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What I would bring to Synod

I have spent my working life helping organisations and governments solve complex problems, often when the situation has already reached a crisis and all the available options look bad. That work has meant establishing what is actually true before deciding anything, testing whether a proposed course would survive reality with the people it affects, and then making it happen, not just handing over a report and walking away.

Much of this work has been internationally working among communities holding very different beliefs, where progress depended on respecting where each person comes from. Years of helping organisations do more with less have taught me that tight budgets need not mean shrinking ambition, provided we are honest about what we are choosing to stop doing.



What I care about most is that the Church understands itself properly, grounds its decisions in evidence rather than habit or assumption, and is willing to look beyond the arrangements it has inherited when those arrangements are failing the people they were built to serve. That is the approach, practical and curious, I would bring to Synod.

Why I am standing for Synod.

I am a cradle Christian who grew up as a chorister, wandered from church as a teenager, and returned to Christ in my 20s through the warm welcome of a local city parish, its loving congregation, and the routine of communion and parish life.

Like many of my generation, I have been a working nomad since graduating in 2005, living across the world in international development and my faith has always given me a home wherever I found myself.

In 2014, living in Northern Iraq, I set up a small charity to help the churches of Ankawa support thousands of refugees fleeing ISIS. Rebuilding lives alongside our Christian brothers and sisters there bolstered my own faith, and their confidence despite persecution is something I want to bring back to our Church at home: confidence in our faith when those around us are not, confident in what we have, and hopeful about what we can be.

Now, in my forties, I have returned home to Worcestershire to raise our three boys in the countryside, where our parish church has been the centre of village life for us. As Church Warden, Deanery Synod representative and a national volunteer for Save the Parish, I support our church in seeing growth through presence in our communities, not by offering less and less in an age of ever greater isolation. We are not a business like the post office, pubs or banks, we cannot and should not be closing branches or limiting access.

Over the page are the issues I am standing on. .
For a conversation on these, or on what I would bring to Synod,
do feel free to get in touch.



1. Confidence in the parish.

Our parishes already do wonderful work, yet too often that work goes unclaimed. *A confidence in the parish, and in the priest who anchors it, as an engine of growth both spiritual and financial*, is the voice I will bring to Synod. We should be proud of our Church's part in our communities and our country, and speak more boldly about it. That confidence starts with the settled leadership of a parish priest known within, and given wholly to, the community they serve, because that presence builds the trust that brings the giving and vocations the church needs to grow.

2. Every parish matters

Much of the national conversation about growth looks first to our cities and towns, where the numbers are largest. But a Church measuring itself against urban metrics risks losing sight of rural parishes that carry no smaller a claim on its care. *We pray daily; "when two or three are gathered together in His name" and yet the church seems to not value these smaller gatherings constantly focused on the numbers in the pews.* Every community, however small or remote, deserves a Christian presence rooted among it rather than visiting it. I want Synod to judge ministry by what it makes possible in its place, and commit to each parish as a lasting legacy of Christian presence developed over centuries.

3. Support for our clergy

The parish priest remains our source of pastoral leadership, yet clergy are stretched across benefices too large to know, or be known by, their communities. (More priests resigned than retired last year!) Every benefice should be a size a priest can sustain, knowing and known by their people. *We are told there is no money for this, but that is not true.* The Church Commissioners hold over £11 billion endowment created to fund "the cure of souls" in parish ministry, but it needs to return to that purpose. We also need to widen routes into ministry through the diaconate, lay ministry and readers, and ensure access to training and formation is not held back by financial constraints but focused on need. We need to free clergy (and PCCs!) from bureaucracy, so every call to serve finds an open door. *Joyful, confident, empowered, passionate priests will grow churches.*

4. Support for our local churches

Our handsome, often ancient, buildings were called "troublesome" in one report, but they are our inheritance, part of our Christian witness and presence. Maintaining our cultural heritage is something we are all passionate about, but parishes need to be recognised for this work. *We need national solutions to help safeguard our ancient places*, and help them plan a sustainable future, that starts with keeping more money raised locally in local ministry.

5. Church and school

Church schools educate around a million of the country's children, and in a village that link is the closest relationship the parish has with its wider community. Yet that relationship generally stops at the school gate, and very few of those families join us in worship, for reasons we have not properly asked. *We need to find out why, and how to better engage our schools with our churches to create lifelong disciples with families*, not just focusing on the children.

6. Love for each other

The national conversation on marriage and sexuality has become obsessed with the labels that alienate people, which has nothing to do with the love of Christ. *We are taught simply to love one another, and I will keep advocating for the plurality of voices in our Anglican tradition* to be heard, respected and work together.