

Miss Mary Moore

Candidate for the House of Laity

Who I am: I attend the Church of St Peter's London Docks where I am the Sacristan and a member of the PCC. I have been a registered qualified nurse since 1992 and I continue to practise in nursing. I currently work in palliative care at the local hospice of St Joseph's, Hackney having worked for over thirty years in the NHS.

Why I am standing: I am standing as part of the *Save the Parish* movement. Parish life in the Church of England is being held to ransom and is at risk of being lost for ever. The number of parishes across the country being amalgamated is of grave concern, resulting in more pressure being put on the livelihoods of clergy and their families.

Valuing local parish life and my personal

experience: I am a clergy daughter and therefore I know and understand the reality of what it is like to be brought up in the environment of a busy

vicarage. For my late father, being a parish priest was a way of life, not a job: it was the vocation of being a Clerk in Holy Orders. The parish church is, and should continue to be, at the centre of each community and at the centre of our own lives. The role of a parish priest is essential: being there for people's needs whether they are regular church attendees or not.



Pulling parishes away from communities has proven to be disastrous, leading to worsening areas of deprivation, not having a priest in the parish to turn to. Living in a vicarage and being involved in so much of church life has enabled me to understand the importance of our parishes and their priests. As a family, we often encountered people in need: whether physically, mentally, being very hungry, being desperate for help in so many different forms and sometimes just needing a priest to talk to. The people were never failed by the church because those churches had a priest in that parish, who always made time for them in their hour of need.

Summer Fetes held in vicarage gardens was a joy, as they were opened to the whole community in the parish.

Autumn bazaars were held in church halls (that had not been sold off!) and were used by local people for the important events that they wished to celebrate. It was a community that valued and respected the church.

In growing up in an active parish and an open vicarage, I saw how it brought the community together; I met people from all walks of life and it prepared me for when I became a qualified nurse. The vicarage was always an 'open house', it was available and welcoming when anyone needed something, including wishing to have their child baptised, picking up banns certificates and requiring pastoral needs. The

administering of holy communion to the sick in hospital or at home for those that were house bound. This will cease if the parish life and its priests are not protected.

The need for national funding to be balanced again: The Church Commissioners were established in 1948, the same year that the National Health Service (NHS). It was set up to manage the historic assets of the church. How the assets over the years have been managed is, sad to say, similar to how money has been spent within then NHS. More and more managerial positions, more bureaucratic requirements and less and less focus on those who are on the 'shop floor': in the NHS it is our nurses, in the Church of England, it is our priests.

The Church of England is a carbon copy of what the NHS has become, in being less focused on what happens on the wards (I was a surgical ward manager and managed teams of staff for 22yrs) which are essential to being run properly for that particular hospital to be a success. Without excellent wards, the hospital is doomed to failure. It is what goes on there-and not in the offices above-that matters to the public. The wards are the front-line of any hospital. A similar need can be seen in the Church of England, in the way in which funding is organised by the Church Commissioners: the balance needs to be restored, as it once was but sadly many years ago.

Finally:

Without parishes and their priests, with the laity who it relies upon, the Church of England will be doomed. The sacraments will no longer be offered at the daily mass. What I have written (and I could carry on!) shows clearly how important saving the parish life of the Church of England is. We have these well-trained priests who are out there in the communities, they need to be allowed to get on with their roles without being constantly challenged from within by their own dioceses. They need to be resourced, looked after physically and mentally, and allowed to flourish in their parishes. This will then enable the church to grow without being hampered by unnecessary red tape that is not essential to the growing of the Church of God.

Thank you for reading this and I do hope you can understand that I am more than keen to use my experience as a clergy daughter and a nurse to stand at the up coming elections as a layman for the General Synod to represent the Diocese of London. I understand fully how important the role of parish priests are and we must therefore fight to '*Save the Parishes*' of the Church of England.

My contact details are m.moore65@icloud.com so please do contact me if you wish to discuss any points.