**ELECTION TO THE HOUSE OF LAITY OF GENERAL SYNOD 2021**

**GEOFFREY TATTERSALL QC**

**Who am I**

I was born and brought up in Ashton-Under-Lyne, lived in Audenshaw in my teens and went to school in Manchester. I obtained a Law degree at Oxford where I met my wife Hazel, who obtained a mathematics degree and was from Swinton. I became a Barrister in 1970 and practised all my working life in Manchester. After our marriage at St Peter`s Church Swinton in 1971, we lived in Heaton Moor Stockport for 3 years, attending St Paul`s Heaton Moor, until we moved to our present home in Bolton, where we have since worshipped at Christ Church Heaton. We have 3 adult children and 5 grandchildren.

I have been a member of the PCC, the Bolton Deanery Synod and Diocesan Synod since the mid 1980`s. I was Lay Chairman of the Bolton Deanery [1993-2002] and thereafter Chairman of the Diocesan House of Laity [1994-2003] and was an active member of many diocesan committees, including Bishop`s Council. All these activities had to come to an end when in 2004 Bishop Nigel appointed me as the Diocesan Chancellor. I still continue in this role. All my knowledge of how the diocese operated stood me in good stead for that role which still continues. It has enabled me to get to know very many parishes throughout the whole of the Diocese. I have been a member of the Cathedral Council since 2009 and Bishop Nigel made me a lay canon of the Cathedral in 2003. Hazel has also been involved in parochial affairs. She has been the Church`s Free Will Offering Secretary for well over 30 years, is a former Enrolling Member of the parish`s Mother`s Union and until this year was Secretary of the Bolton Deanery Synod. In addition, she has run a Brownie Pack for almost all our marriage.

I had a wide-ranging legal practice which ended with my specialising in complex litigation involving spinal or brain injury. This led to my appointment as Queen`s Counsel in 1992 and as the sole Judge of Appeal in the Isle of Man for almost 20 years and my sitting as a Deputy High Court Judge in London until July 2020. I have recently retired from legal practice. However, I am still fit, active and blessed with good health and would like to continue to serve as a member of General Synod which I have done since 1995.

**Why am I standing?**

I have been Chairman of the Synod`s Standing Orders Committee and the Fees Advisory Committee for almost all the time I have been on Synod. I also chaired the Synod for about 6 years. I have a particular interest in legislation, which is not something most members are passionate about. I have played an increasingly active role in the legislation which comes before the Synod. I have chaired various Revision Committees which have produced legislation relating to marriage, clergy terms of service, safeguarding, and clergy discipline and was a member of the Steering Committee which ultimately led to women being able to be consecrated as Bishops. Since 2017 I have been the Deputy Chair of the Synod`s Legislative Committee which has the responsibility for promoting Church legislation through Parliament and have appeared as a witness before Parliament`s Ecclesiastical Committee on various occasions. In September 2020 I was responsible for the enactment of legislation to allow the Synod to meet remotely … necessary because since the Synod`s Constitution was created by statute, it was necessary to amend this to allow us to enjoy the delights of Zoom.

**What can I offer?**

[1] Past experience … as an active, involved and committed existing member of Synod.

[2] Professional experience … apart from being the forum for debates about Church issues, Synod is primarily a legislative body and I am willing and keen to deploy my professional skills for the national Church to ensure that we make legislation well.

[3] Commitment…. throughout all my time on Synod I have regularly attended every day of every session save once when I was ill and once when I had been asked to represent, without fee and unsuccessfully, a man sentenced to death in the Bahamas.

[4] Willingness and Independence of mind … to stand up and say what needs to be said.

[5] Knowledge of the Diocese … and of the needs and aspiration of people in parishes.

**Current issues facing the Church**

“*Living in Love and Faith*” will continue to be debated … and probably too much! Personally, I cannot see how we cannot allow the relationships of those who are LGBTI+ to be blessed in Church although I have doubts as to whether the Church could recognise their relationships as married. I am pretty sure all this will be divisive and will damage the Church in the public eye.

More important I think is how, post pandemic, we can grow the Church because we face a lack of faith, confidence and enthusiasm and a lack of money to fund the church growing. In these difficult times it seems to me that the funding of parochial, rather than sector, ministry is important and should be a priority. I thus support the *Save the Parish* campaign.

What concerns me most however is that we are going to have to reform the system of clergy discipline and safeguarding, hopefully along the lines of a report produced by a Working Party, of which I was a member, established under the auspices of the Ecclesiastical Law Society. For many years I served as a Chair of Tribunals dealing with cases of clergy discipline and I firmly believe that the system needs reforming to make it fairer to both those who make complaints and those against whom complaints are made. I would very much like to play an active part in that process.

**And finally**

I am grateful to Canon John Walsh OBE, the Secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee, who has proposed my candidature and to Malcolm Walker, the longstanding Chairman of the Bolton Deanery, who has seconded me, for their support.

I ask for your first preference vote or such other vote as you feel able to give me. If you want to discuss anything with me, please feel free to phone, text or email me.

Geoffrey Tattersall QC

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