

Downing Street have today announced that the new Bishop of Stockport - and the first woman bishop in the Church of England - will be the Revd Libby Lane, currently Vicar of St Peter's, Hale, and St Elizabeth's, Ashley.

As Bishop of Stockport she will serve as a suffragan (assistant) bishop in the Diocese of Chester. She will be consecrated as the 8th Bishop of Stockport at a ceremony at York Minster on Monday 26 January 2015.

Libby Lane was ordained as a priest in 1994 and has served a number of parish and chaplaincy roles in the North of England in the Dioceses of Blackburn, York and Chester. For the past 8 years she has served as Vicar of St. Peter's Hale and St. Elizabeth's Ashley.

She is one of eight clergy women from the Church of England elected as Participant Observers in the House of Bishops, as the representative from the dioceses of the North West.

Speaking at Stockport town hall where she was announced as the new Bishop of Stockport Libby Lane said: "I am grateful for, though somewhat daunted by, the confidence placed in me by the Diocese of Chester. This is unexpected and very exciting. On this historic day as the Church of England announces the first woman nominated to be Bishop, I am very conscious of all those who have gone before me, women and men, who for decades have looked forward to this moment. But most of all I am thankful to God.

"The church faces wonderful opportunities, to proclaim afresh, in this generation, the Good News of Jesus and to build His Kingdom. The Church of England is called to serve all the people of this country, and being present in every community, we communicate our faith best when our lives build up the lives of others, especially the most vulnerable. I am excited by the possibilities and challenges ahead."

Responding to news of the announcement the Archbishop of York, the Most Revd Dr John Sentamu, said: "It is with great joy that on January 26, 2015 - the feast of Timothy and Titus, companions of Paul - I will be in York Minster, presiding over the consecration of the Revd Libby Lane as Bishop Suffragan of Stockport. Libby brings a wealth of experience in parish ministry, in hospital and FE chaplaincy, in vocations work and the nurture of ordinands. I am delighted that she will exercise her episcopal ministry with joy, prayerfulness, and trust in God.

"When the General Synod rejected the previous proposals in November 2012, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, wrote to 'pour some balm on (my) wounded heart'. That year, he encouraged me, his province was finally celebrating the election of two women bishops. 'Be comforted', he said, 'it will come.'

"When I wrote to him last weekend to offer my prayers for his battle with prostate cancer, he replied with these words: 'Wonderful that you over there will soon have women bishops. Yippee! I know you have pushed for this for a long time. Yippee again!'

"Praise be to God in the highest heaven, and peace to all in England!"

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, said: ""I am absolutely delighted that Libby has been appointed to succeed Bishop Robert Atwell as Bishop of Stockport. Her Christ-centred life, calmness and clear determination to serve the church and the community make her

a wonderful choice.

"She will be bishop in a diocese that has been outstanding in its development of people, and she will make a major contribution. She and her family will be in my prayers during the initial excitement, and the pressures of moving".

The Bishop of Chester, the Rt Revd Dr Peter Forster, said: "Libby has had a varied and distinguished ministry, and is currently a first-rate parish priest. She has already demonstrated her ability to contribute nationally through her representative role in the House of Bishops, on behalf of the north-west England dioceses.

"As the first woman bishop in the Church of England she will face many challenges as well as enjoying many opportunities to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ. I have no doubt that she has the gifts and determination to be an outstanding bishop.

"I am delighted at her designation as Bishop of Stockport after a lengthy process of discernment across the Church of England and beyond."

The nomination of Libby as the new Bishop of Stockport was approved by the Queen and announced today (Wednesday 17 December 2014).

Libby succeeds the Rt Revd Robert Atwell, who is now the Bishop of Exeter.

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Biographical Details:

Libby Lane has been the Vicar of St Peter's Hale and St Elizabeth's Ashley, in the Diocese of Chester, since April 2007, and from January 2010 has also been Dean of Women in Ministry for the diocese. After school in Manchester and University at Oxford, she trained for ministry at Cranmer Hall in Durham. She was ordained a deacon in 1993 and a priest in 1994, serving her curacy in Blackburn, Lancashire.

Prior to moving to Hale, Libby was Team Vicar in the Stockport South West Team, and Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands in the Diocese of Chester, advising and supporting those considering a vocation to ministry in the church. She continues to be a Bishop's Selection Advisor.

Libby has served in the Diocese of York, as Chaplain in hospital and further education, and as Family Life Officer for the Committee for Social Responsibility in the Diocese of Chester.

She is one of eight clergy women from the Church of England elected as Participant Observers in the House of Bishops, as the representative from the dioceses of the North West.

Her husband, George, is also a priest; they were one of the first married couples in the Church of England to be ordained together. George is Coordinating Chaplain at Manchester Airport, licensed in the Diocese of Manchester. They have two grown up children in higher education. Her interests include being a school governor, encouraging social action initiatives, learning to play the saxophone, supporting Manchester United, reading and doing cryptic crosswords.

Resources available:

A Video statement by The Revd Libby Lane on her appointment is available from the Diocese of Chester Website [here](#) (Chester Diocese youtube channel is available [here](#)).

An audio interview with The Revd Libby Lane on today's announcement is available as part of a Church of England podcast [here](#).

A photostream from today's announcement including photos of The Revd Libby lane are available [here](#).

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