Rear Admiral Philip Wilcocks
Lay Chair: Abbeydore Deanery
Chair of the House of Clergy

Proposer:  Nat Hone, Bosbury (Ledbury Deanery)
Seconder:  Nigel Sellar, Bredwardine (Abbeydore Deanery)

A friend of mine recently asked me to consider standing for election as a representative of our diocese in the House of Laity of the General Synod ~ he felt that I had skills and experience to offer the wider church.  Over the past few weeks, I have sought out other views and have prayerfully considered what God wants me to do; the latter has normally been done while walking our dog along the quiet country lanes in the SW of our diocese.

At the last meeting of the General Synod, ++Stephen asked "What kind of church is God calling us to be?"  And there is no doubt that nearly 2 years of successive lockdowns as we have struggled to cope with the challenges of Covid has brought this key question into sharper focus.  Returning to the "old norm" is highly unlikely; our world has suffered a strategic shock the implications of which will take some time to come to fruition.  And yet dealing with Covid has highlighted new ways of worship, new mediums to explore, new venues that we can use.  It would be a great shame if these were lost as we move forward.

St John calls us to be "courageous disciples" ~ to follow Christ to the very best of our abilities.  And yet in doing so, I believe the church has to do so as a collegiate body – with all 3 houses of Synods ~ Diocesan as well as General ~ working in unity for the growth of God's kingdom.  Huge challenges continue to face our world, our nation, our communities ~ and yet at the heart of our Christian witness is the local parish, benefice and deanery.  I am delighted that this formed a key part of ++Stephen's address and is indeed at the "pointy end" of the work that +Richard is leading within our own diocese.

I sense that the Holy Spirit is calling upon the laity to be at the heart of this way forward and I would be honoured and privileged to be elected to the General Synod as a diocesan lay member.