

Kevin Peto-Bostick

CANDIDATE FOR THE GENERAL SYNOD

The Parish is the heart of our Church

I came to know Jesus late in life; I was forty-two years old when I was baptised and confirmed. This would not have happened had it not been for a Parish priest who was local, able and willing to provide the pastoral shepherding of a questioning neighbour.

At some point it became accepted wisdom that to continue funding in declining parishes was subsidising and delaying an inevitable failure. This thinking has led to the doom spiral we are experiencing today. Archbishop Cottrell, addressing General Synod in 2021 asserted that we "...need to put Jesus at the centre, and the spiritual, theological and missiological objectives that flows from that." And a parish church with a well-educated and supported Priest is the very best way to ensure Christ is known.

I have seen first-hand the struggle in our Diocese to support clergy numbers. We are fortunate as we are not, yet, insolvent and we do have reserves available. I pray that we are nearing the bottom of our downward glide slope and will be able to level off in the next five years. Having been personally accountable for budgets up to £25 million in my career, I appreciate the dedication it takes to achieve a budget in times of tightening resources, and I recognise that the decisions taken are not easy. Yet I also see income from a fund intended to provide for "... the Cure of Souls in parishes where such assistance is most required" sending a desultory amount to parishes.

At General Synod I will actively stand with Save the Parish to advocate for the necessary changes needed to restore the statutory requirement that income from the Church Commissioners' endowment must be spent in accordance with the historic mandate to support ministry in parishes.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Matthew 6:21



My family and I worship at St Peter's in Hinton St Mary in rural North Dorset, where I am a Churchwarden. I serve our Benefice as a Lay Worship Leader.

I am privileged to serve my Parish on the Deanery Synod, and our Deanery on the Diocesan Synod. Within the Diocesan Synod I am pleased to be able to serve on the Bishop's Council, Finance and Resources Committee and Church Buildings Committee.

I joined Save the Parish at its inception as I firmly believe that the Parish system, if properly resourced, remains the right way for the Church to make Jesus known.



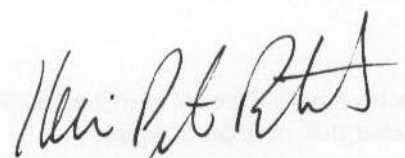
But please don't mistake my passion on the above issue as rendering me unaware of the breadth of work this Synod must be ready to address; and each of these issues will have advocates as passionate as I am about parishes. I look forward to listening, discussing, researching and praying on these issues because they do matter – to us and to God.

I will be thorough in examining issues and proposals because I like what some refer to as 'the boring bits' of the work of Synod. An example of delving into the boring bits was when, with a Vacancy approaching, we heard of planning to let our Vicarage for "... the year it will take to get someone in post." Some research (going all the way back to the Benefices Measure of 1898) revealed that the Patron holds the right of appointment. Fortunately, our Patron was well known to me, and he informed the Diocese of plans to advertise and appoint forthwith. I believe this action drove the Diocese to expedite their process. Consequently, we were in formal Vacancy for under six months. Because someone paid attention to the boring bits.

The issue which will likely attract the most coverage and attention in the next Synod is the output of the House of Bishops working group to consider the process for the Prayers of Love and Faith and define what legislative change and work is needed for clergy same-sex marriage. I expect this to one of the most sensitive questions before Synod, and I won't pretend it is simple. What I do believe is that the Church is called to be a place of welcome — 'there is no longer Jew or Greek... for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28). The Living in Love and Faith process has done years of careful work, and I want to keep listening — to Scripture, to LGBTQ+ Christians who've faithfully served this Church, and to this diocese — to faithfully discern God's will.

Another topic will be Project Spire, the Church Commissioners initiative to provide a £100 million investment to address the legacy of chattel slavery. Despite the disingenuous misrepresentation of this proposal by some, I find myself in agreement with the assertion of Bishop Stephen that the Church cannot ignore its links with a "fundamental historic wrong" without torpedoing its "moral leadership in the present or the future".

Thank you for your time in reading my statement, I think you can see where my heart lies; and I hope it has resonated enough with you for your vote (or high preference if I am not your first choice). On these and other issues I will listen to the debates and pray as I try to discern the will of God for our church. I promise that I will represent you diligently with a strong voice that isn't afraid to speak up – I will challenge, test and occasionally contest proposals from the central church so that we can make Jesus known.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicky P. B. B. S.' with a stylized flourish at the end.