

General Synod Elections House of Clergy Candidate: Revd Garry Ward



Vicar of Claverley & Tuck Hill

Hereford Diocese Disability Advisor

I have been a Vicar in Hereford Diocese for ten years. I have been on Diocesan Synod for 8 years and served as Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor for Vulnerable Adults for nearly three years. Since March 2020 I have been the Diocesan Disability Advisor – helping parishes to be more accessible and advising the DAC about alterations to church buildings.

My passion is for inclusivity within the Church of England. I am secretary for the Hereford Diocese Inclusive Church Forum and the Hereford Convenor for MOSAIC. I think we should accept all people whoever they are or whatever their story is. We are all human beings created in God's image and therefore, have a right to be loved, accepted and protected by the church. The church should not discriminate on grounds of gender, race, ability / disability, sexuality or any other reason. Jesus accepted all, saints and sinners alike, and so should we. We need to put aside our own learned prejudices for the greater good of God's open and free Kingdom.

I also have a passion for justice. I am a member of the Church of England Clergy Advocates and served as a Unite union representative for several years, helping many clergy who had been charged under the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM). I have campaigned against the CDM as it is not fit for purpose. I now welcome the overhaul of this system, working for a fairer more balanced approach to discipline, particularly separating minor issues from major ones. I will continue to campaign for change until the discipline system is a true, impartial and robust structure that we can all trust and have faith in.



I have been the sub-warden of Readers for Bridgnorth and Telford Severn Gorge since 2017. I believe that Lay Ministry is an integral part of ministerial life and as clergy we need good strong lay leadership to complement our ordained role within the church. I do, however, feel that the reduction of clergy in many dioceses has eroded the sacramental life of the church and lead to more people leaving due to lack of direction within many parishes. Lay leadership needs to be licensed and complimentary to the clergy, not instead of or carried out in an ad-hoc, unmonitored manner.

Finally, let me assure you if I am elected to General Synod I will work hard to represent our Diocese and our unique ministry situation in this very rural part of God's Kingdom. Rural issues are often pushed out in favour of urban and particularly inner-city issues. However, rural ministry makes up a huge part of the Church of England and rural issues should be recognised and not left out. We don't want become the second class clergy of predominantly urban lead church.