

# Re-Elect Simon Butler 1

Vicar, St Mary's Battersea, (also Chair of Trustees, Clergy Support Trust)

Proposed: Canon Roxanne Hunte, Holy Innocents & St Mark, South Norwood

Seconded: Reverend Steve Melluish, St Michael's with St Stephen's, Wandsworth



## Vote Simon Butler 1 for...

- A very experienced Synod Hand – Prolocutor of Canterbury since 2015 – who will have your back in Synod.
- Generous inclusive orthodoxy, where there is a place for all in our Church.
- An honest voice for Southwark Clergy in the diocese and beyond who can build partnerships for change & speak truth to power.

## Clergy Care & Wellbeing

I began & led the work that emerged as the Covenant for Clergy Care & Wellbeing. It now needs to be embedded in our life so that early positive reception becomes real culture change. We face huge uncertainties post-pandemic and those called to ordained ministry need the whole Church – bishops, laity and clergy – to take seriously our spoken commitment to the Covenant and to build a healthier, preventative ministerial culture not just for us but for the good of the whole Church. **If elected, I will lead this work in the lifetime of the next Synod.**

## Living in Love & Faith (LLF)

LLF has mostly been about education and I think we are learning that our mission to England *as it is* and our duty to LGBTI+ clergy/laity require a new settlement, one where we need not unchurch others. **If elected, I want to see:**

- No order of ministry or appointment, including the episcopacy, barred to clergy on grounds of sexuality or if in a committed, stable partnership;**
- Clergy feel safe and supported in their ministry whether LGBTI+ or hold in good conscience conservative views.**
- An optional authorised/commended liturgy available to those who wish to use it to commit to God their lives as same-sex couples.**

## Clergy Discipline & Safeguarding

Accompanying clergy through discipline has been eye-opening. The CDM is a failure. I support the proposals for replacement. **If you elect me I will serve on the Group appointed to replace the CDM and will ensure clergy are better protected from vexatious complaints, heavy-handed process and unaccountable episcopal decisions.** I've experienced the nightmare of my own safeguarding risk assessment, and have first-hand knowledge of the deficit of natural justice in some processes, for both victims and respondents. Pouring money into safeguarding alone is insufficient: those who fail in leadership in safeguarding must be held to account, whoever and however senior they are. There is still much to do, still too many wrongs to put right. **This is a Gospel priority for the Church in our time.**

## For the Parish *and* Mixed Ecology

At Archbishops' Council I have supported our bids for Commissioners' funds towards new mission & evangelistic opportunities: many have focused on ordinary parishes and chaplaincies. If the parish is under threat, it is from numerical decline, not from 'mixed ecology'. I understand the concerns of *Save the Parish*, but believe its tone too confrontational, too apocalyptic. **If you elect me, I will hold our Archbishops to their commitment to the parish in our emerging Strategy as a Church, and support funds for new mission and the development of lay leadership.**

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## Personal Statement

I've served in Southwark since 1997. Being a member of Synod remains a privilege and a vocational experience. I think I have five more years in me in which I can make a concrete difference, seeing through some crucial changes that will make for a better church for all clergy. Since 2015 I've been the Prolocutor of Canterbury, elected to speak for you all in Synod and on Archbishops' Council. I sit solidly in the centre of the Church (an Evangelical heart, a sacramental worshipper, moderately progressive in social ethics). I want a Church where theology and approach to mission is matched by generosity to those with different commitments and methods. **If elected I intend to stand for a second term as Prolocutor.**

## Personal Priorities for 2021-26

- **A gentle pace in a post-pandemic church.** We need to be a kinder, more patient and compassionate church, where sincere worship, service of neighbour and thoughtful evangelism define our shared expression of faith in Christ *for* the nation. The stresses of Covid have revealed a tendency to shout at each other rather than work together. We are a broad church: we are better when we accept & live that truth.
- **Honesty about the challenges of mission and ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.** We are in a post-Christian age and the role/'status' of clergy has changed beyond recognition. Clergy training must focus on feeding and growing the church for this context, with racial and social diversity key in ministerial selection.
- **I am very clearly 'out' as a partnered gay priest in the Councils of the church.** I take a tenacious, irenic and dialogical approach to engaging with episcopal and conservative colleagues, built on mutual respect and friendship. "I will not let you go until you bless me", defines my inclusive style. I believe I'm a respected partner in seeking a just settlement to our sexuality debate.
- **A commitment to the Five Guiding Principles.** These are a painful compromise for many in the Church. I honour those who bear the scars of it, especially women and traditional Catholics. Despite contradictions and faults, it's not the time to unpick the settlement.

## My Work For You 2015-21

- **Clergy Care & Wellbeing:** I'm the architect & author of the Clergy Covenant and have used my networks and understanding to build agreement & a programme for action.
- **Legislative Reform:** I chair the Archbishops' Council Legislative Reform Committee, which exists to simplify ecclesiastical law. This work will occupy much Synod time in 2021-26, post-Covid. Legislating is the bread-and-butter of Synod, & members need to give it full, detailed attention. My top priority **will be to obtain reforms to clergy terms of service – especially protection of clergy from bullying by lay people** – so that the church's professional expectations about ministry are matched with similar, robust protections. Clergy who feel supported, valued, and who have clarity about the nature of their role and security in it, are most likely to thrive personally and spiritually & grow churches.
- **Clergy Remuneration:** I led the House of Clergy to ask for the recent review. I've lobbied and voted against tiny stipend increases that have diminished its value.
- **Safeguarding:** I've been surprised by the way in which those involved in safeguarding cases – complainants and respondents – find their way to my door, often angry & seeking help about how to find their way through the complexities of church culture. **I commit to doing more of this if elected.** I introduced a Private Members' Motion in 2019 requiring dioceses and the national church to undertake tendering for their professional services, to bring an end to the cosiness that exists between the church, Ecclesiastical Insurance and church law firms. **I will bring this back if re-elected.**
- **Explaining & Engaging:** social media is often suspicious and critical of those in senior leadership (I know what that can be like locally so try to be firm but generous to those who lead nationally!). As a member of AC I engage with critics to defuse some of the most unfair examples. I try to remember the bulk who get on with ministry, who never enter debates: they need a voice too. With several long-standing Synod members not standing again, we need some continuity to keep to important corporate memory and hold to commitments made. **I ask for your first vote.**