

Election Address for Richard Jones

I have taken a leading role within my church (Christ Church) and parish (East Stour, Gillingham, Dorset) since moving to the area with my family over 18 years ago. I have held the post of Churchwarden for over 15 years, and have been a Lay Worship leader in the Stour Vale Benefice, regularly helping to lead services in my parish. I have been a member of the Blackmore Vale Deanery Synod for the last 11 years, Salisbury Diocesan synod for 9 years and have been the Diocesan Synod Bishops Council representative on the committee for the reuse of redundant churches for the past 7 years. Through these roles I have gained a valuable insight and knowledge into the workings of the church and the experience and skills required in order to research areas and make recommendations and decisions that affect, not only members of my own parish, but those further afield.

My family are the main focus in my life, I have been married to my wife Susan (an NHS nurse working in the local community) for nearly 35 years. We have two adult children, Claire and David and have recently welcomed their partners, Matt and Jenni, to our family. We remain a close knit family unit and I am delighted to say I have my family's full backing in my decision to seek election for General Synod.

In my work life, I have worked in historic building conservation for over 40 years working for English Heritage, the private sector, and I am currently self employed as a building conservator. Being self employed I manage my own time which gives me the ability to commit to the time table of meetings required General Synod.

Away from work my passion is travel and architecture with a special interest in late medieval churches, family monuments and their associated heraldry. I have been researching heraldry for the last 35 years and have written several articles and papers for various publications and societies, most recently contributing to the revised edition of Pevsner Dorset.

I believe it is the job of the synod to promote unity, prevent, if possible division and remember that we are a member of the world wide Anglican Communion. To this discussion I can bring my experience of working in a rural Benefice of 8 parishes.

To my knowledge it is a long time since a member of the synod came from the Blackmore Vale Deanery, a rural, economically poor area with a high percentage of people living on low fixed incomes, which remains in this economic climate an important issue within parish life. I have lived in rural England the majority of my life and I am able to bring valuable life experience of the importance of the Anglican churches' influence on individuals and the central role the Church can play in small communities.

Personally I am a supporter of both Common Worship and the more traditional Book of Common Prayer and believe that the two can be mutually supportive in Parish Worship. I do not believe any particular party label fits me but I am a strong believer in the Bible, the Church of England, and have a liberal approach to life. I make my decisions based on evidence and the conscience given to me by God.

I believe I have the time, knowledge and energy to become a dedicated and enthusiastic member of Synod.