

**From:** Chris Davies <[redacted] DPA >  
**Sent:** 10 August 2018 19:04  
**To:** Nick Harvey <[redacted] DPA >  
**Cc:** David J. Allworthy <[redacted] DPA >; Chris Davies (Personal) <[redacted] DPA >  
**Subject:** RE: IICSA, Cyril Smith etc

Dear Nick

I'm OK thanks, depressed about BREXIT and by feeling powerless to contribute to the debate, and with a sense of detachment from the party that I have not experienced in more than 40 years and that leaves me without a strong sense of purpose.

I've just made the mistake of reading the Brighton Conference agenda which I think has killed any interest I had in attending. What is the point of ALL those words when mostly they just say that Lib Dems want to be nice and fair but just? Interesting and newsworthy ideas are just swamped by all the waffle. And as for the all the complaints procedure stuff – all this dancing on pins when in the real world social media is full of anonymous rudeness and violence.

Ah well, not my problem. I wish you good luck with it all.

Some retired police officers working on the Rochdale inquiry did eventually get around to having a coffee and chat at my place 2-3 years ago. I haven't anything new to add.

I didn't know Cyril other than as a party member in Liverpool until in 1985 I became the PPC for Littleborough and Saddleworth (which included part of Rochdale borough), although David Alton encouraged him to give me a note to support my nomination bid. Of course I got to know him better after that but he fell out with me about 1990 when I supported a Lib Dem councillor who had defeated his brother to become group leader. In 1992 he effectively supported my Tory opponent! David Alton again intervened during the 1995 by-election and got him back on board, and after being elected as MP, and later as MEP, I made a point of visiting him every few months at Emma Street. It made sense to keep him on side.

I think around 1985 someone showed me a copy of the Rochdale Free Press article from 1979 that alleged that he had spanked boys in care, or maybe I was just told about it, but it was old news spread by political opponents and referred to a time before Cyril became an MP. Indeed, I think he was a Labour Party councillor at the time. It wasn't an issue that ever came up on the doorstep or in the Rochdale Observer.

To confirm: during my 29 years as a Lib and Lib Dem candidate, as MP for a constituency that included part of Rochdale borough, and as MEP for the North West, I NEVER received any communication of any type from any individual alleging inappropriate behaviour by Cyril of a sexual nature. Indeed, I don't recall anyone making any complaints about Cyril other than those of a normal political nature.

I spoke at Cyril's memorial service. I would not have done so had I believed that he had carried out the acts that have been alleged. I remain unconvinced that all the allegations about his behaviour can be correct, but that is perhaps because I believe strongly that Cyril Smith was a far better

representative for the people of Rochdale than the loathsome Simon Danczuk who led the attack after Cyril was dead.

Incidentally, I was asked by the investigating officers whether there might have been collusion and a cover-up between senior Labour councillors and senior Lib Dem councillors (including Paul Rowen) about activities at a care home in Rochdale. Frankly, remembering the state of local politics at the time, I thought this to be out of the question. Labour and the Lib Dems HATED each other. They didn't like to be in the same room together let alone get together to plot a cover up.

I remember also getting a call, I think when Nick Clegg was leader, from someone in his office or in Cowley Street who had been asked to find out if anyone had complained about Cyril to me. I told them as above, and said that I had also discussed the claims with Liz Lynne who had told me that she too had never had any allegations made to her. She pondered whether she could perhaps have forgotten. I told her that, knowing her, she could not possibly have done so. Had any such allegation been made all her political antennae would have been quivering. She would certainly have covered her back by forwarding the allegations to the police, and if she had found substance in them she would have gone for the jugular and attacked Cyril publicly (she owed him no debts; he had done his best to stop her gaining the Rochdale nomination and denied her political support until her election). She agreed that that must have been the case.

As for Debbie Doyle – sorry, but I don't think I have seen her in two decades. In any case, for reasons that one member of your staff will understand I am not entirely convinced that her evidence would be trustworthy, although out of a sense of guilt (I had not hired her onto my MP's staff after my 1995 election) I did recommend her to Liz when she needed a casework officer.

I know nothing of Clement Freud. I don't recall ever meeting him.

Feel free to contact me if you have questions, and to pass on the contents of this email to whoever you like.

With regards

Chris