

General Synod Election Address – Dr Richard Davis, Treasurer Ottery Deanery,
Diocese of Exeter and Member of the Exeter Diocesan Buildings Strategy Committee

I have recently retired from a career of leadership in the Armed Forces, in business, in the charity sector and in Central Government. I have contributed to profound change in organisations large and small, as they face up to their challenges and the needs of their people. I have been a member of the Church of England for nearly 40 years and have already held various lay positions at parish, deanery and diocesan level. I hope now to contribute to the national Church's counsels as it faces the biggest issues of the time in the Church. In the issues facing General Synod, I would be guided by a vision of a church that flourishes by showing God's love *for* all the world, *to* all the world. The Church of England I seek to help build is one that is based on the principles of having a witness in every community and showing our love to our neighbours. I have a particular heart for church fellowships that are struggling to keep going.

Relationships are important to me. I would like to be a channel of communication between General Synod and the synods of the Diocese of Exeter and deaneries in the Diocese, including my Deanery (Ottery) of which I am the Treasurer. I would therefore offer myself to talk to diocesan and deanery synods and listen to what their members say about the work of General Synod.

It is important to me that General Synod exemplifies God's love in its counsels. My attention in Synod's agenda would be on the most profound needs of humanity, spiritual and practical. Synod's actions should shape the Church's response *to* the needs of the world, and the Church should organise itself to act most effectively *in* the world. Synod should also exemplify God's love in the way its members work with each other. It should demonstrate Christian behaviour to the wider world. The issues General Synod addresses are complex, not simple. I would actively promote a Synod in which members influence each other from a standpoint of humility, listening carefully to other members, reflecting on their own views, acknowledging their prejudices and biases, holding firmly to God's given truth and lightly to positions that are less certain and not shared by all Christians. Synod needs to build on the perspectives, skills and experience of all its members. Members should recognise that their fellow members are not just people to be persuaded to their own view, but together form a group that can find the richest answers when everyone contributes to them. And I know that working that way is hard.