

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

WITNESS STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER HORNE

I, **CHRISTOPHER HORNE** of **DPA** will say: -

1. I was born on **DPA** 1945. I was educated at Watford Grammar School, and then at Eton College, with a bursary under the Fleming Scheme. I then qualified as a Chartered Accountant.
2. The matters set out in this statement occurred 46 years ago, however the incident to which I will refer was of such significance that I believe my memory thereof to be accurate.
3. I have been a member of the Conservative Party since 1963, was formerly a Borough Councillor in the London Borough of Hammersmith, Chairman of the Highway Planning Committee from 1968-1971 and personal assistant to the Chairman of the Thamesmead Committee of the Greater London Council; in 1974 I stood twice as a Parliamentary candidate for the Conservative Party.
4. In the February 1974 General Election I was the Conservative candidate for Manchester Central – I had been living in the North West since late 1971. I was unsuccessful in that election and then in the October 1974 election I stood again as candidate for Meriden.
5. I had lost my Council seat in 1971 and was considering what at that stage I wished to do in the next stage of my life. An old friend of mine had just purchased two accountancy firms in Manchester and some management work was required on them; he suggested that three months in Manchester would be good for me. I took him up on his offer, and initially stayed in West Manchester before moving to Wilmslow in North Cheshire. In fact I stayed in the Manchester area for over 3 years and had a very happy time there.
6. In the 1972 I was living in Wilmslow. The Labour MP for Rochdale, Jack McCann had died and as a result there was a By-Election. The Conservative candidate, David Trippier was a fellow young Conservative – he is five weeks older than I am – and I was a willing and enthusiastic supporter for him
7. The By-Election, which was contested by four candidates, including a candidate representing the extreme right, took place on 26th October 1972. Cyril Smith, who had

formerly been a member of the Labour Party was the Liberal candidate and the winner in the contest.

8. Early on in the campaign many party workers – both Conservative and Labour – became aware that it was – in the good Scottish phrase – the “*talk of the steamie*” - that Cyril Smith had had the opportunity to commit sexual offences with young boys and had taken advantage of those opportunities.
9. This talk became general knowledge, and was in danger of becoming officially into the public domain, and, by definition, would then have become an issue in the by-election. However the local police, who to the best of my election then were the Lancashire Police took action to ensure it was not disseminated.
10. The instruction not to mention the matter was conveyed to the Conservative party workers by a police visit, to the campaign office at which I, the local agent and a number of other party workers were present. I have a vivid memory of the meeting.
11. A police officer arrived. He informed those present that “*any mention of Cyril Smith’s predilection for boys*” (his words) would be regarded as conduct likely to lead to a breach of the peace and could well lead to an injunction and an order to stay out of Rochdale during the election. I did not take a name or number – in retrospect I should have done, but I recall he was probably in his 40s so it is unlikely he is still alive.
12. He was very clear that any mention of this issue would be treated as an offence and acted on accordingly; he indicated that the same information had been given to the Labour Party.
13. The Conservative candidate, David (now Sir David) Trippier, was not present at this meeting and so would not have witnessed this exchange.
14. Rochdale was every bit as divided a town then as it is now; the presence of the immigrant community was a major campaign point of an extreme right wing candidate who put out leaflets saying “*Enoch Powell is Right*”, Cyril Smith’s behaviour with boys was basically agreed to be ignored in what was as bitter a campaign as I have ever known in my 55 years in politics.

Statement of Truth

I, **Christopher Horne** believe that the contents of this statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed ..

DPA

Dated

March 2019