

# GENERAL SYNOD 2016

## Report of the Central Communications Board Proposer: The Most Revd Pat Storey

**Embargoed Against Delivery  
Check Against Delivery**

Communication is how we interact. Think how much the poorer you would be (and some people are) without speech, hearing, facial expressions or body language. That is how we tell one another what is going on with us. That is how I understand you and you understand me. Communication is essential to who we are.

A little girl and a little boy were at nursery school one day. The girl approached the boy and said: 'Hey Billy, want to play house?' He said: 'Ok, what do you want me to do?' Sally replied 'I want you to communicate your feelings.' 'Communicate my feelings?' said a bewildered Billy, 'I have no idea what that means.' The little girl nodded and said 'Perfect. You can be the husband.'

That, by the way, is a very stereotypical joke, and not at all as it happens, true of my own husband! But I enjoyed telling it anyway!

As a very recent addition to the Central Communications Board, I am very impressed with what the members of this Board do, and the time that they so generously give. It is a busy committee that deals with all areas of broadcasting, literature and royalties, and sets the policy for our Communications strategy in the Church of Ireland.

It has been a busy year – the supplement to the Church Hymnal, Thanks and Praise, was produced, printed and launched during 2015, and it has been very well received.

It is a great asset to our worship. The Board also helped with support for the Historical Centenaries Working Group, which has also, as is evidenced by its title, had a very busy year. Other areas of immense work and support included the production of the Dignity Charter and of the Guide to Human Sexuality. There were 70 press releases during 2015 – and many of you receive the monthly e-bulletin. Ongoing training for Diocesan Communications Officers continues and the most recent one on social media training was, I gather, an excellent event.

Staff and volunteers have come and gone throughout the year. We want to acknowledge the great debt we owe to Jenny Compston who was an excellent administrative support, and much more, in Belfast. We wish Jenny every blessing in retirement, and welcome Peter Cheney as Assistant Press Officer. Around the broadcasting arena we said goodbye to Dean Tom Gordon as Protestant Co-ordinator at RTE and we welcome Jacqui Mullen and Rev Ken Rue to this role. Dr Ray Refausse has retired as RB Librarian and we wish him well too in his retirement and welcome Dr Susan Hood to her new role, who is no stranger to us.

We would love to be the recipient and the communicator of a million good news stories. That is how we would like to be spending our time and energy through our communications strategy – and we hope that in our new website we have achieved a new ‘fit for purpose’ vehicle to achieve this. Please see on the screens around and before you our new Church of Ireland website.

There has been a lot of work to achieve the quality of this new website and we are deeply grateful to all concerned, especially the Church House communications staff. It is an excellent way to get good news stories out around the country and we encourage you to keep feeding your stories and events into our Communications Department so that we can load them onto the website and then on to social media too. We want to get the message across that we are alive and well, and you are an integral part of that! We cannot do it without you. So many good things happen around the Dioceses, and we never hear about them – so please do keep the information highway busy! We do, however, have a website policy with which all traffic needs to comply, so if you send us a photo of your Granny’s birthday, we mightn’t just consider that to be relevant information for the whole country, lovely as I am sure she is!

Alan Clark said this about journalism: ‘If you are the editor of The Times, you can never get away for an evening. It’s worse than a herd of dairy cows.’ Thus I want to thank in particular both Janet Maxwell as Director of Communications, and Paul Harron who does an amazing job of being our Press Officer. It cannot be easy being available all the time and having to deal often with church emergencies when you are trying to be with your family, getting some headspace, or driving from one end of the country to the other. So thank you for going beyond the call of duty many, many times, and sometimes for me! It is very much appreciated. Please enjoy our new website – your new website – there will be a link from the old one, and please do give

us a million reasons (but not your Granny!) to keep communicating good news. Not just good news. But the good news of the love that became flesh and made His home in us. We communicate; we love – because He loved first.