

Witness Statement of I.D.S.Beer

I, Ian David Stafford Beer, will say as follows:

Brief synopsis of my career:

1955 - 1961 Assistant Master (biology) and then Housemaster, Marlborough College
1961 - 1969 Headmaster, Ellesmere College Shropshire. JP for Shropshire
1969 - 1981 Head Master, Lancing College, Sussex. JP for West Sussex
1980 Chairman HMC, Chairman RFU Coaching, and Player Safety Committees
1981 – 1991 Head Master, Harrow School, JP for Middlesex (but was not active)
1990-1991 Chairman P.E. Working group for the National Curriculum
1990 – 2006 Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (Chairman 1997-06)
1992 (thereabouts) Appointed JP for Gloucestershire (but was not active)
1993- 1994 Chairman of RFU; founded and chaired SPIRE Charity (later called Injured Players Foundation)
1994-2001 Independent Schools Council (Chairman 1997-2001)
1992 - 94 England Sports Council
Throughout these years a Governor of countless schools in the UK; Resident Governor for British School in Colombo 1996.
1992 appointed CBE for services to education.

1. I believe I first met Peter Ball through my future Mother-in-Law, who was a Governor of both the Stroud High School (girls) and Marling School (boys) where the Ball twins taught, and she hosted a religious discussion group, attended by the twins, in her house. The Ball twins created The Society of the Glorious Ascension in the Priory at Stratford Park, Stroud. When I was appointed to Ellesmere College, just after my marriage, the Governing Body needed some younger recruits and I suggested both The Rev.Peter Ball and Dr.David Harrison (later Sir David, Harrison) who was a science Don at Cambridge). They both served Ellesmere admirably.
2. When I was asked to go to Lancing as Head they both volunteered to come with me, if Lancing would have them. (Ellesmere is a Woodard School in the Midland Division; Lancing the premier School of the whole Foundation which was founded in 1848 to provide Christian education to the Middle classes. It is now one of the largest educational charities in the UK) The Woodard Foundation transferred their appointment to the Southern Division. It was never suggested by anyone then, or later, that Peter Ball should become a Governor of Harrow. However, when I become Chairman of HMC in 1990 I suggested to the Committee that it might be a good idea were he to be asked to become Honorary Chaplain to the Conference with no specific duties other than his presence at the AGM during my year in office, as he was involved with so many schools. The Committee readily agreed. When I left Lancing he remained as a Governor there. Later I believe he became a Governor of Radley and of Wellington.
3. Whilst at Ellesmere, the Society of the Glorious Ascension grew very rapidly and opened Pories elsewhere in the country. Members of the Society had to continue with their normal job whilst retiring at the end of the day to the Priory and living the disciplined life of a friar. It was to one of these Pories, I believe Alum Rock in Birmingham, that we sent a pupil (or pupils, I forget) to receive Christian influence and a disciplined lifestyle for one week. The parents were consulted, and readily agreed but, to my knowledge, no one visited them from the school nor inspected the Priory; we trusted the organisation and our Governor, Peter Ball. The Chaplain of the College was, of course, closely involved. The boy(s) returned after a week of tough, yet kind discipline, never to be naughty again at school – fed up, from what I remember, of having to get up at 3.0 am each morning to say prayers.
4. At Ellesmere and at Lancing, as at many boarding schools at that time, we often had staying with us during Holy Week a Priest (often a Monk or Friar) who conducted some services and held

seminars and private discussions with pupils and staff. I believe that Father Peter one year may have been one of those but I have no record. These committed Christian men usually attracted individuals to themselves and the school allowed private discussion – indeed, if it had not been private, it would have been of little use. The resident Chaplains kept a close eye on pupils meeting visitors. We watched what was going on but, I never had any inkling of 'wrong doing'. As Peter Ball was a Governor of both Ellesmere and Lancing he was usually in the School for official business meetings and had less time to be with individual boys than, say, the resident Lenten visitor or the full time Chaplains.

5. I should record that in a long headmastering career I had reason to report some members of staff to the Department of Education and they were removed from the teaching profession. Moreover, boys themselves would report misgivings to me or to members of staff they felt they could trust; everything depended on creating a proper atmosphere in the school and that was a major priority within the task of running a boys boarding school.
6. I now turn to the events, after my retirement, which have taken place since Ball's resignation as Bishop of Gloucester. I know that I was asked by Peter Ball's solicitor to write to someone and that person may well have been Chief Inspector Murdoch – I do not have the record. I had no idea then of the nature of the allegations against Bishop Ball, except that they were of a sexual nature. Today, I am little the wiser except that he was, at a later date, found guilty. However, I have no reason to withdraw the comments made to Murdoch in my letter(ACE021184) of 28th January, 1993. as I believed them to be true at that time.
7. In 1995, having been told by Peter that he had a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury allowing him to officiate anywhere in the UK, provided that the Diocesan Bishop gave approval, I wrote to Bishop Bentley requesting that he, Peter, be allowed to marry our younger son. The local people wished Peter to do so as there was no incumbent at that time. Permission, however, was not granted and, so we turned to the ex-Chaplain of Ellesmere who had been present at the baptism of the boy.
8. My real problem was that, on the one hand, I had Peter Ball telling me that the Archbishop had apparently written him a letter of support, whilst on the other hand, the Bishop of Gloucester was telling me he was guilty. (ACE001002,1004,1008 and 1021). Of course I accepted the Bishop of Gloucester's refusal to allow Peter to officiate, but I did ask him why he had made that decision but he refused to tell me. Instead he told me, in confidence, what the Police thought.(INQ000311) I do not recall ever telling the Bishop that I thought Peter was innocent as I had not been told what he might be guilty of doing. For me, at that stage in April 1995, no Court of Law had passed judgement and I was not prepared to assume Peter was guilty of whatever until I heard the details of what he had allegedly done - no one I knew would tell me. I have since read document INQ0001347 and I am upset and saddened by the contents.
9. During this period I was once telephoned by the Police in Sussex but I do not recall them contacting me again. I simply waited to hear from someone to be told exactly what Peter Ball had done wrong, but I had to wait until his Court case very much later. Even then it has not been easy as he pleaded guilty to several charges and so the details were never made public. Your letter of 1st May, 2018 states 'Bishop Ball is said to have abused both young adults and children in a similar manner, in the same context and setting, with the same modus operandi and with similar responses by the institutions concerned and so seeks to avoid an artificial distinction in this particular case.' This the first time I have read of this and I do not know what it means. I had, and have, no reason to believe that Peter Ball abused his position or access to make improper contact with boys at Ellesmere or Lancing. Had I done so, I would have taken appropriate action as I did in other cases.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true

Signed:
Dated:

DPA

18th May, 2018