

Please vote for: Mark Johnson, Diocese of Oxford

Nominated by: Mrs Julie Shields, Burnham and Slough Deanery

Seconded by: Mrs Angela Farr, Burnham and Slough Deanery



Why vote for me?

Firstly, I am passionate about God, people, and the Church of England. I believe in an inclusive, encompassing, and compassionate church, a church full of the love and joy of Jesus. A church which reaches out to all peoples regardless of faith, belief, knowledge, sexuality, divergence, class, gender, or other perceived difference – a church where everyone is equal, where all are valued, and where all are loved.

Ecumenical, open to learning from all faiths (and none), passionate and committed to spreading the love of God as shown in the life of Jesus, through his flawed, but beloved, church. I believe that all people have a place in God's world.

I believe that the Church of England, and in particular the parish system, can and must feed the spiritual, social, mental, cultural, and physical lives of all peoples and, in so doing, bring the Kingdom to life locally, nationally, and across the world.

To do this we need strong, open, transparent, and inclusive governance. We need a governing structure which encompasses servanthood, acknowledges difference, faces reality, and provides strong, clear, understandable, and enforceable rules and regulations. Rules and regulations which enable and empower, rather than constrict and constrain.

It is time, I believe, for us, the people of Oxford, to stand up for what we believe, to reach out to all, and to work with others as we look to realise the Kingdom (especially I believe we need to do this through the church and its structures, rather than despite them).

Secondly, I have extensive experience of organisations, structures, and people, both within and without the Church.

For many years I was Deanery Lay Chair in Burnham and Slough, one of the most diverse and exciting deaneries in the diocese. This was, perhaps, the most rewarding role I have undertaken. Working with the deanery team, and leading the deanery through challenging times, I learnt that difference needs to be celebrated, people need to be empowered and encouraged, small and large are equally important, good financial governance is essential, but finance must not drive vision.

During this time I served on Diocesan synod, again a privilege whereby I gained more than I gave. I have also served on many different and differing PCC's.

As a lifetime Christian I have experienced, and enjoyed, many differing traditions. Brought up as a Roman Catholic I joined the

General Information

Working Life:

Steward*
Burham Abbey

Self Employed*
Administrative Services

Preacher*
URC Church Services

General Manager
British Psychotherapy
Foundation

Manager,
Befriending Service

London Manager
Mental Health Matters

Manager
Community Training/Cafe

Systems Manager

Database Manager

Programmer

Voluntary Life:

Deanery Lay Chair
Burnham and Slough

PCC Treasurer

PCC Secretary

PCC Member*

Trustee*
Community Café

Trustee
Cancer Charity

** Current*

Personal

Married (my wife is a vicar)

Two stepchildren

Two grandchildren

Have been challenged by
mental health issues.

Mark Johnson – Diocese of Oxford

Church of England in my late teens, enjoying a wide-range of churchmanship (from Evangelical to Catholic) in many different environments, including Central London, Slough, and rural Wiltshire, where my first wife was the Financial Director at Salisbury Cathedral. Over the past fifteen years I have worshipped in Oxford Diocese, mainly in the diverse and exciting deanery of Burnham and Slough – which contains some of the wealthiest and some of the most deprived parishes in the diocese. I now worship in Manor Park, Slough, where my wonderful wife is Vicar. This is an amazing church community, embedded in a challenged, but wonderful, area of Slough, we are particularly proud of belonging to the Inclusive Church Community.

In summary I have experience of Inner City, Rural, and Suburban church life, am eclectic and inclusive in my approach to life, church, and churchmanship; have worked as a senior manager in the charity sector for many years. I listen, debate, learn, and persuade, am a champion for those whose voice remains unheard, am committed to the truth – and am open to change and challenge.

If elected I would strive to become known to all in the diocese. I would look to represent the diocese and the people who live here as fully as possible. I would support and encourage an open, honest, and loving church; full of all God's people, reaching out into the world and bringing the Kingdom to life in all its glory.

I am also aware that all of these things take time, effort, and determination. Hard work is something I enjoy, and I have the resilience and resource to deal with the challenges of promoting an agenda in an established and somewhat resistant to change church – the upside of which is the amazing changes which can and do happen when we God works through us.

Finally, on a positive note: I have been challenged for much of my life by mental health issues. These dark times have made me a better person, open to others, able to be with people wherever they are, whatever they have done, and whoever they are or are striving to be.

Priorities

- We need representation from all peoples in God's wonderful Kingdom, especially from those who feel, and are, neglected and underrepresented. As a white, middle class, man, (sorry, I don't really fit the underrepresented mould) I would strive to ensure that everyone is truly represented in the governance of the church.
- We need representatives who are in touch with people at all levels of the diocese, I am able to talk to, listen to, and learn from, people across society.
- We need to address the issues facing our nation and the church, such as poverty, the lack of spiritual life (although spirituality is surprisingly growing but where is the church?), discrimination, refugees, crime, difference, privilege, and many others.
- We need to ensure that the church deals quickly, sensitively, and honestly with its preoccupation with sexuality and gender – I strongly support equal marriage, gender diversity, and full acceptance of all peoples; believing church should be a place where everyone is equal, feeling safe to be themselves.
- We need to look to ourselves as we deal with the pain, horror, and distress caused, and still being caused, by our inability to deal with issues such as racial discrimination, safeguarding, bullying, church discipline, and gender discrimination. The church needs to move away from protecting itself and look to protect all of God's people.
- We need to revisit the structuring of the church, making parishes more resilient, supporting existing work, changing what does not work. We need to share resources fairly and equally – according to need, not ability to pay. We need to reach out to people as Jesus did, not because they believed, but because they had need.
- We need to change our top-heavy ecclesiastical structures, moving power from institutions and translating it to people (I believe in the old adage "democracy is the worst form of government – except for all the others that have been tried.").
- We need to be a church which is seen to be a voice of change and prophecy, working for the good of all, bringing the Kingdom to life through prayer and action.

For more information, questions, or comments please contact me on mrj418@outlook.com

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