

# GENERAL SYNOD ELECTION 2021

## ROBIN WHITEHOUSE

THE DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD - HOUSE OF LAITY

Proposed by: Mary Snape, Goldenhill and Tunstall Deanery

Seconded by: Sam (Samantha) Price, Wolverhampton Deanery

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Dear Elector

It has been a privilege to serve the Diocese of Lichfield as one of the Lay Members of General Synod since I was elected in 2015. I am standing for re-election and I am therefore asking you to consider giving me your **first preference vote**, as I believe that the background and knowledge I have, along with understanding the formalities of General Synod, is what is necessary to again represent the Diocese of Lichfield in General Synod.



### ABOUT MYSELF

- 70 years old, married to Julie, have 6 daughters and 7 grandchildren.
- a lifelong Anglican.
- a Licensed Reader since 1984.
- Churchwarden at St Stephen the Martyr, Wolverhampton. Lay Chair of Wolverhampton Deanery Synod.
- Member of the Wolverhampton Area Mission and Pastoral Sub Committee.
- Board Member of St Stephen's Church of England Multi Academy Trust, and Chair of the Trust Board.
- Retired in 2014 after 44 years in Local Government.
- Enjoy gardening, walking, watching cricket and rugby and working with computers.

### I will focus on:

- Mission & Pastoral outreach to the whole community.
- Protecting the parochial system
- Racial Justice.
- Legislative Business.

Please see over the page 

## **Mission & Pastoral outreach to the whole community**

When considering the contribution of the Church's mission in any community, the importance of the parish should not be underestimated, and we should celebrate the importance of traditional models of pastoral outreach. This is particularly important if there is a church school within the parish as I am a firm believer that within the community, schools and churches remain an important part of their life, despite our country becoming more and more secular. The parish priest/incumbent remains one of the few people to both live and work within the community they serve and especially in the context of urban communities, this is a factor that needs to be affirmed and its sustainability guaranteed, during possible pastoral reorganization, especially in areas of deprivation.

In considering mission and pastoral outreach to the whole community, the congregation can play an important part under the guidance of the parish priest/incumbent because all disciples are called to a ministry of outreach. The parish system ensures that everyone, no matter what faith or none, are in the care of a Christian community, and the challenge is for parish clergy to be constantly mindful that they are parish priest to a whole community and not just a chaplain to the worshiping congregation.

## **Protecting the parochial system.**

The Church of England is a pilgrim Church serving God and open to all it needs to become a Church united that works together in a spirit of mutual respect by ensuring that all that we do in God's name continues uphold The Five Guiding Principles of the House of Bishops' Declaration on The Ministry of Bishops and Priests. Although the pandemic has changed the way people have 'accessed' services, it has in a way, diminished the importance of the Sacraments, especially in relationship to the Eucharist, by not being able to physically receive the consecrated bread and wine, this needs to be taken into consideration during the Vision and Strategy discussions.

As a Reader I had to make the Declaration of Assent which states "The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation." I therefore look to the Bible for inspiration and guidance as well as living the traditions of the Universal Church.

## **Racial Justice.**

Desperate for the hope, peace and mercy for which Christ died, justice is badly needed within the society of which we are all part, due to the rise in race and religious hate crime, and there appears to be a decline in respect and compassion on race, immigration, asylum and refugee matters.

The church has a vital role to play in this conversation. It should be a prophetic voice which calls upon government, local authorities, businesses and civil society groups to respond with integrity, compassion and love to all.

## **Legislative Business.**

As General Synod is the legislative body of the Church of England, it has to consider various legislations, for instance a change in Canon Law. Consequently, this is an important part of General Synod as the legislation which has been passed becomes part of UK law and is subject to Parliamentary Approval and Royal Assent. Having been directly involved with legal documents in some form or another, I consider that this is a very important part of Synodical Governance.

***Thank you for taking the time to read my address. I hope that you will consider supporting my election to the General Synod and give me your first preference vote.***

*May I ask you to pray for all those standing for General Synod.*

*Yours in Christ*

*Robin Whitehouse*