

## Bill Seddon



- 69 years old, married to Rosie for 45 years with 3 adult children and 4 grandchildren
- Retired Chief Executive of the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church
- General Synod House of Laity 2010–2021
- Church of England Pensions Board 2018–2021
- General Synod Environmental Group Steering Committee, since inception in 2016
- Evangelical Group of the General Synod 2010–2021
- Chair of the Northumbria Community Trust

### *Proposed*

John Rhodes, Lay Chair  
Rickmansworth Deanery Synod

### *Seconded*

Nigel Challis, Diocesan Synod  
and Bishop's Council

## What can I offer as your General Synod representative?

### *Locally grounded*

As a life-long Anglican I have always been a committed member of my parish church, which for over 25 years has meant worshipping with my family at St Andrew's, Chorleywood, where I am currently churchwarden and PCC lay vice-chair. I am passionate about encouraging actions and initiatives that demonstrate our care for creation both as individuals and as a church as we witness to our local community. For many years I was also involved in children's ministry, seeking to teach Christian truths in innovative ways. More recently I have been committed to building good safeguarding practice and promoting a culture that reflects this to ensure we offer as safe an environment as possible for all that attend our Church, both young and old.

### *Nationally Experienced*

For 30 years I was Chief Executive of the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church (CFB), which managed over £1.3 billion on behalf of pension and charitable trusts. Not only were good financial returns required, but our investments had to meet the ethical criteria of the Methodist Church. As a senior executive in the Methodist Church, I gained considerable experience in the world of church finances at denominational level. I was Chair of the Church Investors Group, whose 70 members now control assets in excess of £20bn and I often worked with the Church of England on ethical issues related to investment as well as many other denominations around the world.

Since retirement I have continued to assist Christian charities and pension funds with their investments, sitting on the Investment Committees of the Clergy Support Trust and the William Leech Foundation as well as those of the Church of England Pensions Board and the Methodist Church pension schemes. In addition, I sit on the Church of England Ethical Investment Advisory Group's Nominations Committee. I also represented the Pensions Board on the Archbishops' Council Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee during the production of the Review of Clergy Remuneration, published earlier this year.

### *Gospel Driven*

My own walk with God has been what has sustained me over the years. It has taught me that as a Christian, my faith cannot be compartmentalised, but must be applied to all parts of my life. It helped me understand that although the return on Church investments is important it must not be earned in a way that is at variance with the Gospel message. I have had considerable experience in these matters as a member of the Methodist Church Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment, the CFB representative on the Church of England's Ethical Investment Advisory Group, and as a member of the Responsible Investment Advisory Panel of EdenTree, Ecclesiastical Insurance's investment arm.

Similarly, when tackling other controversial issues, it is right to start with Gospel teaching and then to apply it intelligently. My experience in using this approach in the world of finance has been a significant help to me throughout my time on Synod. Through it, I can bring together an understanding of the big picture without losing sight of local implications, which I believe allows me to make informed and valuable contributions to the work of General Synod.

## Serving on General Synod

### *By informing others*

One of a member's key responsibilities is to try and make General Synod come alive to the local church. I have done this by circulating [my personal reflections on each Group of Sessions](#) to my 'link' Deanery Synods, and encouraging them to pass these on to their PCCs. I am committed to continue doing this, if re-elected. It is also important to find opportunities to explain how General Synod works. I have done this through presentations at Deanery Synods, PCCs and other groups such as local Readers and will continue to do so when invited.

### *By asking questions*

Many of [my questions](#) have been on matters where I have expertise, such as climate change, the environment and ethical issues related to investment. However, I believe one of my duties as a member of General Synod is to raise matters that others in the Diocese bring to my attention. Examples of this have been funeral poverty and clergy ill-health

### *By speaking out*

As a member of General Synod, it is important to be willing and able to speak. Usually this will be on issues on which you have some knowledge or experience. However, there needs to be space for passion and concern to be expressed. Over the 11 years I have been a member of General Synod, most of my speeches have been on climate change, the environment and corporate ethics. However, I have also spoken on Clergy Wellbeing, Fixed Odds Betting, the Living Wage, the Anglican/Methodist Covenant and the House of Laity electorate. All my speeches can be seen on my website. If re-elected I am committed to speak out where I have knowledge and experience, but also on matters of concern not only to me, but to others in the diocese.

## Key issues facing the Church of England

### *The Climate Emergency*

Few now doubt that one of the greatest challenges humanity faces is climate change. The fifth mark of mission is to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Our Church has responded to this in many ways, including: the Eco Church and Eco Diocese initiatives; celebrating the Season for Creation; aligning its investments with the Paris Accord; and a commitment to be carbon net zero by 2030. In addition to supporting such initiatives at parish, diocesan and national level, I am committed to urging General Synod to play its part through the witness of its own actions. I was responsible for persuading the Business Committee to adopt its Top Ten Tips for an Eco Synod last year and if elected, I have been given the task of managing the transition of the Synod Environmental Group into the new Quinquennium.

### *Simpler, Humbler and Bolder*

We are seeking to discern the kind of church God is calling us to become as we identify a strategy for the next decade. The Archbishop of York reminded us that although the vision doesn't change, it needs to be proclaimed afresh in every generation. Today, he suggests, we are being called to be a church centred on and shaped by Jesus Christ. Three strategic objectives are emerging: to be a church of missionary disciples; to be a 'mixed ecology' church, reflecting the many cultures and contexts we serve; and to be more diverse in our membership. To achieve this, he argues, we must be a simpler, bolder and humbler Church. There is talk in some quarters that this will result in the end of the parish system. However, the aim is very different; a revitalised parish system equipped for mission. This has my whole hearted support and if elected I will support initiatives to bring it about.

### *Living in Love and Faith*

Living in Love and Faith is a major resource to help us grapple with issues related to human sexuality, but it does not give answers. The new Synod will seek to discern the way forward, a journey that is well underway. I have been blessed by the companions I have already met on the way, even when our views differ. Having read the book and completed the course with four Church friends, my position remains the traditional one that has been part of Church doctrine for millennia. However, I now have a much greater understanding of the issues and feel compassion for those that have experienced hurt. I recognise that there are alternative interpretations of the scriptures that can lead to very different conclusions. I am also keenly aware that unity is a key biblical value. Reaching any 'decision' at this time would, in my view, split the Church and be a very negative witness to our country. We have lived with difference in the past and I would suggest, in humility, that we continue to do so on this issue until we can live our way into the answer.

### *And finally...*

Above all, I offer my willingness to serve. Part of this involves listening to different views and representing them fairly when the opportunity arises so if I am re-elected do contact me (wtseddon@gmail.com).

Please consider giving me your first preference vote.