RE-ELECT SAM MARGRAVE

Your Strong Independent Voice of Experience on General Synod

To #SaveTheParish and deliver action - not just words



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

After much prayer, I feel called once again to stand to serve as your voice on General Synod. Since 2010, I have worked hard to be a strong, independent voice for parish ministry, church growth, responsible stewardship and support for the most vulnerable. It has been a great honour to serve you for sixteen years. **I have attended every Synod, spoken regularly in debates, voted, moved amendments and motions, and asked your questions. I bring experience, independence and a record of getting things done.**

Some of what I have helped achieve:

- Challenged wasteful spending, including the costs of bishops and central administration.
- Secured increased support and funding for parishes in rural and urban communities, with further investment expected over the next five years.
- Campaigned to end the cruelty of "paupers' funerals", where councils disposed of bodies without a service or refused to return ashes to loved ones.
- Challenged proposals to axe VAT relief for churches or to end the Churches Charitable Status.

OUR PARISHES MUST COME FIRST

For too long, parishes have been starved of the resources they need. Until 2021, it often felt like a lonely task arguing for greater investment in parish ministry while parts of the national Church focused on larger structures, bigger benefices, fewer clergy and less local presence.

Having worked as a Diocesan Community Worker, served in parish ministry and as a PCC Treasurer, I understand the challenges our churches face. We need greater investment in clergy, youth work and community ministry, stronger support for volunteers, and fairer funding for parish mission. Local churches need the resources not simply to survive, but to thrive. **We should be at the beating heart of every village, town and city - not putting up a "For Sale" sign.**

We must also be proud to serve our whole community - whether it is the farmer who comes to Harvest, the family attending Christingle, or someone turning to the Church in a time of crisis, celebration or grief. Those who live in a Parish are Parishioners too; Church attendance figures are important but a Church with 20 people at the heart of a community of hundreds or thousands of residents is as valuable as a mega Church with thousands attending on Sunday. **Every community deserves a church it can call its own: a place where people encounter Jesus, know love, grow in faith and find support when times are difficult.**

The conversation has become much more parish-positive. Now we must turn words into action. Working with others on General Synod, I believe we can secure a future in which the Church of England not only survives but thrives - re-evangelising and re-engaging our nation.



After more than a decade of campaigning, work is now underway to reduce costs associated with bishops' expenses, including housing, chauffeurs and staff duplication. Persistence can deliver change. I want less money spent on bureaucracy and more invested directly in parishes, clergy, church growth and mission.

Born in Coventry and raised across North and South Warwickshire, I came to faith as an adult at All Saints, Bedworth. I've previously been a local Councillor, a business lecturer, a company director, trustee of the Chapel of Unity and on Bishops Council. Today, I am Chief Executive of Bedworth Civic Hall CIO, a community venue and theatre serving

around 80,000 visitors each year with an annual turnover of more than £1 million. The venue, like many churches, was once at risk of closure. Through careful stewardship, we transformed its future. Lessons for our churches are similar: reduce burdens, control costs, support volunteers, improve facilities, grow income and invest for the long term.

MY 10 PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

1.CUT WASTE AND INVEST IN PARISHES TO STOP CLOSURES: I will continue challenging excessive diocesan/national spending, six-figure salaries **and opposing proposals to close thousands of Churches and slash stipendiary Clergy posts.** We must use our assets better, reduce Parish Share and put more money into parish ministry, clergy and mission to grow the Church. General Synod also costs too much!

2. RADICALLY RESOURCE PARISH MINISTRY AND GROWTH: I support #SaveTheParish and will continue fighting for fairer funding. We need investment to repair roofs, install heating and toilets, make buildings sustainable, train new organists and bell ringers, support youth/community work, and free clergy from spending so much time simply trying to pay the bills. We have billions in assets: they must work harder for parish mission.

3. MORE PRIESTS AND MORE VOCATIONS: I want a priest in every parish. We need to train more ordinands and remove financial and other barriers preventing people from answering God's call to ministry.

4. STOP SECULARISATION AND PLANS TO AXE CHURCH CHARITABLE STATUS & VAT RELIEF: I oppose aggressive secularisation, attempts to axe VAT relief and calls to abolish churches' charitable status. Christians should be welcomed to express faith in public. Government must recognise the enormous contribution Christians and Churches make to society.

5. BE A STRONG VOICE FOR THE POOR: I will continue challenging poverty in rural and urban communities and speaking about funeral poverty, homelessness, food banks, struggling farmers and the responsible use of Church investments. The Church must never forget the poorest.

6. END CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION: Synod must speak out and call on Government to act.

7. SUPPORT MOTHERS' UNION CAMPAIGNS: Over sixteen years I have supported campaigns concerning the sexualisation of children, domestic violence and family wellbeing. I will continue this support.

8. COMMUNICATE WITH OUR PARISHES: I've previously written reports and attended local synods. But the current rules restrict the two-way communication the role needs. I want that changed to reach everyone. I will hold online and in-person surgeries, so I can listen and your voice can reach General Synod.

9. NEVER BE AFRAID TO SPEAK UP: I will continue raising difficult issues, offering perspectives others may not, representing all, and holding leaders to account. An independent voice matters.

10. YOUR VOICE MATTERS - BRING THE NATIONAL CHURCH TO COVENTRY DIOCESE: I will bring Church Commissioners and national Church leaders to our Diocese for a one-day conference where they can hear directly from you and our parishes to ensure your priorities shape their plans.

My vision is for a strong, mission-focused Church that demonstrates Christ's love, supports thriving parish ministry, empowers volunteers, invests in growth and remains rooted in every community.

THIS WILL BE A CLOSE ELECTION

The next General Synod will make decisions that could shape the Church of England for a generation. **Re-election is not guaranteed. If you value strong parish ministry, responsible stewardship, accountability and genuinely independent representation, please give me your 1st preference vote and continue to hold me and our Church in your prayers.** If I am not re-elected, I thank you for the privilege of representing you for the last sixteen years. Together we have made a difference, and it has been an honour to serve. **I very much hope, with your support and prayers, that we can continue that work together for another five years.**

Yours in Love and Prayer,



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