



GENERAL SYNOD ELECTIONS FOR THE HOUSE OF LAITY: HEREFORD DIOCESE : 2021

CANON DR. MARTIN ELCOCK

PROPOSED BY: Colin Bailey, Reader in Bridgnorth Deanery.

SECONDED BY: Vera Cox, Churchwarden in Bridgnorth Deanery

Dear Elector,

It has been a great privilege to serve this Diocese as a lay member of General Synod for the last twenty-one years. I worship at All Saints', Claverley, the church where I was baptised and which nurtured my faith both as a child and as an adult, and where I now serve as churchwarden.

I studied in Bristol and Manchester and have attended churches with very different worship styles over the years. I appreciate and value the breadth and diversity of the traditions which make the Church of England the rich tapestry which it is.

I am the Lay Co-chair of Bridgnorth Deanery and also its acting Treasurer. These roles have enabled me to see and better understand the financial pressures which come from sustaining the life of our churches in the often small communities which are so vital in keeping alive the flame of faith.

A little about me and what I bring to General Synod...

- I have worked as a GP and as Senior Medical Office in Hospice and Palliative Care
- I am the former chair of a homeless resettlement charity based in the West Midlands and in London in which I led through a Strategic Review and Senior Management Team recruitment process.
- I have served as a Church School Foundation Governor
- I was a member of the Crown Nomination Commission which appointed Bishop Richard Frith in 2014. More recently I served as a member of the selection and interview panel for the Archdeacon of Ludlow vacancy.

- I have been a Lay Canon of Hereford Cathedral since 2018

I find the Church at its most inspiring when it is outward facing, serving the community in which it is rooted and the wider world. This may be through support at local food banks, Christian Aid or Partners in World Mission agencies such as CMS (the Church Mission Society) and USPG (United Society: Partners in the Gospel) These are inspiring examples of the outworking of Jesus' commandment to love our neighbours as ourselves.

At General Synod I am a member of ACIS (Affirming Catholicism in Synod - the modern progressive catholic movement in the Church of England). I also attend meetings of WATCH (Women and the Church) and Accepting Evangelicals (the open and affirming Evangelical movement in the Church of England)

What of the future...

Being engaged with what is happening in the world is a personal and collective responsibility and challenge. The Covid 19 pandemic has caused unimaginable upheaval and uncertainty and has brought into sharp relief the inequalities within society. Our Archbishops are encouraging us to embrace a vision for the Church which is *Simpler*, *Humbler* and *Bolder* in order to help the Church reconnect with the lost generations of people who no longer attend Church and the many who never have. We start from the conviction that that we are all unconditionally loved and made in the image of God who wants us to live life in all its fullness.

Creating a Sustainable Net Zero Church...

The climate crisis is potentially the most pressing challenge of our times and the Church will be judged by wider society for its engagement with the issues. In February 2020 the General Synod committed the Church to be Net Zero by 2030. The extreme weather and natural disasters of recent months have confronted us with the human cost born disproportionately by some of the world's poorest and least resourced communities for whom climate change is now an urgent matter of survival. Archbishop Justin, Pope Francis and Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch, in their historic message for the Protection of Creation remind us that this is "*a Spiritual Commission requiring a response of commitment. This is a critical moment. Our children's future and the future of our common home depends on it.*"

Building a safe Church...

At long last there seems to be an acknowledgement of our failures in historic abuse cases and the need to establish a redress scheme for survivors. We need to ensure that we always put the needs of those who have suffered abuse before the reputation of the institution of the church. This will be costly yet absolutely necessary and future support and funding for safeguarding has to be prioritised.

The existing Clergy Discipline Procedures need urgent and radical reform to make them fit for purpose. Consideration might also need to be given to how unreasonable behaviour or bullying by the laity is held to account.

In conclusion...

If you have got this far, Thank you! Please do contact me if you would like to discuss anything or ask further questions. I would welcome the opportunity to be re-elected to Synod and would value either your first or a high preference vote in this election.

With all good wishes

MARTIN ELCOCK

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Creating an inclusive church...

I am committed to equality for everyone, at all levels and for all roles within the Church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality.

The *Living in Love and Faith* resources have opened new ways to engage in conversations about issues of human identity and sexuality. We need to consider how we explore what God is saying to us now about all our relationships and what it means to show God's abundant love to everyone.

The Church has been challenged and found wanting in its attitude and response to racism. It must find a way to acknowledge past failings and move to real action in vocations, appointments and representations at all levels of church life.

Building a simplified and strategic Church...

The Church is right to take a strategic approach to evangelism and the structures that support it. We must continue to simplify our rules and procedures to enhance the Church's effectiveness. There is, however, justifiable concern that too many central funds are being diverted from parishes, especially those in deprived or more remote areas, both rural and urban, to support high profile strategic development projects. We need to restore the balance of support for both the existing church communities and the development of new congregations. We need to use our ever decreasing resources more wisely.