

ROBIN BRIMS

I was born and brought up in Heddon on the Wall a small rural and now commuter parish. This is where I worship. I spent 38 years in the Army rising to Lieutenant General. On retirement in 2007 I was appointed to reorganize a university in the Kurdistan region of Iraq which I did over 2 years. I understand leading large organizations with empowered subsidiaries. Sound communications and realistic plans are my watch words.

I have been back in the North East for the last 12 years working as a consultant in security and education. Additionally I was a board member at Norcare, a charity providing housing and treatment for the socially and economically excluded. I was Chairman until 2020 of a new charity, Oswin Projects, which seeks to place people into employment on release from prison. It recently opened Café 16 at our Cathedral.

At Heddon St Andrew I am Lay Chair and Secretary of the PCC. I am a governor of our Church of England Primary School. I am Deanery Finance Officer and currently Acting Lay Chair of Corbridge Deanery. In 2019 I led a group to review how best to allocate the Parish Share in the Newcastle Diocese. This group consulted widely across all 12 Deaneries in the Diocese and met many parish representatives. In the process I gained insights into the hopes, fears and misunderstandings at many levels in the Diocese. Our recommendations were endorsed by the Diocesan Synod in 2020 and are now being implemented.

For the last 10 years I have been Chairman of Northumbria Historic Churches Trust which makes grants to maintain church buildings of all Christian denominations in the North East. This gives me a good understanding of the issues facing parishes and congregations across the region.

As Parish Safeguarding Officer, in the process of applying to be an Authorized Lay Minister and investigating live streaming of worship, I wonder if the associated national rules and processes, important as they are, have been properly tested on a representative group prior to release on all parishes.

My aim is to bring my experience and a fresh mind to enable me to serve the Newcastle Diocese in an informed and balanced way on the General Synod. Over the next 5 years this Diocese must complete our transformation agenda and implement it. This involves significant change and recognition that 'one size does not fit all'. Therefore parishes need to be offered support, trust, time and space, rather than more rules, to make the transition while satisfying the current worshipping communities enabling them to reach out to potential growth.

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