

# **Neil Robbie, Vicar Holy Trinity West Bromwich**

## **Replacing CDM - Restoring Confidence in Clergy Discipline.**

**The human cost of CDM is enormous.** The Sheldon Hub report *I was Handed Over to the Dogs* states how CDM complaints wreck mental health, have adverse effects on ministry and destroy trust in senior clergy. Sadly, CDM can happen to anyone. CDM fails to show God's love by inducing the deep fear of punishment from the outset.

As someone who has endured three vexatious CDMs, without sanction, I have gained valuable insight to many legislative weaknesses and some of the failings of the process.

Sarah Horsman of Sheldon Hub believes people with experience like mine need to be elected to General Synod to help ensure CDM's successor is fair to both respondent and complainant. Work on a replacement is proceeding but many people continue to have serious concerns. I am one of them. If elected, I will advocate for a replacement CDM which is fit for purpose by keeping up to date on developments and asking relevant and challenging questions so that my fellow clergy need never fear the pain and trauma of the existing CDM.

### **Who am I?**



I am a 6'6" tall Scotsman who was drawn, very reluctantly, to living faith in Christ whilst working as a Structural Engineer in the oil industry. I had twelve years of experience in engineering design, sales and project management before being selected to train for ministry. After discovering I'm dyslexic whilst at college, I would like to see a more dyslexia friendly church.

The Diocese of Lichfield has been my home since my ordination in 2005. My wife, Amanda, the author of *The Ministry of a Messy House* (which says it all, really), has worked with me in two multi-ethnic parishes with high levels of urban deprivation.

Amanda and I have a lurcher called Theo and three almost grown up children. Gathering and chopping wood for our log burner and shaping wood carvings helps me to relax.

### **My life before ordination.**

Before being ordained, I was licensed as a Lay Reader in the Diocese of Singapore, where I served in the majority Tamil Parish of Christ Church. Living, working and worshipping in Malaysia & Singapore taught me much about multi-ethnic church life and generous hospitality. I am working toward multi-ethnic leadership in our parish and believe **more needs to be done to facilitate multi-ethnic leadership at the highest levels of the church.**

**Relevant Experience for Synod.** I am now serving my second triennial on Diocesan synod and have served as a Vocations Advisor for 10 years. I am an *ex officio* governor at our church school and chair the Finance committee.

## Issues and commitments

I am offering to serve on synod with some expertise on the issue of **Clergy Discipline Measure**, but am aware that the government of the church involves much more.

**The Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing** was made an Act of Synod at the February 2020 Group of Sessions. Jane Tillier was a great advocate in our diocese for clergy wellbeing and work in this area needs to continue. Decisions at synod can have a beneficial or detrimental effect on clergy wellbeing. I will gladly listen to the needs of my sister and brother clergy and try to represent our perspective at synod.

**Multi-ethnic churches and leadership.** I have worked against racial segregation and toward multi-ethnic church and leadership since serving in Singapore. I believe the church needs worship resources in many languages. The House of Bishops has authorised French and Farsi translations of some liturgies but more translations and culturally relevant resources are needed for churches in multi ethnic parishes across the land.

**The Living in Love and Faith process** will be concluded in the next synod. The journey to this point began a very long time ago and has been marked by heated antagonism and deep pain. The Lord, it seems to me, is teaching us all to listen well and speak graciously as we seek the truth together in love. My aim is to engage in the process with all love and kindness.

## What others say about me

**Fr Ron Farrell SSC**, West Bromwich St Francis (proposer)

I am pleased to nominate Neil for General Synod. He contributes energy and wisdom to our deanery, collaborating across theological difference with grace and insight.

**Rev'd Elizabeth Brown** West Bromwich Deanery, PTO (seconder)

I have known Neil through our deanery. He has always given a clear and detailed report at chapter as to what is happening in his life and the Parish. He is trustworthy in his reports, therefore I think he would make a particularly good representative at General Synod.

The Good Shepherd guides His church as we listen carefully in three ways, as John Stott taught. We must listen to what the suffering world is saying; what the church across the world is experiencing and what the Lord Jesus says to us by His living word and Spirit.

If you want a chat, I can be contacted on 07810 544265 or at neilrobbie208@gmail.com