

DOUGLAS DETTMER

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I have served on General Synod as one of your Proctors in Convocation since 2012 and am standing for re-election because I have been encouraged by many others to do so, and equally because I feel a genuine sense of vocation to continue representing clergy colleagues in this way while offering back the experience of synodical work built up over the years. To that end, I will be grateful for your first-preference or high-preference vote in the election.

The General Synod is the only forum outside Parliament which can make the law of the land, and indeed its primary function is to shape ecclesiastical legislation. As in Parliament, much of the legislative work of General Synod is behind the scenes. Over the years I have developed a close familiarity with the Synod's ways of operating and have sought to apply that expertise both in the day-to-day work of legislating for mission nationally and by channelling it back locally, to support mission and ministry here in our own diocese.

For the past several years I have served on the central Legislative Reform Committee, which oversees the progress of church legislation through the Synod on behalf of the Archbishops' Council. As a member of the Legal Advisory Commission, I help with the shaping of advice to clarify practical questions of ecclesiastical law as the need arises.

In the last quinquennium I was invited to become one of the Synod's panel of chairs and have been glad to serve in this way. The trust of the Synod in the integrity and impartiality of the chairing is of paramount importance to me, and I have been grateful for the confidence of members across the range of considered views expressed in debate.

I am a longstanding member of the Rural Interest Group on General Synod and its predecessor the Rural Affairs Group of the Mission & Public Affairs Council, whose role has included keeping rural issues in the foreground of the church's thinking and engaging with government and other bodies on rural and agricultural policy.

In both rural and urban areas, a 'mixed ecology' is essential for the whole church's effectiveness in mission in our generation. Having been a multi-parish rural incumbent in this diocese for seventeen years, and for the past eleven and a half one of the archdeacons supporting clergy and lay people in rural and urban parishes, I remain utterly committed to the parish system as the bedrock of the Church of England's proclamation of the Gospel in our localities, and to our own Exeter diocesan vision for the growth of mission communities encompassing churches, chaplaincies, schools, and new worshipping communities of many different kinds—with the parish church at the heart of it all.

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A continuing priority for me is the need for the General Synod to strengthen its engagement with the Church Commissioners, in the expectation that a greater proportion of their investment income will be used to support 'cure of souls' parochial ministry in dioceses including our own. I strongly support the development of a greater formal role for the Synod in shaping the national Funding Framework to that end.

I have served the whole thirty-six years of my ordained ministry in this diocese. As a parish priest in mid Devon I was elected chair of our diocesan House of Clergy and for many years served as a rural dean and archdeaconry warden of Readers. In those capacities and as one of your archdeacons I have had the privilege of getting to know our large, diverse diocese and its clergy well. If re-elected, I would continue to bring to the General Synod **not the views of any one party or group but rather the perspective of the diocese as a whole**, especially its priests and deacons.

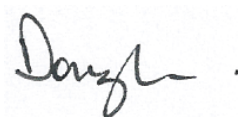
Of all the decisions taken by the General Synod over the past decade and a half, the most consequential was approval of the legislation enabling women to be ordained as bishops. I strongly advocated and voted for that legislation; at the same time, both in the Synod and in the diocese I have worked to ensure provision for those who for conscientious theological reasons are not able to accept that development, so that they and their ministries can continue to flourish within the Church of England. I so much value the fact that people with differing perspectives have felt able to consider me their representative over the years.

The outcome of the process leading to women in the episcopate and its foundational principles for our life together as a church—based on trust, mutuality, and respect for conscientious difference—are of equal significance for the work around the *Living in Love and Faith* process which ended in that particular form at the close of the last quinquennium, but of course will remain an ongoing an ongoing matter for discernment and debate in the next. My own past voting record has been on the progressive side of these questions, though since being asked to chair LLF-related debates in the Synod I have refrained from voting in them as a visible expression of the impartiality of the chairing. As a member of the national LLF working groups for part of their existence, I made it my priority above all to advocate for the whole range of conscientious views in this area to be honoured and provided for practically.

In the next stage of synodical work around teaching and practice in this and other areas, I believe the Church of England needs to walk a path which enables faithful Christians who differ in their theological and practical interpretation of scripture to stay alongside each other in good conscience. From the Elizabethan Settlement onward, history shows that the ability to do so has been one of the strengths of the Church of England, and I believe that by God's grace it can continue to be. I value the historic comprehensiveness and tolerance of the Anglican 'middle way', which when founded on deep theological integrity and spiritual authenticity are among the distinctive gifts which further our church's mission in the society we serve.

In my own ministry as a parish priest and archdeacon in this diocese, time and again I have witnessed mutual love and respect for one another across differences lived out in practice in the life of our mission communities, and I believe that with prayer and openness to God, what is possible locally is likewise possible across a diocese and nationally.

Please don't hesitate to be in touch by email, letter or phone if you would like to talk about any of this, and in any case I look forward to responding to any questions submitted through the online Q&A forum as part of the election process. With my thanks and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Douglas', followed by a small dot.