

Election to Lay Representatives of the Diocese of Rochester to General Synod of the Church of England 2015

Brigadier Ian Dobbie OBE

Personal Details

I served for 35 years in the British Army, having been commissioned into the Royal Engineers. My service included 15 years in all in Germany, two in the Gulf (seconded to an Arab force) and two tours in the infantry role in Northern Ireland. I was an instructor at Sandhurst and the Royal Air Force Staff College. Throughout my service I sought to support Chaplains, occasionally taking services in their absence, and teaching in Sunday Schools. I also involved myself in interdenominational Christian organisations - one being the Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association, of which I was Chairman for 22 years.

On retiring from the Army, I became a church Project Coordinator and Administrator while a £2.35 million building project was undertaken. I am grateful for the spiritual and practical benefit this project has had directly and indirectly beyond the Diocese of Rochester. For the past 20 years I have been General Secretary of an organisation which coordinated the work of eight broadly Christian welfare organisations which support the Armed Services, including Church Army and Salvation Army.

I am Chairman of my church Missionary Committee and lead a Home Group, completed three years on the General Council of an Anglican missionary society, Crosslinks, am Lay Chairman of Sevenoaks Deanery Synod, am a member of the Tonbridge Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Working Group, a member of the Diocesan Board of Patronage and of Reform. I have been one of the Lay Representatives for Rochester Diocese in General Synod from 2000 to 2005 and 2006 to 2015. I also undertake speaking engagements as a Christian layman - to unchurched as well as Church people.

The Church of England

I believe that the Church of England should:

- Be clear and humbly confident in its historic message and in the teaching and proclamation of the Word of God.
- Take steps to mobilise its resources to reverse its declining numbers and the consequential weakening of its influence in the Nation. Particular investment should be made in the ministry to young people.
- Take a positive role and exercise leadership spiritually and morally in our land.
- Order its structures to make the ministry in Parishes really effective.
- Provide services which encourage "seeking" people as well as sustaining believers in the Faith.

Mission

For me the most stimulating and imaginative debate during the last 15 years in General Synod

was that on "The Mission-Shaped Church". Suggestions were made to innovate opportunities to engage with unchurched people by planting new churches and holding services and activities at times and places where such engagement is possible, while retaining an orthodox Biblical Gospel. These should be pursued prayerfully and wholeheartedly. I am encouraged by the Archbishops' recently launching their Reform and Renewal initiative, and trust that this will be significant in the great task of making and sustaining Christians.

Our Church Schools continue to provide a wonderful opportunity for young people to "remember their Creator in the days of their youth".

It is important that Christian people take a lead in fulfilling the Biblical mandate to respect and care for the Environment which our Creator has lovingly provided for all Mankind.

Ministry

We must do all we can to encourage those called to the Ministry and simultaneously expect high standards. This is nothing less than the standard required in the New Testament. Any discipline that may be necessary must be based on Christian justice tempered with mercy.

I am encouraged by the recent increase in the number of ordinands and general efforts to encourage vocations.

Marriage and Morality

The tragic disorder in so much family life in the country convinces me that we should teach and promote the Biblical value and importance of orthodox marriage, and a loving Church will wish to ensure that children should not be deprived of this rightful heritage. The Church has a clear duty to encourage Biblical standards of morality in our national life.

Money

The Church must act as responsible stewards of the financial resources with which it is entrusted, and in particular these must be deployed to ensure that Parish ministries are faithful and fruitful.

I am seeking re-election to the General Synod as your representative, and trust that I can make a responsible contribution to the government of the Church. It needs strong and experienced lay voices if its legislative and central councils are to respond in a proper manner to the needs and opinions of our Parishes. If re-elected, I will undertake my duties to the best of my ability.

I would be grateful for your first preference vote, or the highest vote you are able to give. If re-elected, I look forward to having the opportunity to discuss Synod matters with you, your PCC or your Deanery Synod.

Ian Dobbie

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