

Frances Stenlake – General Synod Election Address

Dear Deanery Synod member

I currently serve as Chair of the House of Laity at Diocesan Synod and as my term of office comes to an end next year I would welcome the opportunity to continue to serve the Diocese by representing you at General Synod.

I live and worship in Barnard Castle, a traditional country parish in a relatively affluent corner of Teesdale, where I am both the treasurer and a Junior Church leader. I am also the treasurer of St Mary's Cockfield, so I am very aware of the difficulties facing small rural parishes in more deprived areas. I believe strongly that the Church of England needs to continue to have a Christian presence in all communities, but accept that the pressure of maintaining listed buildings with dwindling elderly congregations is a challenge.

I studied Mathematics at Durham University in the late 1980's and then returned south to live and work in Epsom, close to my parents, and to train as an actuary. A change in circumstances (remarriage and redundancy) led to the opportunity to move back north and I have been in Barnard Castle for almost 20 years. I feel strongly that this is where I am called to be, in this place in this Diocese and am about to start training as an Authorised Lay Minister of the Word in order to lead worship in my parish.

I am passionate about ensuring everyone who comes into contact with the church is able to do so safely and am the Safeguarding Governor for my local church primary school. I believe in equality for everyone at all levels and roles within the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality.

As one of the Durham six serving on the Crown Nominations Commission to appoint our new Bishop I have had experience of reading lots of paperwork in a short time and working respectfully with those whose views may be different to mine. I am most comfortable with data and finances and would be able to contribute to discussions on how best use might be made of the Church's limited resources, to enable more people to come to know Jesus.

If elected I would hope to visit Deanery Synods to talk about the work of General Synod and the issues being discussed.

Thank you for reading my address. I hope you will feel able to give me your vote.