

Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich
GENERAL SYNOD ELECTION 2021
HOUSE OF LAITY

ELECTION ADDRESS of
DAVID JOHN LAMMING



Proposed by George Woodward (Lay Chair, Ipswich Deanery) and seconded by Karin Norman-Butler (Lay Chair, Hadleigh Deanery)

Having served on General Synod for the past six years, I seek your vote to enable me continue to represent the laity of our diocese. The diocese deserves and needs a strong voice in Synod and I believe that I have provided that, ensuring that it continues to ‘punch above its weight’. I have attended every group of sessions bar one—the special one-day meeting in September 2020 to pass legislation to enable Synod to meet remotely, when attendance was restricted—and even then I proposed via a proxy significant amendments to improve the draft Measure. In April this year I attended the ‘Zoom’ Synod from my hospital ward: I believe a first!

During my time on Synod I have served as a member of two revision committees, including that for the Church Representation and Ministers Measure, which has completely revised the Church Representation Rules, now enabling multi-parish benefices to form a ‘joint council’ as a formal body. At most groups of sessions I have taken advantage of the opportunity to ask probing questions, often being ‘the grit in the oyster’.

I have been a member of the diocesan synod for 24 years, and of the Bishop’s Council for 15 years, to which I’ve recently been re-elected. I also serve as a member of the DBF Governance Committee. Since my 20s I have been

(successively) a member of four different PCCs and I am the lay chairman of my deanery synod. I grew up in suburban London and moved to Essex in 1970 and to Suffolk in 1996. My current parish is in a benefice of five rural parishes. This experience both at diocesan and at ‘grass roots’ level has been invaluable. Now, fully retired, but fit and active, I have the time and energy necessary to continue to serve on General Synod.

Issues

I see the following as among the important issues that synod will be addressing in the next five years (or ‘quinquennium’, as it is generally termed):

- As I wrote in 2015, **promoting the mission of the church** and how, most effectively, we can ‘proclaim afresh’ the good news of Jesus Christ in our generation. As we look around and see congregations ageing and shrinking, especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, this is the clear priority.
- **Promoting the role of the parish church**, with its presence in every community, while at the same time supporting initiatives, such as ‘Lightwave’ here in Suffolk (centrally funded by the Church Commissioners) that seek to introduce people to the Christian faith in other settings. It has to be ‘both and’ not ‘either/or.’ Closing churches during the early part of the pandemic is now acknowledged to have been a mistake. How the Church Commissioners use their substantial funds will be an issue for the new Synod, as will be the governance of the central church institutions, about which a group led by the Bishop of Leeds is due to report later this autumn.
- Continuing the **‘Reform and Renewal’ agenda**, with its objective to simplify aspects of church law. Currently, there is a consultation on reforming the Mission and Pastoral Measure, with plans to bring legislative proposals to Synod in 2022: these will require rigorous scrutiny. As a lawyer, I believe that I am well placed to contribute to such scrutiny, seeking to

ensure that any changes made are sound as well as enabling the gospel to be promoted throughout England.

- The Church of England, with its unique position as the established church, must continue to promote **Christian values** as vital for the health of our increasingly secular society. General Synod has an important role, to which, if re-elected, I would wish to contribute, in speaking out on significant issues of the day, including **international aid** and the **climate crisis**, on which Archbishop Justin, together with the Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarch, has just given a significant lead ahead of the COP26 summit in November.
- **Issues in human sexuality** will return to the synod agenda in 2022, following the ‘Living in Love and Faith’ process. As I stated in my 2015 election address, I continue to believe that marriage is between a man and a woman, but I shall consider carefully how any changes the House of Bishops propose to church teaching and how best we can ‘live with difference’ in an inclusive church.
- **The role of Synod.** I perceive a tension at present between the role of the House of Bishops and that of General Synod. I believe Synod must be more assertive: we need more opportunities for debate, not just receiving presentations.
- **Safeguarding and CDM reform:** This is an area in which I have taken a particular interest over the last 5 years. We must get this right, for the sake of the mission of the church: there have been too many ‘lessons learned’ reports, with the lessons not seemingly learned. I would hope to contribute to the legislative changes likely to be brought to Synod in February 2022.
- **Holy Communion.** A pressing issue is that of restoring ‘communion in both kinds’ for the laity. The House of Bishops have effectively ‘kicked into the long grass’ the issue of using individual cups’. With understandable reluctance

by many to return yet to using the ‘common cup’, this is an urgent issue that I would seek to pursue.

Our diocesan vision and prayer is for the church in Suffolk to grow – in number, depth and influence – and to grow younger. That is a vision that would carry to the General Synod as being vision for the whole of the Church of England and one that would undergird everything the new synod seeks to do.

Having read this, I hope that you will feel able to give me your first preference vote.

Should you wish to contact me before voting, I should be more than happy to speak to you or respond to an e-mail.

David Lamming

September 2021

Some personal details:

Aged 74, married for 51 years to Pauline, with four children and five grandchildren. Barrister by profession, now retired. Practice was mostly in criminal law, environmental law, regulatory offences, planning, and ecclesiastical law.

Member of the Ecclesiastical Law Society.
Lay chairman of Sudbury Deanery Synod.

Other interests: Cricket, which I’m passionate about, and still play—when selected! Former chairman of the North Essex Cricket League. Music. Photography (you may have seen some of my pictures on the iwitness pages of the *East Anglian Daily Times*.)

Contact details:

20 Holbrook Barn Road
Boxford
Sudbury
Suffolk
CO10 5HU

Telephone: 01787 210360
Mobile: 07968 791135

e-mail: djlamming@hotmail.com