Election address

I hope to serve on the General Synod because it seems to me that the church is too inward-looking. I have attended two recent synods and was impressed with how well the business was managed.

Having said that, quite a bit of navel-gazing took place and I was really shocked when a motion about Palestine was jettisoned in February for one about flower arranging!

I came across the issue of Palestine decades ago. As a 22-year-old graduate I went on a British Volunteer Programme to work in Jordan's first university.

My students were Palestinian refugees either descendants of those who fled in 1948 or they had fled across the river to Jordan following the Six Day War of 1967. I rapidly learnt that what had been seen as a saving act for European Jews – the founding of the State of Israel – was and is a total catastrophe for Palestinians. Their land had been given away from under their feet without consultation.

On returning to the UK further training, marriage and children took up my attention. As an army wife I lived in Germany, Ireland, Gibraltar as well as the UK. During a second posting to Germany, I was appointed (not elected) to the very first Army synod. I think it was because my work with an army wife who'd been subjected to domestic violence had been noticed.

When we returned to civilian life in the UK, I worked for the local Rape Crisis Line and retrained as a journalist, working on a regional daily paper.

In 2006 I took three months' unpaid leave to serve as a human rights monitor on a World Council of Churches initiative called the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). I worked in and around a Palestinian town called Tulkarem.

Three years later – now retired – I served a second term, again in the Northern West Bank in a village called Jayyous.

I saw for myself the daily privations and humiliations of Palestinians. Many farmers were not allowed access to their own land and if they didn't farm it for three consecutive years the Israelis would expropriate it.

One family is still vivid in my memory. There were bullet holes in the living room where a trigger-happy soldier had randomly shot through the wall, killing the mother and badly injuring her beautiful teenage daughter.

I also worked with many brilliant Israelis who opposed the occupation. Machsom Watch women would turn up before dawn to make sure soldiers at the checkpoints behaved. And Breaking the Silence are soldiers who bear witness to the crimes committed by their brothers (and sisters) in arms.

On my return I did 98 EAPPI presentations in England, Gibraltar, Germany and the US. I set up a tour of the UK for two Israeli women from New Profile – a group which tries to de-militarise their country and helps young men and women who refuse to serve in the army of occupation..

I led activists from six different countries to the EU to lobby for Palestine. And with encouragement from the then Bishop of Sherborne Graham Kings, I ran sixth-form conferences about Palestine in Sherborne and Wimborne.

I do have to confess that I am currently facing two terrorism charges which I realise could ruin my chances of being elected!

In my defence I would say that I was in good company – many "terrorists" were wearing clerical collars and many health workers were in their scrubs.

All of us support nonviolent direct action group Palestine Action (PA) which the government has proscribed. We all believe that this is a travesty of justice. PA activists have destroyed weapons in Israeli factories in this country – weapons which Israel advertises as "battle tested". Indeed they are – battle tested on some of the 20,000 children murdered in Gaza. PA uses no violence on people or animals.

If elected I would listen to church members in my diocese and do my best to bring their concerns to General Synod whilst collaborating with colleagues.

I have other aspirations. The diocese will be aware that under the brave leadership of our archbishops the motion to "hear" the cries of Palestinian Christians as described in the document called Kairos II was passed. I would hope to work with others to implement the promises made to Palestinians at July's Geneal Synod. *Sharen Green*