

INTRODUCTION

My name is Julie Hall-Williams. I am a resident of Bicknoller in West Somerset and have been worshipping at St George's Bicknoller for nearly 20 years. As a committed Christian I am actively involved in our Church community. I often write and lead intercessions and am licensed to administer the Chalice. I am Secretary of our PCC and a member of the Quantock Deanery Synod.

It is essential to both my husband and myself to live lives guided by prayer, 'quietly' giving practical and moral support to those in need where we can and living lives respectful of others. These principles underpin my personal life, have always underpinned my professional life and if elected, would most certainly underpin my membership of the House of Laity.

I am conscious that I am unknown to many able to vote and put their trust in me. To that end I hope the following information will be helpful in trying to give a brief insight into who I am. Its quite challenge on two sides of A4!

CONTEXT

Historically there have of course always been troubled times in which many implore and/or expect the Church of England to 'make a difference' and to find simple answers to complex situations where the answers are seldom binary. However in these most trying times it seems to me that now more than ever, we need to put and place the principles of love and discipleship at the centre of any decision-making.

I have followed the work of General Synod for some considerable time now and believe that I am realistic about the procedural nature of its business and the nature of many of the challenges it faces. I am very clear that membership represents a significant time commitment and gladly dedicate myself to that, not least as I believe it important to see the Quantock Deanery Synod represented after so many years without direct representation. Each Deanery will of course have its own characteristics but this, with the largest construction project in Europe in its midst with all that that represents, not least in terms of the richness and challenges of cultural diversity, does place it in a unique position.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

I have worked at senior management i.e. Head of Service levels within Local Government, have undertaken secondments to the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Brisbane City Council and acted in an Advisory capacity on strategic HR and performance matters to a number of bodies including a Police Authority, one of the then newly elected Police and Crime Commissioners, Fire and Probation Services.

As a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (amongst other professional qualifications) I had a particular interest in identifying, challenging and addressing poor performance; in promoting collaborative working across sectors and cultures and in providing constructive challenge to historic working practices and structures to make them fit for purpose.

Perhaps the most important conclusion to draw from what is set out here is the fact that I am well versed in working within formal governance structures in organisations under constant public and often political, scrutiny. Due process has had to be followed to the letter and differing aspirations and expectations reconciled where possible and 'managed' where not.

APPROACH

There are two, but not exclusive, principles that would guide my contributions to the work of General Synod:

- I am a pragmatist. I believe that there comes a point when careful consideration of all views on any subject has been exhausted and that a way forward must be determined and decision made. Indecision is destructive disabling to individuals and organisations. Inevitably and sadly there will always be alienation of some (as we have already seen within the Church of England on the matters of the ordination of women, the election of women bishops and in the matter of gay clergy and same sex relationships. Debate on 'Living in Love and Faith' again brings to the fore how some will readily and warmly embrace that which others find contentious and unacceptable). I believe that in such complex situations once decisions have been made the organisation should go forward with confidence whilst always seeking to maintain a dialogue with those feeling disenfranchised, in the hope of ultimate reconciliation.
- I am a firm believer in the benefits of organisations keeping under continual review their own fitness for purpose. In the specific case of the Church of England (notwithstanding its 'compliance' role in key policy areas) to ensure that its own management and governance is a pro-active enabler of the work of God within our local Churches and communities and not a hindrance to local progress and development.

IN CONCLUSION

No matter what controversy and comment appears to have surrounded the Vision and Strategy for the Church of England in recent times, it seems to me that the principles of a 'simpler, humbler and bolder' Church are to be commended. I think it important to continue to see how such principles could be put into effect at local levels in ways that reflect our local distinctiveness.

Finally, if elected it would be my privilege to serve but my duty to ensure active engagement and dialogue with both the Deanery and Diocesan Synods. This I commit to doing.