

STATEMENT

I came to Chichester in April 1991 when I was appointed the Principal of the Theological College. I held that post until 1994 when the College closed, and I was then appointed Rector of Lavant, a post I held until being appointed Chancellor of the Cathedral in 1997. However, I was first appointed a Canon in May 1991 on becoming Principal of the College, and I have sat on the Chapter continuously since 1991. Unlike my posts as Principal of the College and Rector of Lavant, my post as Chancellor is full time at the Cathedral, and therefore it is only since 1997 that I have lived in the Cathedral Close. As Chancellor, I share the work of the Cathedral with the other full-time Cathedral clergy (the Dean and the Precentor); my particular responsibilities are the visitors' and education department, and the Cathedral library, though I have a range of other duties in the wider life of the Diocese of Chichester as well.

When I first joined the Chapter in 1991, my impression was of the diffuseness of Cathedral life; much was going on, involving a huge range of different people, but it was difficult to have an overall view. Clearly, as Principal of the Theological College I had an absorbing and stressful full-time job outside the Cathedral, and there was little opportunity to be involved in the day to day life of the Cathedral. The same would have been true of the other members of the Chapter with outside responsibilities. In the early 90's neither of the two full-time Canons (the Chancellor, Canon Greenacre, and the Precentor, Canon Hester) had job specifications in relation to the Cathedral, and both had developed wide-ranging ministries outside Chichester which involved them in much travelling, frequently abroad. There was a sense, then, in which none of the members of the Chapter had a close and detailed day-to-day involvement in the life of the Cathedral; that was left very much in the hands of the Dean and the Communar (the Cathedral's lay administrator).

This chimed in with John Treadgold's approach to his role as Dean. He did see the Dean as the chief executive of the Cathedral, and was sometimes impatient of Chapter discussions and decisions. He found it hard to confide in the Chapter and to work by

consensus and collaboration. There were times when even the full-time Residentiary Canons felt they were not being included in the proper business of the Chapter.

Child Protection was not an issue high on the agenda of the Chapter. Given the lack of close involvement in the day-to-day life of the Cathedral indicated above, it was easy to assume that all was well, unless there were very strong indications otherwise. There was, I think, a feeling that the case of Michael Walsh related less to the Cathedral than to the School; again, given the sense of diffuseness mentioned above, it seemed possible to make some distinction between the two. The case of Michael Walsh was discussed in the Chapter after he was released from prison, when the Chapter was asked to agree to his occasionally singing in the Choir in the absence of a lay vicar. This was resisted by the Chapter on more than one occasion, out of consideration for the continuing feelings of the families involved in the case; though eventually it was agreed that Mr Walsh could be allowed to sing on a very occasional basis. In the light of the Banks case, this discussion would now be approached in a very different way.

On the day Terence Banks was arrested the Dean summoned an emergency meeting of the members of the Chapter in the Deanery. I recall being telephoned by the Dean's Secretary and asked to attend at (I think) about 4 p.m. I had a parents' evening at my daughter's school fixed for 4.15, so I said that it would be difficult to be there: the Dean's Secretary, while declining to tell me what the meeting was about, said it was important for the Chapter members to be present. Accordingly I was present. My recollection is that most of the members of the Chapter were there, but I cannot recall exactly who was present and who was absent.

The Dean told those present that Terence Banks had been arrested that morning on a number of charges of the sexual abuse of children. He explained that two boys had approached him some days earlier, on the evening before his planned visit to Germany. The Dean told the Chapter of the line he had taken with the boys. He then explained that while he was in Germany another person had gone to the police, and that therefore the case was in the hands of the police by the time he returned. The Dean was evidently

very agitated by the whole situation. It is surprising, and regrettable, that he did not inform the police at once; it is also surprising, and regrettable, that he did not tell the Chapter what was happening until after Terence Banks had been arrested.

At the scheduled Chapter meeting on the following day (11th April 2000) the arrest of Terence Banks was obviously in everyone's minds. The mood of the Chapter after the arrest is not conveyed by the minutes of that meeting, which suggest that the incident only caused some administrative problems for the management of Festivities concerts. Chapter minutes are in any case an uncertain guide to what is said at a Chapter meeting, as they are technically a record of the acts of the Chapter, and not a verbatim record of the discussion. In fact the members of the Chapter were profoundly shocked by what had happened, and quite bewildered. No allegations or suspicions about Terence Banks had previously been brought to the Chapter; and I personally had not harboured any anxieties about him. My elder son, though not old enough to be one of the "crudgemen", had on one or two occasions helped the crudgemen arrange chairs for a concert (and in view of that he and I were subsequently interviewed by police and social services). Terence Banks's arrest came as a big personal shock to me, my wife, and my son.

I recall little of what was said at that Chapter meeting, though I believe that it was on that occasion that the Dean recounted a visit he certainly made to the Banks's home, following the arrest, at which he saw both Terence Banks and his wife **Wife**. The purpose of this visit was, I believe, principally to show pastoral concern for **Wife**, and I think the feeling in the Chapter was that this was the right thing to have done. It was not, I think, felt appropriate that other Chapter members should do so as well; and certainly when the police and social services had called on me and my son, I was told that there should be no contact between us and Terence Banks.

I do not recall at that first Chapter meeting whether there was discussion about pastoral care for the victims and their families. We did understand that the Dean was in touch with at least the families of the two boys who first approached him; we did not know the

identities of any other of the victims; and I think there was a sense that the arrest and the impending court case meant that there could not be contact between the Chapter and those families.

There was a similar emergency gathering of members of the Chapter when David Gutteridge was subsequently arrested. I believe that it was on that occasion, that the Dean had a list of names (which I understood he had received from the police) of boys who might have been involved in the allegations made against Mr Gutteridge. As one name the Dean read out was "Atkinson", and as my son had been taught previously by David Gutteridge, I was extremely agitated, and left the meeting at once to find out what had happened. I tried to contact the police officers involved, without immediate success. Later the Dean called to say that he had spoken with the police and confirmed that my son was not the one named on the list. We gathered later that other members of the Chapter present in the room, and concerned on my account, had impressed on the Dean the need to clarify the matter. I believe that my recollection is in relation to this meeting, but there is a possibility that I am confusing it with the earlier meeting in relation to Banks.

I am willing to assist the Police in their investigation and will attend Court if necessary.

PETER ATKINSON

24 July 2002