

The Church Commissioners for England have today welcomed the Crown appointment of the Rt Hon Caroline Spelman MP as Second Church Estates Commissioner, replacing the Rt Hon Canon Sir Tony Baldry.

The role of the Second Church Estates Commissioner is to provide a link between Government, Parliament and the established Church. The Second Church Estates Commissioner answers oral and written questions from MPs about Church of England matters in the House of Commons, is a member of Parliament's Ecclesiastical Committee and steers Church of England legislation through the House of Commons. She is also an ex-officio member of the General Synod and a member of the Church Commissioners' Board of Governors.

Welcoming Caroline Spelman's appointment, Andrew Brown, Secretary Chairman to the Church Commissioners, said: "We are delighted with the appointment of Caroline as the Second Church Estates Commissioner and look forward to working with her. Caroline has a strong commitment to the church and its mission to local communities. This is vital to the Church Commissioners as we carry out the work and mission of the Church of England."

Commenting on her appointment Caroline Spelman, said: "I am honoured to be asked to undertake this role as the Church is important for the future of our country and I want to help it navigate the challenges of the modern world with the support of our parliamentarians."

Caroline Spelman has held a number of leading parliamentary posts, including from 2010-12 Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. She has also been Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, Shadow Minister for Women, Chairman of the Conservative Party, and Shadow Office of the Deputy Prime Minister/Communities and Local Government. She has also been a member of a number of Parliamentary committees, including the Environmental Audit Select Committee and Joint Committee on the Draft Modern Slavery Bill. She has represented the Parliamentary constituency of Meriden since 1997, a West Midlands seat containing a wide socio-economic mix, which is in both the Birmingham and Coventry dioceses.

Caroline is a former agriculture specialist, holds a BA in European studies from Queen Mary College London, is Vice Chair of Tearfund and Patron of Welcome, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation charity.

A committed and lifelong Anglican, she worships at Knowle Parish Church in her Meriden constituency, has been a longstanding member of the Christians in Parliament all party group and joined the Ecclesiastical Committee in 2014. In March 2014 she initiated a House of Commons debate on the contribution of women to the ordained ministry of the Church of England.

Caroline likes choral singing and is chair of the Parliamentary Choir.

Background on Caroline Spelman:

Parliamentary Career

1997: Elected MP for Meriden

1998-99: Opposition Whip

1997-2001: Board member, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST)

1999-2001: Opposition Spokesperson for Health, Women's Issues

2001-03: Shadow Secretary of State for International Development

2001-04: Shadow Minister for Women

2003-04: Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment,

2009-10: Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

2010-12: Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Past Select committees

Member:

1997-98: Science and Technology

2013-: Environmental Audit

2014: Joint Committee on the Draft Modern Slavery Bill

2014-: Ecclesiastical Committee

Further education

Queen Mary College, London (BA European studies 1980)

The Church Commissioners for England

The Church Commissioners manage an investment fund of £6.7 billion, held mainly in a diversified portfolio, including equities, real estate and alternative investment strategies. The Commissioners' work today supports the Church of England as a Christian presence in every community.

The annual objectives of the Church Commissioners include:

- Supporting ministry costs in dioceses with fewer resources
- Providing funds to support mission activities
- Paying for bishops' ministry and some cathedral costs
- Administering the legal framework for pastoral reorganisation and settling the future of closed church buildings
- Paying clergy pensions for service prior to 1998
- Running the national payroll for serving the retired clergy

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