

Jonny Minshull-Beech



Who Am I?

My journey as a Christian started at the age of 15 in York and for the last nine years, I've attended St Simon Zelotes in London. For six of those years I worked in the City of London as a currency broker and investment writer. Prior to this, I was an intern at Christians Against Poverty.

In 2022 I left my job to work in horse racing as an Assistant Trainer. This provided something of a catalyst for my decision to stand for Synod. Racing attracts a wide variety of people, but in practice the traits which make one keen to ride horses at speeds of up to 40mph with no seat belt often go hand in hand with other risk-taking behaviour. The industry has major issues with substance abuse, poor mental health and a high rate of suicide. Sad to say, the church was almost entirely absent from the lives of people in the industry and local parishes struggled to meet the needs of their community. Services rotated across three or more villages which made them hard to attend for anyone without a car or who worked shifts. Parishes often had no full-time clergy, and were strapped for funds, despite the often heroic efforts of their congregations. The church was unable to meet with, let alone preach to, those who most needed the Gospel.

I hope to use my experience in the finance sector and in racing to advocate for structural change within the church, concentrating its effort, time and money on reaching those it was set up to serve: people up and down our country.

Save the Parish

I firmly believe that the parish structure enables the Anglican Church to fulfil its historic mission. A visible presence in every community, it makes the task of spreading the Gospel and ministering to our neighbourhood much easier.

I've seen how the parish can allow for a church to be revitalised in a short space of time. In 2011, we had a small congregation desperately hoping for revival. By providing our new vicar with accommodation, a stipend, a building, and an income to maintain the buildings, the parish structure allowed him to focus on preaching and ministering to the parish.

We have been blessed by many new people coming to Christian faith and we now have a flourishing Sunday school. We have been able to be a training post for curates and some parishioners have discerned a call to ordination and now lead churches elsewhere. As the parish has flourished so our resources and ability to be generous in mission and ministry has increased. This task would have been nigh on impossible without the parish itself, which removed so many practical and logistical hurdles that other denominations struggle with when seeking to revitalise a church.

Too often, the parish is not resourced to function in this way. I believe the situation is critical and have chosen to stand as part of the Save the Parish movement and pledge to focus my energies on these pledges, so that the Gospel can be preached and the church be salt and light in its community.

The full manifesto can be read here: www.savetheparish.com, but in the main it seeks:

- 01** To support the archbishops in keeping their pledge to support the parish as the best means of evangelism.
- 02** To put the “frontline first”, ensuring that resources that properly belong to and are generated by the parishes remain at parish level, freeing up laity and clergy for mission.
- 03** To ensure that law and projects which initiate from the centre all support and enhance the parochial system by integrating the Strategic Development Fund into the parish and opposing the revision to the Mission & Pastoral Measure which would make it easier and quicker for the dioceses to close churches, make priests redundant, and evict them from their homes.
- 04** We believe that effective mission requires the prioritisation of spending on good theological education as a crucial investment.
- 05** We will call for a Church-State commission to agree a national plan to protect and preserve historic parish buildings.

Standing on the faith received

I support ministry within the whole parish being exercised with care and compassion. But that compassion must be informed by the faith we have inherited.

The Church of England has in my opinion rightly been clear in its opposition to assisted suicide, and I uphold this position. Although motivated by a form of compassion for the terminally ill, doctor-assisted suicide would (as seen in other countries where it has been introduced) start to undermine the culture of the sanctity of life, and lead to many vulnerable elderly people choosing death in order to avoid ‘being a burden’ on their families.

Likewise, I hold to the Church's inherited teaching on marriage. I support pastoral care to all the parish and believe the invitation of the gospel to be one which is gracious, humbling and inclusive.

Mutual Flourishing

I support the current settled position of the Church of England, as articulated in the Five Guiding Principles, whilst recognising more work needs to be done to improve its implementation, in both directions.

The Book of Common Prayer

The Book of Common Prayer has been an unexpected joy to me. It was alien to the tradition I grew up in, but over time I've come to love its lucid theology and soaring prose, which are one of the Anglican Church's greatest inheritances. Not everyone will want to use the BCP, but it is important that provision is made so that it is still regularly used in worship, so that others may continue to be surprised by joy in a liturgy that they never thought would bring them closer to God.

Please can I invite you to give me your first preference vote, or as high a preference as possible.