myself - and I hate labels - I would refer to myself as an 'Holistic Christian'. I believe that there is a balance to be found between Scripture, Reason and the Traditions of our Church but that no one of these aspects outweighs any other in importance. I am a listener, a thinker and a theorist, some have said a problem solver, and I stand for equality and inclusion in all forms. I believe that such inclusion is not only vital to the church's mission but also how Jesus taught us to be.

I am a person with a deep faith, but not a blind faith. This means that the scientific and theological parts of my brain have to co-exist in harmony and, together, make sense of what lies before me: I believe that God truly is the God of **all**.

In my spare time I read, play folk music and immerse myself in photography. I get out into the fields and wider spaces as much as I can, and I love spending time with my family – did I mention they are all amazing?

## Why General Synod?

Firstly, I am concerned that parts of the Church are being marginalised and categorised as irrelevant by a growing number in the secular population. This needs to be addressed but there are other issues which are close to my heart.

- I believe in the new vision, outlined by Archbishop Stephen, in which our Church should become simpler, humbler, bolder, Christ centred and Christ shaped.
- I want our Church to regain its reputation as a place of trust, safety and refuge with Safeguarding high on each and every agenda.
- I would like to take part in the Living in Love and Faith discussions and help to formulate a satisfactory conclusion which promotes inclusion and avoids prejudice.
- I want to support the Renewal and Reform agenda and to encourage all lay church members to engage fully in an active everyday ministry.

Wherever I can, I try to support Rural Ministry: I am concerned that rural areas are being neglected and under-resourced. Equally, I am concerned that continually loading members of our clergy, until 'their pips squeak', simply leads to excessive stress and is not a viable long-term solution: Clergy (and Lay) wellbeing is also high on my list.

## Why Me?

The Diocesan Lay Chair, John Mason, has encouraged me to stand for this election. He felt it was really important that representatives who had my commitment to lay ministry were on General Synod. He said: *"Given falling numbers, the Church of England clearly cannot rely on the clergy as it has in the past, and we really need people like you to work on General Synod to promote the role of the laity in its future mission. From working with you over many years as a fellow Bishop's Council member and Lay Conference organiser, I have no doubt you have the skills and energy needed to be a highly effective member of General Synod."*

## Why Now?

I have never been a militant activist but I am truly concerned for the future of our Church and its ministry and I feel that now is the time to make a difference. The true Gospel Message is getting lost in the noise and I want to help to navigate whatever lies ahead. Retirement, a supportive family, and an open mind have enabled me to stand for election right now.

## In Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission and I hope that you will feel able to support my attempt to seek election to General Synod. Please consider making me your first preference or, failing that, as high you feel able on your voting list. With your support, I would like the opportunity to serve and to make a difference.

If you have any questions for me, please do feel free to contact me directly.