

appointed bishops undertake additional safeguarding training prior to their consecration as bishops.

- 5.6.5 In 2014 the Church established a development programme for those aspiring to senior leadership positions. The curriculum includes consideration of current legal issues including those relating to safeguarding. The programme also seeks to develop skills which have a bearing on promoting safeguarding such as effective team working. The Church now also has a programme of Continuing Ministry Development which includes an appraisal in which leaders can proactively address areas for specific development including safeguarding.
- 5.6.6 The Church has overhauled its disciplinary processes (a long and time consuming process given that primary legislation is required). The Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 introduced much revised and improved rules and procedures. This includes provisions which deal specifically with the disciplining of a bishop subject to investigations for misconduct. Following his conviction Ball received a sanction under this measure.
- 5.6.7 Yet the possibility remains that an abusive candidate could come through selection and training processes, or adopt abusive behaviour once in post. No religious organisation can absolutely guarantee to prevent harm being perpetrated by a manipulative person who has the power that comes with seniority and protected access to vulnerable people. Consequently the Church needs to maintain a continuing vigilance and a readiness to “think the unthinkable”. Safeguarding arrangements need to be sufficiently resilient to enable an effective response to another abusive bishop or person with similar seniority. The responsibility for that sits with the House of Bishops.

## **5.7 The significance of homosexuality in these events**

- 5.7.1 When Ball was first a priest, and a bishop, homosexuality was the subject of clear legal and religious proscription. There was also a higher and more overt level of societal prejudice against homosexuality than there is today. For clerics and the faithful these religious, legal and social pressures served to reinforce a strong taboo. It was extremely difficult for those such as Ball’s victims to speak openly to family members, others in the church or in authority about their experiences and concerns. They had good cause to fear legal action, social ostracisation and damage to their careers. This gave Ball confidence that his victims would remain silent about their experiences. The taboo may have contributed to what appears to be his own denial and self-deceit.
- 5.7.2 There was, in some parts of the Church, an inexperience and naïveté in relation to homosexuality, certainly during the early years under review. Ball successfully conflated abusive sexual activity with practices which were towards the margins of intense spirituality. There was also a trivialisation in the Church of the nature and consequences of conduct which was known to be wrong – Roy Cotton was ordained despite having an acknowledged conviction for the sexual abuse of a boy, while, for the same matter and in the same era, he was permanently excluded from the Scouting movement. That overall context of confusion and denial contributed to the inadequacy of the Church’s response to Ball’s misconduct. It promoted the view



that a person of Ball's religious stature was incapable of truly abusive behaviour, so that the accusations against him must be misguided or malicious.

- 5.7.3 This issue continues to be a source of division and debate in the Church, and an important concern for some of Ball's victims. We would simply emphasise that the Church must promote an open and accepting culture in which everyone, regardless of their sexuality or their views about homosexuality, is clear about their responsibilities towards those who might be abused or who might want to raise concerns about abuse.

## **6. CONCERNS OUTSIDE THE CHURCH**

### **6.1 Ball's status and connections**

- 6.1.1 There has been public speculation that the response of the Church (and of public authorities) to the allegations against Peter Ball, his caution and his subsequent requests to return to active public ministry, was improperly influenced by Ball's connections with prominent and influential figures, and that he was able to use those connections to obtain preferential treatment by the Church (as well as by public authorities). There is no doubt that Ball did have such connections. There is also evidence that he sought to use his connections to his advantage in his dealings with the Church authorities. For example, in a letter to Lord Carey in August 1998 he said *"I get more and more invitations.... to let you know some of them I have spoken to 400 voluntary workers in Eastbourne with the Lord Lieutenant... I am shortly to preach to the Grenadier Guards in their Chapel; preach at Wellington College, confirm at Radley College and next year preach at Dartmouth to what looks like a full turn out of the Royal Family"*.
- 6.1.2 Ball clearly intimates on many occasions, to Lord Carey and others, that he enjoys the status of confidant of the Prince of Wales. He ensured that Lord Carey was aware that he corresponded with the Prince (see paragraph 3.7.17 above) and that he visited Highgrove House. There are frequent references in Ball's letters to Lord Carey and others to his attending royal functions and to meeting members of the Royal Family. Following the retirement of Bishop Michael Ball, the brothers lived together in a house which they rented from the Duchy of Cornwall after the Duchy had acquired the house specifically for that purpose. Ball publicly claimed that it was the Prince of Wales who "allowed me to have a Duchy house". The Duchy has made it clear that the house was purchased, and let on a commercial basis, by the Duchy estate, not by the Prince.
- 6.1.3 Ball himself, both in his correspondence and in his public statements, sought to exploit his contact with members of the Royal Family in order to bolster his position, particularly in the eyes of Lord Carey and others from whom he hoped to receive sympathetic treatment. We have reviewed all the relevant material including the correspondence passing between the Prince of Wales and Ball held by the Church and found no evidence that the Prince of Wales or any other member of the Royal Family sought to intervene at any point in order to protect or promote Ball.