

Witness Name: Robert Parker

Statement No.:

1

Exhibits:

Dated: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

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**THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

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**Witness Statement of Robert Clive Parker**

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I, Robert Clive Parker, will say as follows:-

1. I have read the evidence given in public session on 21<sup>st</sup> October.
2. In relation to the evidence given by the police officer Richard Keenan there are statements I would challenge and absolutely refute (pages 42 to 43) and for which he adduces no evidence ("In my opinion.....").
3. First (page 43) it is just not true that there was any reluctance to assist with operation Magnolia. My memory of that time is not as good as I would like it to be but I certainly recall full and clear determination to assist the police operation. It may have been the case that some matters were 'run past' legal advisers, which was not unusual, but there was no deliberate delay and no need to seek executive support as suggested. Other evidence given suggests that there were other internal police processes which did far more to hold up the enquiry.
4. Second is the suggestion on Page 42 that discovery of the abuse at Ratcliffe Road would have been embarrassing to LCC and other agencies because it could have been uncovered at the time. In my evidence I referred to the poor management of the community homes under Care Branch (also in Kirkwood passim) and referred to the efforts made by David Oldershaw from 1986 as Principal Officer to bring order and good management to a poorly managed service. Certainly, by the time I took over as Assistant Director in late 1989 many positive and effective changes had been made. These did uncover abuse and when they did it was dealt with. I cannot speak for others but I did not feel embarrassed by the allegations made in the Magnolia enquiry, believing we had done all we could to improve matters and knowing that there had been abuse in a number of LCC community homes. I was also aware even then how difficult it was for victims of abuse to report it and seek help, so that, sadly, a delay of several years before abuse is discovered is not unusual.

5. Thirdly I can recall no sense of relief that the CPS decided to discontinue the matter and not bring any charges. Rather I recall being surprised, given the number and nature of the allegations. At the time I thought the decision questionable including for the reason given in evidence on 21st: that victims often take a lifetime to be able to admit (even to themselves) what has been done to them.

6. Should we have challenged the decision? Perhaps.

7. One further point: in case the conspiracy theorists raise it: the decision to close Ratcliffe Road had nothing to do with the abuse later uncovered. The decision was made before any of the allegations emerged - as part of the Child Care Strategy set out in my evidence.

### **Statement of Truth**

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief of its truth.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_R C Parker\_\_\_\_\_

**Dated:** \_\_\_\_22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020\_\_\_\_\_

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