

The Palace,
Chichester,
West Sussex
PO19 1PY

9th November 2011

Dear *Dr Williams,*

Complaint made under the Clergy Disciplinary Measures (CDM) – Bishop Wallace Benn

I am writing to you as the independent Chair of the Safeguarding Group of the Diocese of Chichester and on their behalf in relation to Bishop Wallace Benn, who we are making a complaint about under the Clergy Disciplinary Measures. I am enclosing the CDM forms and associated paperwork in relation to this for your attention.

The Safeguarding Group has decided to make this complaint because they believe that the principles associated with '*Safeguarding*' are critical factors for the Church to be seen to actively embrace and not just another task to be undertaken when it suits.

Whilst it is not possible to protect every child or vulnerable adult from harm, or to be certain that things will never go wrong, there is much any Bishop can do to ensure the way that clergy and lay people work is designed to promote the best possible practice in relation to '*safeguarding*'. One of the most important aspects of this is by setting the example that '*safeguarding*' is a priority and that vigilance is vital. I regret that this has not been the case in respect of Bishop Wallace Benn.

What is particularly disheartening is that Bishop Wallace Benn has had plenty of opportunity to '*get to grips*' with the challenges associated with '*safeguarding*' and had many offers of support in this respect. With regret I note he has chosen to ignore all offers of help and instead chosen to use the legal system to obstruct and prevent any form of constructive progress to resolve matters.

Also of huge significance is the substantial adverse publicity that has been generated as result of the situations outlined in some detail in the attached CDM '*papers*'. It seems clear from this publicity that the Church has much to do to improve its image in terms of compliance with '*safeguarding*' policies and procedures. Of considerable concern is the very real possibility that the public perception will be that senior clergy are exempt from such compliance and therefore it is critical that whatever the outcome of this situation that a very clear and positive message is sent out in respect of '*safeguarding*'.

Should you, or your nominated Officers, have any queries in relation to the matters outlined in the attached documents you can be assured that we will make ourselves available to assist them.

Yours Sincerely


DPA

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Independent Chair,
Diocese of Chichester Safeguarding Group

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