



CLARE LILLINGTON

Deanery: Newton Abbot & Ogwell

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Seconded: Daniel Butler

**Both of Newton Abbot & Ogwell
Deanery**

As a candidate for the House of Laity for General Synod 2026-2031, I am writing to introduce myself. Please take time to read my statement. I hope you will conclude that I have the skills, experience and energy to serve as one of your diocesan representatives.

Your vote in this election matters and I would very much appreciate **your first or highest preference vote**.

About me

I have lived in Chudleigh for over 40 years and have 4 adult children plus a number of grandchildren.

As a family we worship at Chudleigh Parish Church, a welcoming community with its focus on teaching and discipleship.

I enjoy walking, gardening and knitting for the family, but my current interest is book binding, both making new books and restoring the old. I am professionally trained as an accountant, and latterly I gained a BSc in Maths from the Open University. Over the years I have specialised in church and charity accounts. Through my work I have an eye for detail and enjoy working with others, qualities which are suited for being on General Synod.

Church experience

General Synod rep 2025-26

(In casual vacancy election)

Chudleigh Church treasurer &
Churchwarden

House group member

Member of PCC & Deanery Synod

Member of Bishop's Diocesan

Council & Diocesan Assets Group
Trustee of:

Chudleigh Parish Church

Exeter Diocesan Board of Finance

Exeter Diocesan Trust

Lady Lucie Rynell's Charity

Why stand for General Synod -

- Represent the concerns of our local community and diocese at national level
- Get a chance to review and vote on official church matters and national budgets using my skills in finance and governance
- Raise issues and contribute to debates on all topics facing the church
- I want the Church to be a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can hear the saving gospel of Jesus.

Underlying the work of the Synod is to understand God's will for the church as in:

Church Finance – Local churches rely heavily on congregational contributions to fund frontline ministry, but sliding attendance has squeezed these funds. The church pays 'parish share' to the diocese, that helps to support the cost of clergy. However, the central church is asset-rich with an £11 billion investment fund managed by the Church Commissioners, despite dioceses and parishes facing mounting deficits, soaring building maintenance costs and declining congregational income. We need to encourage more to be distributed from the centre.

The Parish System – There is an Anglican church in every parish in the country which is often the only large building in the rural areas providing a welcoming community space. With the decline in church attendance, some small churches could be at risk. Every parish church has an opportunity to engage with its parishioners, whether churchgoers or not, and show the love of the gospel to the community. It is a vital network. We need to keep this alive and help it thrive.

Living in Love and Faith - This is an important debate, driven by the changing attitudes of society to relationships and sexuality. I want to be part of a church that is welcoming and loving to all and which upholds traditional Christian views on marriage. I am committed to engaging in the debate in a way that respects those whose views differ from my own.

Outreach to Young People and Families – This is vital to the future of the church and for spreading the gospel. We need to encourage outreach in schools and train youth workers to engage with young people. I know my faith was enhanced by my attendance at summer camps and youth groups in my teens. We need to give today's youth the same opportunities and encouragement. They are hopefully going to be future leaders of the church.

Outreach and Evangelism – Speaking about our faith and witnessing to others takes courage. It need not be hard, we just have to be hospitable and genuine. I fully support efforts to resource local churches that are trying new ways of being church and doing mission today.

General Synod – I have learned much from my year on General Synod. Reading the papers has increased my knowledge of an array of subjects and the debates have helped me see the various points of view. There are many topics that will come up in the next quinquennium such as finance, safeguarding, Living in Love and Faith along with others. As we move into the coming five years, I'm certain there will be further topics that do challenge members.

My commitment to you in seeking election to the House of Laity of the General Synod to represent the Diocese of Exeter is:

- To give the **time and effort** to carry out my duties faithfully and prayerfully
- To be **actively involved** in Diocesan affairs to better understand local matters
- To be **available** to you by phone, email or in person to answer questions

Thank you for reading my address. I hope you will give me your first or highest preference vote.

