

25 May 2011

The Rt Hon the Baroness Butler-Sloss GBE



Dear Chris,

There several issues which I do not want to make public but I feel need to be drawn to the attention of the Archbishop.

- 1 There is a perception within and without the Diocese, particularly pointed out to me by the Chairman of the Safeguarding Group who is a retired police Chief Superintendant, of an anti-woman culture. John Hind tells me that he is aware of this. There was, he says, in the past an anti-woman culture but it is no longer true and the perception is incorrect.
- 2 There has been a culture of denial of the seriousness of historic abuse when the allegations are made against a senior clergyman who is a friend. One example is GR which I set out in my review of 'Other Priests in the Diocese.'
- 3 In general the effect on the victims of historic abuse is not well understood eg 'wasn't it all a long time ago?' This may lead to some reluctance in the future by some to take these allegations seriously.
- 4 It is difficult for some senior clergy, not all, to have an adequate degree of communication with the DSA and the Safeguarding Group. For them the relationship remains superficial.
- 5 There appear to have been and possibly remain a number of people with a sexual orientation which might predispose to a sympathy for misbehaviour, particularly in the Eastbourne area ever since Bishop Peter Ball lived there. I have been told that outside the Diocese it may be known that such people will receive a welcome. I was told that there were 26 cases of inappropriate behaviour in the Diocese last year, not all clergy and not all sexual abuse.



- 6 There is an urgent need for the implementation of the good safeguarding policies now drafted so that they are embedded across the Diocese at every level and this will require training right across the clergy at all levels.
- 7 There is an urgent need for strong leadership both among area bishops and, in particular at the top. With some diffidence I suggest that the next incumbent as Diocesan Bishop needs to be a strong leader who puts his mark on the Diocese.

I have discussed some of these points with John Hind but he has not seen this letter. He has had a real wake-up call and is making strong efforts to put things right. He has a major task ahead of him.

I have not discussed any general points with the Bishop of Lewes. He is too concerned by my criticisms of him for me to be able to have any useful conversation with him. He now says all the right things but I very much doubt whether he has actually understood why he has been criticised.

Almost all the points I am making above I have discussed privately with the Archdeacon of Lewes and Hastings, Philip Jones. He has had the unenviable task of being my conduit pipe to the Diocese and coping with my requirements and with the Diocese. He has been in his quiet way brilliant and I am most grateful to him. He is well aware of these issues but says that that there is improvement and they are being worked on by him and some other senior colleagues. He will be a valuable support in the future.

I am, as you see, in Devon so am sending this letter to my secretary to send on to you.

Yours ever,

Elizabeth