



Sue Cavill - championing the parish system, 'green' issues, lay leadership and listening

I live in Long Eaton and have been a communicant member of the Church of England since the age of 14, including membership of 27 years in the urban priority church St. Christopher's in Leicester, and since 2016 membership of All Saints and St Mary's, Sawley in the Diocese of Derby. I have been involved in youth work and leading small groups and I currently co-lead a small group with my husband, having completed a certificate in theology, ministry and mission in 2020. I regularly play keyboard for our church services. I lead my parish's environment team. We have been a silver eco church since 2019 and are now working towards gold. I am a member of South East Derbyshire Deanery

My professional background is in journalism, public relations and public consultation. I worked for many years in the NHS and led more than 20 public consultations. I continue to support public consultations in a consultancy role.

I believe in the authority of the Bible as the Word of God. The parish I belong to is what is often described as 'low church'. I understand that there can be varying interpretations of Scripture and I value debate and respect the views of those in different branches of the Church of England and other denominations.

I have just completed five years representing Derby Diocese on General Synod. During these five years I have done my best to reflect the views of those who have contacted me about a variety of issues. I am standing again as I would like to continue to have a voice about the matters I described in my original manifesto, matters which I believe are important to the church within our wider communities and particularly our parishes.

The parish system has for hundreds of years covered the country with houses of prayer which belong to local people, where they can find solace in the big events of their lives – birth, death, marriage. The parish church is therefore a marvellous platform for mission. During the past five years, I have been part of the [Save the Parish Network](#) whose members on General Synod have begun campaigning for a complete reconsideration of how the National Church distributes its wealth. At the moment only about eight per cent of the Church Commissioners' planned annual distribution is ring-fenced for parish ministry, even though Queen Anne's endowment, which the Church Commissioners' funds are partially based on, was originally given to fund the cure of souls in parishes where such assistance is most required. I would like to continue with **Save the Parish** working to ensure that any new distribution formula directs money to the parishes that need it most and guarantees that dioceses are sustainably resourced to keep priests in parishes. I will also join with **Save the Parish** proposing a charter of care that values our clergy and guards them from exhaustion, including an immediate halt to cutting stipendiary posts as a means of balancing budgets, and a limit to the number of parishes a priest is required to cover. It is also important to renew theological training to move away from more management-focused training to deeper study of scripture, the creeds, history and Anglican liturgy. Every candidate should be resourced to study at the highest level their circumstances permit, and fully funded residential colleges should be allowed to thrive alongside more flexible forms of training. Such measures will hopefully help to deal with the crisis of low numbers of people coming forward for ministry, by focusing on clergy wellbeing and formation.

In 2021 I said that the church is uniquely placed as a landowner and opinion former to lead '**green' ecological activities** to protect God's creation. I am passionate about this. In the past five years I have had a vote as General Synod made key decisions supporting the move to Carbon Net Zero and championing care of land and nature. I became secretary of the General Synod Environment

Group and organised regular fringe meetings. I have been General Synod representative on the National Environment Group, which oversees the Church of England's environmental activities, including the Net Zero campaign. On this group I have tried to be an active voice for parishes, understanding the pressures they may be under. I would like to continue this, and to continue being part of the Church of England's leadership in creation care.

Lay leadership is not just about co-opting lay people to carry out the tasks the church is already doing, it is about discerning the gifts lay people bring from their daily lives and professions. On General Synod I have spoken up for lay leadership and training and will continue to do so if re-elected.

There is an ongoing debate about how decisions are taken in the Church of England, and where accountability lies. I would like to continue to be part of this, and to ensure that all voices, including the voices of those in parishes, are heard. I want to continue to promote **better listening** by the Church of England leadership.

I did not mention in my original manifesto the difficult debate about same-sex relationships, known as Living in Love and Faith. It was disappointing and upsetting that in spite of five years of often painful debate no resolution was reached. I hope that in the next five years new mechanisms will allow the Church of England to settle this question in a way that takes account of all views. I am not and have not been part of any group campaigning on this issue – my concern is that the church should not be split and that we can find a way to go forward in love. Verses which have been important to me during the last five years have been Jesus' prayer for us in John 17:20-21: 'I ask not only on behalf of these [his current disciples], but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, **that they may be one**'. In the environment of Synod, where there is sometimes disagreement, I would continue to commit myself to work for that unity as we tackle difficult and important issues.

My email is suecavill53@gmail.com, phone 07906 398285. Please consider voting for me as your first or a high preference. If you would like me to send you updates and ask your views if I am elected to the Synod, please let me know.

