

General Synod House of Laity election 2026 (Sheffield Diocese)



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Christ Church Fulwood
Hallam Deanery



Proposed by: Ian Walker, All Saints Ecclesall & Diocesan Synod, Chair Sheffield Diocesan Board of Finance.

Seconded by: Holly Brown, All Saints Denaby Main, West Doncaster Deanery.

Dear Electors

As a candidate in the election to represent Sheffield Diocese in the House of Laity on General Synod please will you prayerfully consider voting for me using your first preference or highest available preference vote.

Who am I?

I grew up in a church-going family in the Liverpool suburbs, attending the local parish church and attended a Church of England school. I became a believer as a teenager and have remained **a member of the C of E throughout my adult life**. When I moved to Sheffield, I became a member of Christ Church, Fulwood, southwest of the city centre, while my brother & his family worship in a small village church which is part of a rural multi-parish benefice.

I am 65, single and have spent my **working life in the NHS** and have been a **consultant surgeon** at Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Trust since 1998. I now work part-time clinically, and as a Medical Examiner (doctor who scrutinises health care records & agrees death certification) and also serve as Chair of the four nation Intercollegiate Examination Board in General Surgery.

In my time-off, I relax by catching up with family & friends, cooking and enjoying being outdoors, either gardening, visiting gardens or fishing. I have been a member of a book club since before it became fashionable!

What do I believe?

I believe that the Bible is the divinely inspired and written word of God, that it tells us about who God is and His love for every human being, His perfect plan for the world he created, His offer of forgiveness and a restored eternal relationship for everyone who believes in the death and resurrection of His only Son, Jesus, and who confesses Him as Saviour and Lord. In the Bible, I believe the God promises abundant life to all who believe in Him, that He shows us how we should live both as individuals and as a church and also shares with us 'the Great Commission' at the end of Matthew's Gospel, which still remains the church's mandate for mission 2000 years later.

How have I served in the local church and on General Synod?

In my family Christian service is seen an integral part of life: my father was a churchwarden and involved in charitable work. As a teenager I helped at a holiday club for children with special educational needs.

Being part of a large church means that really getting to know people can be a challenge. I am a **member of a bible study small group** where we seek to share not only the Gospel but the ups and downs of daily lives, as we meet, learn and pray together. I have **served with our student ministry team** which seeks to disciple students at Sheffield and Hallam Universities, and encourage, equip and support Christian students as they seek to live distinctive lives and reach out with Gospel hope to their fellow students.

As a surgeon, I have always appreciated the biblical illustration of the church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), understanding that in order for the (church's) body to be healthy, everyone needs to play their part under the Lordship of Christ.

As a **churchwarden at Christ Church Fulwood** (2002-2010 & 2017-2021) I came to understand the increasing complexity and challenge of what it takes to keep a parish church 'on the road'. Although, we as a local church have been blessed with considerable resources, I became well acquainted with the challenges of annual budgets, escalating costs, building and HR issues, volunteers and safeguarding. During that time we sought, with the diocese and working in co-operation with other local churches to grow the church across South Yorkshire, by planting and grafting, 'releasing' through ministry resourcing, development and support, local churches in Sheffield, Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster.

I am a **trustee of the Anglican Trust and the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion (EFAC)**, founded by John Stott in 1961, with the aim of encouraging biblically faithful fellowship, teaching and mission throughout the Anglican Communion.

Having been elected to General Synod in 2010, and re-elected in 2015 and 2021, I have tried to be conscientious in participating in the Sessions, have asked questions, spoken in a number of debates (particularly on the role of lay members; issues related to health care and the end of life; finance and mission). I have sought to report back to Diocesan and Deanery Synods and my PCC in a way that is comprehensive, fair and highlights what is most relevant in our context.

I was appointed to serve on the **governing body of one of the theological colleges** (Cranmer Hall, Durham) in 2012 & have also **served (2012-2022) as one of General Synod's elected three lay representatives on the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC)**, the national church body which selects candidates to be diocesan bishops, for nomination to the Sovereign. Being on the CNC for the appointment of more than 30 diocesan bishops has given me an unparalleled opportunity to learn about the life of the C of E and the communities it serves across the country, both the joys and the challenges.

What now for the Church of England?

Cranmer's founding vision for the Church of England, where there is no place without a Church of England parish, remains relevant today. The C of E's potential for good, in its 16,000 parishes across the whole of England is awesome, but its reach is frequently constrained by the many challenges churches face (declining and ageing congregations; declining clergy numbers; burnt out clergy; buildings now not fit for purpose; safeguarding concerns; volunteer recruitment; perceived loss of relevance in society and unresolved ongoing disagreements about core issues (doctrine) such as on the nature of human identity, marriage and sexuality).

Please do email or message me with any questions.

I long for every local church to feel confident about stepping up and out with a distinctive hope-filled Christian message in the face of life's uncertainties and challenges; welcoming everyone, while being unafraid of tackling the big questions; and caring for those in need. I am willing to serve on General Synod, to play my part, in partnership with others, in helping make this happen, for the good of all.

Please can I encourage you to pray for the outcome of these elections & the future direction of the Church of England.

In Christ



