



John Fowler  
*Candidate for election to General Synod, 2010*

I live in Maidstone and for more than 20 years my family and I have attended All Saints Church. I am responsible for the team which does the readings and leads the intercessions and my wife has been a Sunday School leader for many years.

I was born in Merseyside and studied Chemistry at the University of York. Later in my career I gained an MSc in overseas development at the University of Swansea. I have worked for much of my life in public sector organisations. I set up and ran the Sure Start Children's Centre in Sheerness, Swale, providing services for children and families; prior to that I was the National Development Officer for The Prince's Trust. I now run Kent Savers, the new Credit Union which offers ethical financial services to the people of Kent and Medway. An important part of our work is to reduce the damage done by the loan sharks who exploit the poorest and most vulnerable members of our community.

Much of my early career was spent in the field of overseas development; I was a volunteer science teacher in Tanzania and worked as Youth Affairs Adviser to the Commonwealth Secretary General during which time I was privileged to work in Commonwealth countries right across the world. I am now a trustee of a small charity working in a remote part of Tanzania, I am also on the boards of Swale Council for Voluntary Service and of a charity which provides support to young people leaving care. I believe very strongly that voluntary organisations and charities are vitally important in providing quality services across our communities. At the same time I see this as a constructive way to engage people to work together for the common good.

I believe that it is important to respect those with different views, to find ways to work together and, when appropriate, to celebrate those differences. I believe strongly in the rights of all of our population, no matter what their gender, ethnic origin, disability or sexual orientation to be treated equally both within the Church and throughout our wider society. I am relieved that, following the outcomes of the last General Synod, we are at last moving in what I see as a positive direction. However I acknowledge the challenges this presents to us all in working together and ensuring we all feel we belong to – and are part of – the Church of England. I am concerned that the reputation of our church amongst the general public seems only to relate to issues about women clergy and sexuality when there are so many other issues which are key to the work of the Church.

Our country is about to enter a time of significant stress and tensions as the cuts to the public sector take effect; this will inevitably affect us all. I believe that the Church has a duty and responsibility to offer practical, emotional and spiritual support to those who will be most adversely affected.

If I am privileged to be elected as a Diocesan representative on General Synod I will want to communicate effectively and ensure that reports about what happens at General Synod are made available to all who are interested. I will also work hard to listen to the concerns and priorities of Deanery Synod members and to find ways to represent those views faithfully.

Thank you for reading this, I will be very pleased to discuss any aspect of my candidacy; please feel free to contact me. I hope that you will allow me to serve you as one of your representatives on General Synod by giving me a high preference vote.

Thank you.