

# Letters to Editor

'Nimbys' are those who say that they agree with something, but 'not in my back yard'. They might agree we should have wind farms, but object if one is proposed near them. They might agree that councils should make provision for the Traveller community, but then oppose proposals their local area.

The Report by the Independent Reviewer, Canon Maggie Swinson, entitled 'Submission by Women and the Church (WATCH) regarding the appointment of Diocesan Bishops', published in April, shows that nimbysism is flourishing in the Church of England.

Her report responded to the complaint by WATCH who had objected to the appointment of Philip North as Bishop of Blackburn. WATCH had argued that Bishop Philip should not have been allowed to be a bishop due to his 'theological position on the ordination of women' (Page 32).

Canon Swinson rejected that. She confirmed that 'all orders of ministry are equally open to all, whether or not they are able to receive the ministry of women as bishops or priests.' (Page 30).

The Five Guiding Principles were designed to achieve two things. To enable women to be ordained as bishops (Principle 1) and to enable traditionalists to flourish: 'Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures' (Principle 4).

In Appendix 5 of her Report, Canon Swinson conducted a wider review of the Statement of Needs of 24 dioceses who in recent years have appointed a bishop. Of those 24 dioceses, 18 had produced a Statement of Needs that said that they respect the Five Guiding Principles that allow a traditionalist to be a bishop, they just don't want one in their own diocese.

For example:

- Bath and Wells: 'We seek a bishop who ... is respectful of the Five Guiding Principles; and who ordains women and men.'

- Derby: 'we would want them to be willing to ordain women themselves, as well as being committed to the Five Guiding Principles of mutual flourishing for the whole Church.'
- Norwich: 'committed to the five guiding principles who will ordain men and women'
- Peterborough: 'Wholeheartedly ordains men and women and upholds the Five Guiding Principles for mutual flourishing.'
- York: 'An ordainer of both men and women who is committed to the Five Guiding Principles.'

So, in other words 'We are committed to allowing traditionalists to flourish, but we don't want one here.'

This discriminatory attitude is not limited to the appointment of bishops, it is often seen in the appointments of suffragan bishops, deans and archdeacons. Those who make the appointments agree that in theory a traditionalist can hold such a role, but that it is not appropriate for this local context. Not in my back yard.

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