

Open Letter to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York

12th October 2023

Dear Archbishops,

Re: Update on Notice of Complaint re Mr. William Nye LVO

You will recall that we wrote to you both some five months ago in order to make a formal complaint about the Secretary General of General Synod, Mr. William Nye, who is at the same time Secretary to the Archbishops' Council and the CEO of Church House Westminster and National Church Institutes (NCIs). This letter is to update you on the progress, 150 days after making our complaint.

Our June letter specified dozens of potential complainants, with grievances citing “culpable negligence in the carriage of safeguarding...” which was “precipitated by the suicides of victims and some falsely accused, together with an extensive catalogue of frequent failings, gross incompetence, misconduct, corruption, deception and cover-ups”. We made it plain that we had a considerable body of evidence to submit.

Within a few weeks of sending the letter, Christine Hewitt-Dyer, Head of People for Church House, was in touch to explain that whilst a complaints process for senior church officers existed, uniquely this did **not** apply to Mr. Nye. But we were nonetheless assured that an ‘independent’ barrister would be appointed to conduct some process of investigation. The following sequence of events then took place:

1. Ms. Hewitt-Dyer selected a barrister with extensive involvement in a previous and unresolved case of multiple weaponised safeguarding allegations perpetrated by church lawyers, several senior church officers and others against an individual.
2. Eventually, after negotiation, Ms. Hewitt-Dyer conceded there could be a *perceived* conflict of interest here, and the barrister concurred with this judgment and accordingly withdrew. A second barrister was selected, but then also withdrawn.
3. A third barrister was finally proposed. At no stage were Terms of Reference shared with persons who wished to complain about Mr. Nye. These Terms of Reference were drawn up by people who worked directly under and report to him.
4. The third barrister then informed the lead complainant that they would have less than a week to collate and submit written evidence. Ms. Hewitt-Dyer supported this. But due to a family bereavement that deadline was slightly extended.

However, the barrister subsequently stated that no other complainant would have access to this process, since he deemed that only **one** person was making any complaint about Mr. Nye, thereby excluding many persons from filing grievances in their own right. So the complaints process is now stalled, and it will not be able to go ahead until it is possible for all individuals to submit their own evidence. Meanwhile, Ms. Hewitt-Dyer insists that Mr. Nye cannot be suspended from any of his duties, so he continues to enjoy operational oversight in safeguarding, despite objections and desperate pleas by victims.

The meeting of the July 2023 General Synod at York, and its aftermath, has also brought a number of our most serious concerns to the surface. These have included:

1. Mr. Martin Sewell (Rochester) submitted a written question regarding the progress on an inquiry into the “deliberate weaponization of safeguarding perpetrated against Prof. Martyn Percy by church lawyers, senior church officers and others”. Sewell’s question was subjected to substantial alteration without his knowledge or consent. Subsequent inquiries confirm it was the **same** church lawyers engaged in actions against Dr Percy who’d deliberately altered this question at Synod. However, church lawyers denied wrongdoing.

2. With the instantaneous dismantling of the ISB, the two sacked board members had raised concerns about a dozen or so victims expecting to have investigations into their cases expedited. The Archbishops' Council swiftly issued a media statement saying victims "were being supported and had been consulted on having their reviews completed". This was completely untrue.
3. Three months later, Archbishops' Council announced it had appointed Kevin Compton as a 'Commissioner' to oversee the above work, and despite there being no advertisement or selection process for this Commissioner, that the victims/survivors had all been consulted. This was completely untrue. Those affected wrote to you to state this. Requests were made trying to prevent Mr. Nye anywhere near the cases of these victims. You have ignored these pleas.
4. The Archbishops Council were written to regarding interim support for those most affected by delays in cases being heard, and absurdly slow progress in reviews. You have declined to help victims, and those abused have been told to wait until 2025, or thereabouts, when the Redress Scheme might commence. Meanwhile, the Director of the NST and the Lead Bishops for Safeguarding all have their email 'Out of Office Auto-Reply' on – almost permanently.

We make some brief observations in closing. First, the casework reviewing abuses continues to be delayed. One is 1500 days late. Another had key information deliberately withheld from IICSA by some senior bishops (current). Other instances indicate that the reputation of your lawyers, staff and senior clergy are prioritised over truth and justice. You have been sent relevant evidence. Yet you do nothing about the lies and coverups.

Second, with the Redress Scheme now delayed by Archbishops' Council until 2025, we think there should be no further expectancy that individuals, congregations, parishes or the public make any further financial contributions towards the Church of England. As the donations directly fund the incompetent, unjust and corrupt culture you are unwilling to address, we think it is high time this was arrested. Maybe if/when a Redress Scheme proves its worth, donating to the Church of England's work could be revisited?

Third, we remain deeply concerned that the institution which you purport to lead only protects itself – always at the expense of all other interests. We have raised concerns about previous abuses allegedly perpetrated by Mr. Nye or Bishop Steven Croft (both have appalling performance records in safeguarding). Yet they still evade any accountability.

Fourth, with no conflicts of interest policy for NCIs or Archbishops' Council, this systemic culture of corruption and nepotism remains unchecked, and so sustains the underlying despotism. The time has come for all members of Archbishops' Council, those in Legal Affairs Office at Church House/Lambeth Palace, Church Commissioners, and senior church officers, to provide fully transparent Declaration of Interests to General Synod by February 2024. This must include details of the law firms each Diocese and Bishop retains, which law firms are engaged in NCIs and General Synod, and the insurers and PR agents used by each of these bodies. We also require full disclosure from all key post-holders regarding the United Grand Lodge of England – with assurances stating whether or not they are/were members, or closely associated with such bodies.

Finally, it is often assumed Jesus' ministry embraced all-encompassing forgiveness and indiscriminate compassion. Yet we note the Gospels record no such sentiments directed by Jesus towards the religious leaders of his time, and who presided over a culture that systemically oppressed and abused others. This collective group – Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Chief Priests – were seen as agents of injustice protecting their powers and prestige. We see little contrast between what Jesus opposed and condemned then, and what victims of abuse frequently encounter from Archbishops' Council now.

Sincerely, *Name and Address Supplied*