

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Statement of Sir David Austin Trippler

I Sir David Austin Trippler of DPA will say :-

1. I was born on DPA 1946. DPA
2. I served as a Conservative Member of Parliament (MP) for Rossendale from 1979 to 1983, and for Rossendale and Darwen from 1983 until 1992.
3. I served as PPS to Kenneth Clarke at the Department of Health and Social Security from 1982 to 1983; Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Trade and Industry from 1983 to 1985; Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Employment from 1985 to 1987; Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment from 1987 to 1989; and then Minister of State for the Environment and Countryside at the Department of the Environment from 1989 to 1992.
4. Before the start of my Parliamentary career, I served as an elected member of Rochdale Council, and in that capacity I got to know Cyril Smith very well.
5. Following the death of Jack McCann, the Labour MP for Rochdale, there was a bye-Election for the Rochdale seat. This took place on the 26th October 1972 and I was the Conservative candidate.
6. Cyril Smith was the Liberal candidate. The Labour candidate was Lawrence Cunliffe who subsequently became an MP for another seat in 1979.
7. In addition to the three candidates from the mainstream parties, there was an extreme right-wing candidate, Jim Merrick, who was chairman of the "British Campaign to Stop Immigration". The atmosphere of the Bye-Election was particularly unpleasant because of his involvement. He put out leaflets headed "Enoch is right". His supporters were very unsavoury.

8. I confirm that during the campaign, it was widely known amongst all the political parties that there had been some allegations of a sexual nature involving Cyril Smith and boys.
9. This information reached us on the rumour mill early on in the campaign.
10. However, we also learned via the rumour mill that the allegations had been investigated by the police and they had decided not to take any further action.
11. On that basis, although widely known, the matter was considered taboo. The view was taken that if the police had decided not take any further action, then there was presumably nothing in it and by using it, we would also incur the risk of legal action for slander. For that reason, nobody went anywhere near it.
12. As can be imagined, because this was a high profile bye-election, hundreds of party workers came in from other areas to work during the campaign. I don't specifically recall Christopher Home. I do not recall any specific police visit to warn us off mentioning the allegations.
13. I have been advised by Richard Scorer, solicitor who took this statement from me, that in fact in 1970 Lancashire Police had recommended the prosecution of Cyril Smith for offences of indecency against boys, but that this recommendation was overruled by the DPP. This is the first I have heard this. As stated above, at the time in 1972 my understanding was that the police had decided on no further action, and on that basis the matter was not something which could be raised in the campaign.

Statement of Truth

I David Austin Trippier believe that the contents of this statement are true to the best of my knowledge information and belief.

Signed ... 

Dated 19th March 2019