



Rev Dr Rob Munro

(Rector of Cheadle)

Proposer: Rev Alan Ward (Rural Dean Wallasey)
Seconded: Rev Canon David Page (Vicar Elsworth)

BACKGROUND – Who I am

- Having been brought up an atheist, I came to faith in my late teens in a local parish youth group; so I have a passion for working creatively to share the faith with those outside church circles.
- I'm married to Sarah, who works as an achievement mentor in a RC primary school; and we have three adult children and a dog – but I think I can only outrun one of the four of them these days.
- I used to be a teacher in Maths and PE at Hazel Grove High School, and I remain actively involved with local schools, being known for live painting while Bible-story telling.
- I have served all my ordained ministry in Chester Diocese, in parishes in both Archdeacons, but for the last 18 years in Cheadle, where I am also rural dean.
- I still enjoying relaxing: playing music on guitar or drums (*when I'm allowed!*); reading (*Tolkien is my all-time favourite*); and computing (*programming as well as games*). Although I like the odd project too (*wood-carving is my latest effort*).
- Some light relief...? *Who is the most ruthless person in Scripture? Boaz, until he married her!*

CONTACT

Feel free to contact me if you want any more information or want to chat through any of the issues.

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The Church of England is at a watershed. Despite depressing headlines and deep challenges, I believe God is still calling us to renew the Church of England vision to bring his blessing to our nation in every community and draw people to a life-transforming faith in Him.

At its best, the General Synod can support us all to do that, if it holds to its stated vision for the 2020's to be "**Christ-centred and Jesus shaped**" in a "**Simpler, Humbler, Bolder**" church. We need a General Synod that will enable us, and not seek to burden us further, in that task.

That is why I would like the privilege to continue to serve our diocese there, so I can continue to speak up for **local Parish ministry**; for **effective community engagement**, for **urgency in mission**, especially among **younger people**; for **theological education** that enables all people to engage with God more deeply, whether lay or ordained.

In short, I pray for Synod recapture its heart for God and its heart for people; not be mired with processes and problems, but inspired by grace to encourage us in faith and service.

WHY ME...?

I bring considerable experience of **Parish ministry**, both in a 'turn-around' ministry in Davenham and a larger church in Cheadle. I know first-hand how challenging ministry and mission is on the 'coal face'.

I also bring considerable **knowledge of the Diocese**, through being Chair of Clergy, on Finance & Scrutiny, HR and Outreach committees – where speaking up for local ministry matters. Ultimately my **passion is for theology, ministry and mission**, rather than politics; but while the best ministry usually grows from the bottom up, the best encouragement can come from the top down – that's what I'd work for our General Synod to do. I love the Church of England too much to let our politics divide us or short-term pragmatism divert us from the urgent call to bring the gospel to this generation.

PLEASE VOTE!

Whether you vote for me or not, **please use your vote!**

Those elected to Synod need to know they have a positive mandate to speak on your behalf. The STV system helps - if your preferred candidate has already been elected or excluded; your second and third votes and so on can count also, that way it helps those elected to represent as wide a spectrum as possible.

If you'd like me to carry on serving you, please vote for me – 1st preferences especially gratefully received, but 2nd or 3rd would be great too!

EXPERIENCE – What I do

- On **General Synod** for Chester since 2005 – serving the **Diocese Commission** (*helping get us our 2 suffragan Bishops*), and **Statistics Reference Panel** (*good data is a great and honest aid to mission*). It has been a great privilege, and a considerable challenge, to serve the Diocese through the Synod.
- In the Diocese, I have been **Chair of House of Clergy** since 2014 (*final term ends this summer*); Chaired the **Diocesan Mission Committee** (*helping reshape it to combine all 5 marks of mission in the new Outreach Committee, to which I am now elected*); and I have served on the **Bishop's Council** since 2000.
- I am committed to excellence in **Theological Education**. I used to tutor the Readers' training, regularly lecture at **St Mellitus** (*and hopefully in the NW's new Emmanuel Theological College*); but also help coordinate the **Manchester Bible School** and **South Manchester Keswick Convention** and I still chair the **Fellowship of Word and Spirit** conference. My D.Min. was on "*Healing Ministry in a Local Church*".
- Local Parish ministry is my passion and so I chair our local **Village Partnership**, and serve the **Civic Society** and **Sure Start** centre, and represent the community on the **Towns' Fund Board** which recently was granted over £13 million for local regeneration. I'd love to see churches helped to build stronger local community partnerships.
- I also serve the wider church in other ways in mission, as a member of the **CEEC**, **Church Society** and **Latimer Trust**, upholding the historic faith; but also sharing it more widely through **Festival Manchester** Engagement group – to organise a large city-wide outreach in Manchester during summer 2022.

WHAT MATTERS MATTER IN THIS SYNOD...?

Outreach The **Archbishops' Evangelism Task Group** reports this autumn, and I support any initiatives that will help us sharing Jesus' good news. I am especially concerned for our outreach among **younger people**, whose increased stresses and Covid-isolation have left legacies of harm, while the church has found it hard to bring our reservoirs of hope to those who most need it. I am also concerned that the power of a **local parish in its community** to share faith is often eclipsed by new initiatives. New ways of engaging a fragmented society are vital, and I support initiatives to **communicate the gospel in new ways** to new communities, recognising the enthusiasm **church plants** can bring; but we need real investment with **established churches** to revision their role at the heart of their community.

Discipleship Following Jesus calls us to life-long learning and living in His grace, and so theological education and training is not just for the ordained. "**Everyday Faith**" is a key tool in enabling every church member to share the reason for the hope they have, but has yet to take root widely, that I would work for. I'd also support consideration of a **renewed Diaconate** and other **lay ministries**, but I am concerned to strengthen the **distinctive call of the priest** to a ministry of Word and Sacrament. Theological training is under review, but often seems to be more driven by the purse-strings than deepening a passion for God.

Living in Love and Faith This synod must wrestle with issues of human identity and sexuality, following up the LLF extensive study and reflection the church has been engaged in. That process has revealed some **deep hurts and fears** that need to be faced honestly, and the need to re-discover that radical grace that enables us to bring love and truth together as Jesus did. These are live issues for us all, even within my own extended family; I intend to engage fully with the ongoing reflection and debate, but I am still persuaded by teaching summarised by **Lambeth 1.10** and '**Issues in Human Sexuality**' (1991), and our challenge is to speak to these issues, not just with love and faith, but with real hope for all those impacted by them – that is what I will work for.

Other Issues I am actively engaging in initiatives to radically review the **Clergy Discipline Measure**, which is not fit for purpose; but with twin concerns for both **Clergy Wellbeing** and for **Simplification**, particularly for parishes not just clergy. I am involved in the Statistics Review Panel, partly to accelerate initiatives that will make Church reporting and **Mission Statistics processes** be more cloud based, simpler and more accessible. **Climate change** is a defining issue for this generation, not least for our link diocese in Melanesia! As a parish hosting the Camino to COP pilgrimage, I am concerned that our response as a Church is not mere gesture, but brings tangible lasting change. Finally, I am concerned that General Synod becomes more a place of **prayerful reflection** more than political action – in the end it is our Lord's Church, not ours; and faithfulness is the only effective foundation for fruitfulness in His Kingdom.

Thanks for reading all this. Remember to vote! Any support grateful received!

In Christ,