

Tony Allwood

Proposed by: Canon George Woodward
Lay Chair of Ipswich Deanery

Seconded by: Canon Dr Mo Blackburn
Lay Chair of Saxmundham Deanery



Personal

I am married with two sons and three grandchildren, including a daughter-in-law who is a vicar in Tunbridge Wells.

We have lived in Woodbridge and attended St John's for around 40 years, during which time I have been churchwarden and later led the administration team. This included organising the "Alive" Christian festival for its first five years.

My hobbies are sailing and walking, and I enjoy visiting other churches.

Experience

- **Business** - I worked for British Telecom, firstly as a design engineer and then as a project manager for many years. After taking early retirement I ran my own company and did consultancy work, mainly in the area of management development.
- **Deanery** - Early retirement enabled me to give more time to church work and for about 12 years I was Lay Chair of Woodbridge Deanery. During that time we successfully undertook two major pastoral reorganisations. My 18 years on the Deanery Finance committee has enabled me to see both the challenges and the successes of church finance.
- **Diocese** - I have been on Diocesan Synod for 13 years, and for the last 3 years have been privileged to be the Lay Chair of the Diocesan Synod, working closely with the Clergy Chair and Diocesan staff to assist the Diocese to move forward, in both physical and Zoom meetings. I have enjoyed meeting with and learning from other Diocesan Lay Chairs at their annual gathering, and hope that I have brought useful experience back to our Diocese. I have been a member of Bishop's Council for 8 years, and a member of the Diocesan Finance committee for the last 3 years.
- **Cathedral** - In spring 2011 I was asked by Bishop Nigel to become a Lay Canon of St Edmundsbury Cathedral and served the full six years term in that office.
- **General Synod** - In 2015 I was elected to General Synod and have attended all the synod meetings, both physical and via Zoom, since then. Having learned how Synod operates and made connections, I am now well placed to build on this experience.

Faith

My faith in God is important to me, and I believe that He made each one of us unique and so it is natural that different people will want to worship Him differently. While I worship in an "evangelical" church, I am comfortable with a range of styles, from attending the midweek Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion to more modern Sunday services. I enjoy both traditional and contemporary music, but have little musical ability myself.

My Vision for General Synod

This remains the same as six years ago:

- I would like the Synod to move away from an adversarial towards a more consensus-seeking approach which respects other's views. In this way it could set an example of Christian values.
- I hope that through better communications, Synod might become more closely linked with parishes.

I consider that the second of these has been partially achieved as I have put considerable emphasis on attending and contributing to the Deanery Synods of the three Deaneries I was linked to, and have received much positive feedback. The first continues to need more prayer.

How I hope to continue to contribute

Several people have encouraged me to stand for a further term General Synod and being retired, I have time to give it the necessary attention. There are 4 main areas where I would hope to have an influence:

- I know that this Synod is going to be contentious, but believe we must not let differences about sexuality get out of proportion and damage the Church's reputation and hence our mission. Christ welcomed everyone, and I support a fully inclusive church, but appreciate that others have different views. I found the "Shared Conversations" at General Synod, where we met in very small groups to talk in depth, very helpful in understanding other points of view. I am always keen to involve as many people as possible in decision-making and I would encourage everyone to engage with the "Living in Love and Faith" materials so that the church might come to an informed decision in this area. I am not a member of any lobbying group and reject both the extremely conservative and extremely liberal viewpoints.
- Recently the media have been highlighting the controversy between the traditional Parish-based church (the majority of congregations in Suffolk,) and the more recent new national Strategic Development Funded initiatives like "Inspiring Ipswich" and "Lightwave". I believe that we need both, strengthening the support for the Parish system while also developing new ways for people to worship and draw near to God. This is partly a communications problem, but we all need to ensure that saying "new is good" does not imply "old is bad", and especially in our more rural areas, the national church must be encouraged to further support the Parish system.
- The Church is in the middle of a period of re-structuring under the Reform and Renewal agenda. There has been some simplification of legal processes and reductions in bureaucracy are promised. However there is scope for more simplification and greater Lay involvement and responsibility. My business and management experience, combined with my experience at Parish, Deanery and Diocesan level means that I feel well equipped to contribute.
- Many people outside the Church have the perception that the Church of England is more concerned with internal debates about contentious issues than with helping them find the faith that they seek. The media seeks to exploit this for their own ends and too often the negative messages that are given put people off approaching the Church. A more harmonious atmosphere within the Synod would improve this perception and help create a more positive image of the Church. I would seek to use my consensus-building skills to encourage harmony both in the formal sessions and, more likely, in the informal parts of the Synod.

I ask for your support to continue to represent these views on General Synod and help lead the Church forward on behalf of this Diocese. If you have any questions, please contact me at:

tony_allwood@btopenworld.com or on 01394 384575.