

Fiona MacMillan

Proposer: Eugene Ling, Reader at St Martin in the Fields, Westminster St Margarets Deanery Synod.

Seconded: Savitri Hensman, Stepney Deanery Synod



About me

- I'm a trustee of Inclusive Church. I'm disabled, neurodivergent and use a wheelchair. I'm a native Londoner with one adult daughter and live in a council flat with a wild garden full of sparrows, bees and blackberries.

Church experience

- I've been part of St Martin in the Fields since childhood – I grew up in London and went to St Martin's High School. This has grounded my faith in a very practical theology.
- I have led evening prayer and intercessions, sung in the Choir and worked in the soup kitchen. I've served on PCC, Deanery and Diocesan synods.
- I'm now also active in the online congregation - as a steward for live-streamed services, leading zoom small groups for lectio divina and live-streaming compline. I hold a monthly online coffee gathering where disabled Christians talk about faith and health.
- I'm a member of the Nazareth community, practising contemplative prayer, sacrament and service. I knit hats for people without recourse to public funds.

Work experience

- After 10 years managing pioneering health projects I studied at the School for Social Entrepreneurs, becoming one of its first Fellows.
- I use my experience of disability, faith and church as a practitioner, speaker, and writer. Talks, panels and workshops have included Ely and Southwark dioceses, Praxis South, Church for Everyone, Quaker national gathering, National Justice & Peace Network, WATCH lay women, HeartEdge, Greenbelt and Southbank. I've co-edited two booklets to share ideas from the disability conference and contributed chapters to three books.
- I chair the Disability Advisory Group at St Martin's and lead the planning team for an annual conference – a space for disabled people to gather to resource each other and the church. It's a partnership of St Martin's and Inclusive Church.
- I convene the *Shut In, Shut Out, Shut Up* disability seminars on the HeartEdge platform, most recently on Ableism and Church.

Why am I standing?

- I want to advocate for disabled people at Synod. **Disabled people are 20% of the population and currently under-represented.**
- **I have some experience in how Synod works.** I've attended regularly since 2015 as a trustee of Inclusive Church, offering resources and encouragement. I've helped to organise a fringe event, speaking alongside disabled colleagues about our experiences of church. I've followed proceedings closely online.
- **I co-led an access audit of General Synod,** with Ann Memmott and Alice Kemp. We explored access and participation in the building, processes and members' experience. Findings were reported to the Business Committee and CMDDP (Committee for Ministry of and among Deaf and Disabled People). I'd like to help develop this work in the future.

What do I stand for?

- **I'm committed to equality** at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of disability, ethnicity, gender identity, mental health, neurodiversity, socio-economic status, or sexuality.
- **Jesus's life, example and teaching call us to the edge.** Too many people remain on the margins of society. The church needs to resource in different ways, rediscovering an ability for innovation by listening to and working with people. Church on the edge becomes a place of growth and human flourishing.
- **Spending priorities** are a sign of our values, particularly in times of financial constraints. We need to fully resource the work of racial justice.
- **Living in Love & Faith** LGBT+ people have been faithful despite the pain of discrimination. Equality will be an act of love, blessing a sign of hope.
- **Safeguarding** must be overseen by an independent body, as recommended by IICSA. The Church has failed repeatedly to understand our safeguarding responsibility and duty of care. We need humility, honesty and radical change.
- **Climate emergency** We need to build on plans to be carbon zero by 2030 and to end investment in fossil fuels.
- The **parish model of ministry** is a cornerstone to keep. Resources should be used to support people and clergy in developing parish ministry. A renewed vision of the parish can honour tradition and celebrate how technology is enabling more people to participate in church life.

'Fiona has been involved for many years with different equality issues. She has a gift for working with others in creative ways, exploring and living out faith, and is deeply committed to making the church accessible and welcoming for all.' Savi Hensman

Please contact me if you would like to know more

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