

REVD MARTINE OBORNE – LONDON DIOCESE

PLEASE GIVE ME YOUR FIRST/HIGH PREFERENCE VOTE, THANK YOU

NOMINATED BY REVD KRISTIN BREUSS AND REVD SAM WELLS

CHAIR OF WATCH, WOMEN AND THE CHURCH (2022 to date)

HOUNSLOW AREA DEAN (2021-26)

VICE CHAIR OF BOARD OF PATRONAGE (2024 to date)

VICAR OF ST MICHAEL CHISWICK (2012 to date)



WHY I'M STANDING FOR GENERAL SYNOD

Jesus calls us to help him bring in the Kingdom of God where there is no first or last, where all people are equal in the sight of God and precious. It is the Church's calling, as the Body of Christ, to affirm this and live it out. For too long many have, both in the recent and the distant past, been complicit in theologies that we ultimately come to see as harmful and untrue to the Gospel. I feel called to stand for General Synod and show some courage in speaking up clearly for those who face discrimination and marginalisation for whatever reasons.

In our last General Synod, London was represented by only 3 female members of the House of Clergy out of a total of 11. And of the 22 London members (clergy and laity combined) 8 either did not support the ordination of women or were from churches that do not accept that women should be vicars or bishops. Only 4% of parishes in the Church of England have passed Resolutions to restrict women's roles, so we need more proportionate representation of those who fully support female clergy as priests and leaders in General Synod.

I am committed to equality for everyone, in all roles within the Church, regardless of disability, economic power, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity or sexuality.

WHO AM I?

I am the vicar of St Michael's Chiswick, a small but diverse parish. It is a joy and privilege to serve the people here and encourage them in their mission to make disciples of Jesus and bring healing to our world. I have served as Area Dean for five years, praying for and encouraging the hard-working, excellent clergy in our deanery and their teams. It has been a fabulous opportunity to witness ministry and mission across different traditions and contexts. I have learnt a lot from my colleagues.

- Ordained in 2009
- Published novels and children's books (2000s)
- Investment banking (1980-97)
- School Governor and founder of St Mary Magdelene Academy in Islington

I am Chair of WATCH, a charity that calls for equality for women in the Church of England. It is wonderful that we have so many female priests and senior clergy in the Church today. But still many hundreds of churches restrict women's roles in various ways and some serving bishops do not receive communion from our Archbishop of Canterbury because she is female. Women are expected to 'flourish' in this context, but a culture that legitimises discrimination on grounds of sex cannot help being undermining. I am concerned that the London Vacancy-in-See Committee has not specified that the next Bishop of London should be someone who ordains women: it is unreasonable to expect female clergy to be overseen by a bishop who personally does not believe women should be ordained or undertake leadership roles in the Church. Furthermore, I believe that continuing to teach (in some churches) that God created men to lead and women to submit to that leadership makes it hard for the Church to speak out about gender injustice. Women experience oppression at every stage of their lives: in some countries fetuses are aborted because of their sex; girls don't get the same medical care as their brothers; girls and young women are kidnapped and trafficked as sex slaves every day; and globally about one in three women (approximately 840 million people) experience physical or sexual intimate violence in their lifetime, according to the [World Health Organization](#). This is all a huge crime against humanity, and I would hope to help Synod work harder to combat these evils.

WHAT ELSE IS IMPORTANT TO ME?

STRENGTHENING THE PARISH CHURCH

Recently the Church Commissioners approved a plan to unite six benefices in the Kerrier deanery in the Diocese of Truro to create a single massive benefice comprising 21 churches. This follows a trajectory in most dioceses where parishes are being bundled together in ever larger groups without adequate resources.

I have been fortunate to be the vicar of a single parish in the London diocese. With the 'cure of souls for my parish', I have been able to get to know my parishioners well – whether they come to church regularly, irregularly or not at all. I have supported parishioners with christenings, weddings, funerals and many community events and services so that our church is hugely loved in the local area and people see the Church of England as a great blessing – which is what it is and has been and must continue to be. It is hard to see how I could have developed the relationships and trust that I have done in recent years, if I'd been trying to serve multiple parishes at the same time.

I support the principles of the Save the Parish campaign and would like to see small churches entrusted with greater resources. I would hope to encourage greater transparency in how the Church's finances are managed and how decisions affecting parishes are made. I believe there should also be greater accountability about the large sums of money that have been invested in big new projects and a willingness to admit and learn from investments that have failed to achieve their aims.

STANDING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH INCLUSIVE CHURCH AND TOGETHER

When I became Chair of WATCH in 2022 I tried to make clear that my calling was to help women achieve equality in the Church and to stand against the harmful oppression of women in our world. Neither I nor WATCH could fight other battles against discrimination at the same time. I soon came to see, however, that it is impossible to call out one form of discrimination and disregard others. I am, therefore, a passionate supporter of Inclusive Church and other organisations that seek to combat discrimination on other grounds.

I believe that God is concerned about how we should treat one another - with kindness, love and respect – and not about what consenting adults do in their bedrooms or whether they choose to live with a gender identity that does not match the one they were assigned at birth. This does not mean that I believe 'anything goes.' There is much cruelty and exploitation of people in our society and we, as the Church, should be calling out promiscuity, unfaithfulness and domestic violence – and honouring relationships that are committed, faithful and caring, whether they are between people of the opposite sex, the same sex or non-binary.

ENCOURAGING THE CALLINGS OF GMH AND WORKING-CLASS CLERGY AND LAY MINISTERS

Jesus called those whom others regarded as outsiders or unworthy to be the leaders of the community he was trying to build – not the religious elites and scholars of his time. We must do more to find and encourage the people God is calling to serve the Church from GMH and working-class backgrounds. Although I read Maths at Oxford, my parents raised me in my grandparents' home in Bermondsey. My parents encouraged me and my sister to work hard at school so that we could do well and give something back to society; and I was the first in our family to go to university. I believe that we all should be able to be fully our God-given selves and I go out of my way to encourage and support those held back through disadvantage or discrimination.

LOOKING AHEAD

I love the Church of England – it *is* the Body of Christ – and that is why I feel so concerned about the challenges and opportunities it faces. If elected to General Synod, I will work with integrity, courage and energy to help work with others to build a Church that is true to the Gospel and brings greater light and joy to our world.

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS STATEMENT

PLEASE CONTACT ME WITH ANY QUESTIONS ON 07805 928584 or revoborne@gmail.com