

GAVIN DRAKE

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Stephen Cottrell
Archbishop of York

By email only: [REDACTED]

3 December 2021

Dear Archbishop Stephen,

By now you will hopefully have had time to read the decision notice of the Deputy President of Tribunals, His Honour Judge David Turner QC, in response to my request for a review of your decision to take no further action on my second complaint against Bishop Paul Williams.

As his ruling upheld your decision, you may not have read the finer points in detail. It is worth doing so, because Judge Turner appears to be quite critical of Bishop Paul's approach, and he accepts the points that I make about the bishop being the ONLY source of data about whether or not clergy are authorised (it being bishops who do the authorising) and also about Bishop Paul's refusal to record accurately the status of clergy (marking Anthony Giles as being on "sabbatical" rather than having "stepped back on terms equivalent to suspension."

In your decision letter, you said that there are "lessons to be learnt by Bishop Paul". In paragraph 14, Judge Turner says "Perhaps unfortunately, the Archbishop does not further amplify the lessons he has in mind".

The judge concludes his decision notice (paragraph 45) by saying: "I respectfully express the hope that any lessons the Bishop (or indeed others) need to learn may be spelt out by the Archbishop without delay, given the obvious importance of the concern underlying the complaint."

While Judge Turner invites you to do this "without delay", I would ask you to consider an Archiepiscopal Visitation by independent external safeguarding professionals into safeguarding practices within the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham. Since publishing the churchabuse.uk website on 10 October, I have been contacted by numerous people with shocking stories to tell about the way Bishop Paul Williams has responded to other safeguarding cases.

If the Church really is serious about striving to be a safe place, it needs to fully investigate allegations of wrongdoing. You have blocked two investigations into complaints that I have brought under the CDM about Bishop Paul's safeguarding practices. I urge you now to convene your own investigation – outside the CDM process – to fully understand the seriousness of the situation in this diocese.

Alternatively, if you do not intend to undertake a visitation, then I urge you to comply with Judge Turner's invitation to spell out the lessons you say Bishop Paul Williams needs to learn, as the judge requested, "without delay".

Yours sincerely

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