

RE-ELECT

CLIVE SCOWEN

Nominated by **Ade Adebajo** Chair of Diocesan Synod House of Laity, and **Robert May**, former Secretary, Harrow Deanery Synod



I have been honoured to represent London's laity on General Synod since 2005. If you would like to elect me for a further term, please give me your **first preference vote**. To discover what I believe, my priorities, what I stand for, my assessment of the situation the Church of England now faces, and what I have done in the past five years, please read on.

The Church of Jesus

The Church is Jesus's church, not ours. He is her bridegroom, head and Lord. She exists to make Jesus famous and give Him glory, so that the world, seeing Him, will believe and be saved. He calls us to do things His way, not ours. **General Synod, if it is to fulfil its role, needs to surrender to His ways, for He is God. So do I.**

Priorities and Opportunities

Our nation desperately needs to hear again the Good News of Jesus Christ, and to see it lived out in loving service in the power of the Holy Spirit. My overriding priority is to enable the Church throughout England to have **evangelism and discipleship** at the top of its agenda, to allocate finance in support of that, and to remove all impediments to effective mission. I long to see many thousands of women and men of all backgrounds, and especially younger people and folk of global majority heritage, come to personal faith in Christ and become His disciples. Nothing must be allowed to get in the way of that great task, so that all our traditions become increasingly effective in making disciples and growing the church.

Vital to that task is **unity**. We can embrace much diversity of practice and emphasis within a framework of **orthodox doctrine and a common focus on Jesus as Lord of His church**. Such unity requires that those unable to receive the ordained ministry of women be guaranteed the honoured place to flourish in this church which they were promised; and that those who are committed to the Church's historic doctrine have the right to oversight by bishops with ordinary jurisdiction who share those convictions.

At a time of great uncertainty about the future, and of fear of the effects of climate change and the risk of war, as well as lack of confidence in our political system to solve our economic and social problems, many are seeking hope and security. Around England something new is happening: people, especially younger men, are turning up at church looking for answers. **We must mobilise, equip and resource churches and individual Christians to seize these amazing opportunities to reach unchurched folk with the Gospel.**

If England is to be **re-evangelised**, the new synod will need to pursue **radical culture change** to secure a quantum increase in **prayer, equipped laity** and **financial giving**, alongside further **release of Church Commissioners' money** and **elimination of wasteful duplication**, which will require reorganisation at national and diocesan levels. We need a new wave of **church planting**, especially on **urban estates**. **Giving follows vision**: if lay people catch a God-given vision they will give generously to enable its fulfilment.

Weaknesses and Threats

There are (at least) three major threats facing the Church of England.

The greatest threat is that she may break apart over issues around **sexuality**. I believe that the Lord Jesus clearly teaches that God ordained marriage to be the lifelong union of one man with one woman, and that He calls us all to a fulfilled celibate life unless or until we enter into such a marriage. So I will **resist changing either the church's doctrine of marriage or canon law** in a way which would allow same-sex couples to "marry" in church or clergy to enter into civil same-sex marriages. I regret that the commending of **Prayers of Love and Faith** has brought fracture and disunity at every level of the Church. In my view the whole process following Living in Love and Faith, and especially the way it was done, was a huge mistake.

At the same time, we need to be like Jesus: full of grace and truth, upholding Biblical norms while loving and accepting people whose lifestyles are far removed from the demanding ethics which He taught and practised. Achieving that balance is difficult but possible with the Holy Spirit's resources. We have a **wonderfully inclusive Gospel** which is the same for all people, regardless of their "identity" or characteristics: repent - believe the Good News - receive the Holy Spirit - become a child of God by new birth - pursue holiness. **Absolutely no-one is excluded**, whatever their starting point.

The second major threat is the **clergy vocation and retention crisis**. Many more clergy are leaving active ministry and retiring than are being ordained. While recent improvements in clergy stipends and pensions should help reverse the trend over time, there is an urgent need to ensure that those considering ordained ministry are encouraged and assured of a secure future in the Church, and that clergy in their 60s (especially those ordained later in life) are encouraged to remain in post, or even take new ones, beyond 70 if they wish and remain in good health and effective in mission and ministry. Without such measures the **parish system**, so essential to the church's pastoral and evangelistic ministry, will eventually collapse.

The third threat is lack of confidence in the Church's **safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults**. Revelations of massive historical failures have shaken confidence both inside and outside the Church. On the ground our safeguarding systems and delivery are better than ever, but the perception that the Church marks its own homework must be addressed. We need independent oversight of our safeguarding work, while ensuring that professionals remain embedded in our diocesan teams (and local volunteer PSOs in our parishes and church plants), securing that safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility rather something outsourced to remote and unaccountable people who do not understand the church's needs in this area.

My record

In the last 5 years I have

- in debates over sexuality consistently opposed the Prayers of Love and Faith and any proposals which I judged would be inconsistent with the Church's doctrine of marriage or compromise the Gospel
- helped shape legislation to make the church's national governance more efficient and effective.
- been a member of the Synod's Business Committee, shaping the agendas for Synod meetings and seeking to improve the conduct of business and indeed of synod members
- for the second time, chaired the Elections Review Group which, among other things, oversaw the improvement of the electronic voting system for these elections, and reformed the rules for elections to and by General Synod and which govern diocesan and deanery synods and PCCs
- been elected to a 5-year term as a central member of the Crown Nominations Commission (which I will only be able to complete if I am re-elected to Synod), in which capacity I have participated in the nomination of a dozen diocesan bishops including the Archbishop of Canterbury
- been elected to the Dioceses Commission, which is responsible for proposing changes to the number and size of dioceses and giving permission for suffragan sees to be filled
- served on the synod's Legislative and Standing Orders Committees
- spoken and moved amendments in many debates and asked many synodical questions

Me

I am

- 68 years old and single
- a licensed lay minister and church warden at Christ Church Roxeth in Harrow
- Chair of the House of Laity of Harrow Deanery Synod
- a retired barrister and former Editor of The Law Reports and The Weekly Law Reports
- trustee of 2 charities and director of 3 charitable companies
- involved in the synodical life of this diocese at every level, currently serving on Bishop's Council and its Finance Committee, Willesden Area Council, and (ex officio) Harrow Deanery Synod Standing Committee

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Please give me your FIRST PREFERENCE VOTE