

The Revd Steve Wilcox

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Proposed by: The Revd Simon Elliott
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Thank you for taking the time to read my election address.

My background

I have been an Anglican all my life, growing up in an Anglican church, attending Anglican churches during my formative years and serving in ordained ministry in York Diocese for the past fourteen years. I was born in Birmingham and grew up in the West Midlands. After university I worked for six years as a chartered accountant in London, before being selected for ordination in the Church of England.

I am married to Alice and have three children aged 15, 13, and 11. I enjoy hill and moorland walking and thank God for the glorious landscapes, and many wonderful places to walk in York Diocese.

My context

For the past ten years I have been the incumbent of two small churches in the East Riding of Yorkshire, on the edge of the city of Hull. Like many small churches in the Diocese, we are seeking to make our way, to grow in faith and number, to contribute to the financial needs of the Diocese as much as we can.

Like all churches in the Diocese we have been deeply affected by the Covid crisis, and whilst we delight to be able to meet, sing and share the Lord's Supper again we are still waiting to see how our ministry will be impacted in the medium to long-term. I arrived at St Peter's and St Mark's as the first incumbent of the plurality, so I have personal experience of helping two churches learn how to work together and all the challenges involved in that.

I am passionate about knowing our good God, and about mission and discipleship to help others know him, and during those ten years I have worked with the rest of the church leadership to grow what we might call "missionary disciples", through midweek home groups, children and youth ministry on Sunday and midweek, personal visitation and discipleship, as well as the main Sunday worship (including a new 4pm congregation). As a church we are also seeking to serve the community in a variety of ways, including through our charity the Anlaby Communities Trust with objects including meeting needs of all kinds as well as advancing education and youth work. The Trust also runs a community garden. I long to see the many churches in Hull, East Yorkshire and the Diocese grow in faith and number in the years to come, and I have worked with others to encourage that: For example, serving on Diocesan Synod (2018-); and being fully involved in the West Hull Area Mission (2016) and the Come and See Mission (2020).

Why I am standing

We all know that the Church of England faces significant opportunities and challenges over the coming years, including ongoing discussions about future Vision and Strategy (including finances and parish reorganisation); recovering and moving forward following the Covid crisis; the care of clergy; and discussions around race, the environment and sexuality. I have been encouraged to stand by others who feel that my experience will help me to make a contribution in many of those areas. I cannot mention all the areas in this statement, but here are a few examples of how I may be able to contribute:

- **Vision and strategy**

I believe the local parish church continues to be absolutely vital in the development of the Church's strategy and, if elected, I will make that clear. However, I accept that some degree of change is necessary in how we organise ourselves as a Church in order to continue to share the good news with new generations and to meet our significant financial challenges. I am supportive of the concept of a "mixed ecology" in which different forms of local church are able to flourish together. I have experience of a variety of different ministry contexts (inner-city, suburban and rural) through working with and talking to others in networks such as the Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship and Hull 2030, as well as Diocesan Synod. My background as an accountant has helped me in church life and I hope would also be an asset in General Synod life. It may be worth saying that I've been told I have the gift of encouraging others, and we all need encouragement at the moment.

- **Clergy care**

I have long been an advocate of the importance of clergy care – both care by the local church and the Diocese, and self-care. The Covid crisis and its impact on mental health has only made that even more critical. I am an enthusiastic supporter of the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing and if elected I will work to ensure that this continues to receive the attention it deserves. I have also benefited and seen others benefit from spiritual direction and mentoring, and will be an advocate for this. I have experience of overseeing and caring for ordained clergy (curates and associate minister) and other staff.

- **Living in Love and Faith (LLF)**

I believe that it is vital that the Church of England holds the conversation that LLF is encouraging, and I will be fully committed to the process being brought to a satisfactory conclusion for the good of the whole Church. I believe we need great humility to learn how to better care for all in our parishes and I am committed to doing so in grace and truth.

- **Education**

I am passionate about the importance of education, being aware of the enormous potential that it has to shape future generations. I have served as a governor at two local schools over the past 9 years (including as chair of governors at a community primary school for 2 years). I served for three years on the York Diocesan Board of Education (2013-2015) and will continue to advocate for the importance of our Church Schools in our common life together.

- **Implementation and Dialogue Group**

I will take an active role in any further discussions on this matter, being fully committed to the "mutual flourishing" that has been advocated in recent years.

Please do get in touch with me if you have any questions. In the longer term, if I am elected then I do hope that you will feel free to contact me to express your views and concerns. I should be grateful if you would consider giving me your first, second or third preference vote.

With thanks

Steve