

Dagmar Winter

Rector of Hexham
Bishop's Adviser for Women's Ministry



I am very grateful to Rev Rachel Scheffer, Priest-in-Charge of Stamfordham with Matfen and Development Officer for Children's and Young People's Work (Corbridge Deanery) for nominating me, and to Canon Brian Hurst, Vicar of Bamburgh and Area Dean of Bamburgh & Glendale, for seconding this nomination.

The last five years

General Synod is a legislative body and much time was spent in the last five years on the Women Bishops legislation. In 2013/2014 I was a member of the Steering Group which prepared the legislative 'package' that finally won the day in 2014. It was a memorable experience working with a diverse group of people to find the necessary common ground for a way forward together.

Other highlights included the church's engagement with issues of poverty, the environment, ethical investment, the Eucharistic Prayers for children and the additional simplified options for baptisms. I have spoken in quite a number of debates, keen to support our church to be outward looking, gracious and distinct in its contribution to national life.

Much work goes on not just on the floor of Synod itself but in various working groups and committees, and in addition to the *Women Bishops Legislation Steering Group*, I have continued to serve on the *Rural Affairs Group* out of which came the major national 'Faith and the Future of the Countryside' conference and further resources for the rural church. I also particularly valued the dialogue with policy makers and the opportunities for speaking up for rural communities and for the rural church and rural schools. Feeding in the northeast perspective was an important aspect. If elected, I shall continue to have a lively interest in rural affairs.

General Synod elected me onto the *Mission and Public Affairs Council* which supports an excellent team of advisers. This is mainly outward looking work, responding to issues of the day, and with the opportunities of input into statements of the Church of England and its engagement with government, the media and the general public, as well as supporting the development of evangelistic resources.

At the beginning of its meetings, General Synod has been privileged to be addressed by church leaders from other churches and from other parts of the world, in particular from persecuted churches. I have found this inspiring and sobering in equal measure and a very fitting context in which to frame those problems which dominate our thinking and our debates.

The next five years

Huge challenges await! The comprehensive Reform and Renewal programme will have a significant impact on our Diocese as well as the potential of changing the face of the Church of England. I would like to continue participating at the level of General Synod in those national conversations which will shape our future. I appreciate the reality check concerning our numbers (people and finance) and I would also like to help articulate clearly the realities of church and community to a London-focussed centre, so that we can find ways forward that are appropriate for our Northeast context.

In order for this to happen well, we need to work hard at the flow of information from parish level to General Synod level and back again. If elected, I know I would continue to enjoy reporting back to my 'allocated' deanery synods as well as diocesan synod on the goings-on of General Synod. I believe it is as important for the national church to be earthed locally as it is to encourage in the local church the sense of belonging to a much wider community.

Changes are afoot to reform the workings of General Synod and I would support any move that helps to make this body more efficient, better connected with church members and outward looking.

I welcome the renewed emphasis on strengthening the sense of discipleship in our churches. In a recent speech at General Synod I spoke of generous inclusive openness as well as clarity and confidence in the gift of the Gospel which we should bring to the public discourse.

It is in this spirit that I am seeking re-election and I would love to continue to represent the Diocese of Newcastle for the next five years.

For the record, I generally attend the *Affirming Catholicism* and *WATCH* fringe meetings at General Synod.

May I ask you, please, to vote for me – preferably with your first vote.

I am very happy to respond to any questions you may have and can be contacted on 01434 602 031 or 01434 604 580
or rector@hexhamabbey.org.uk (*please note my previous btinternet address is defunct*)
- or will see you at the Hustings on 19th September, 1.30pm in Newcastle Cathedral.