

“We welcome the independent report published today from Fiona Scolding KC, commissioned by Soul Survivor, into the Mike Pilavachi case. The review takes a detailed look at the evidence produced following the allegations made by numerous individuals against Mike Pilavachi, which were then jointly investigated by the National Safeguarding Team (NST) and the Diocese of St Albans. At the heart of this case are those who came forward to share their experiences; we thank them for their courage, and we will ensure that they will continue to be supported by the Church.

The joint investigation concluded that the concerns raised against Mike Pilavachi were substantiated. This report, which makes stark reading, identifies lessons which must be learnt about culture, practice, governance, oversight, and safeguarding arrangements at both local and national levels. The conclusions and recommendations point to the need for the whole Church to work harder at identifying, building, and supporting positive cultures in which unhealthy leadership and power dynamics can better be challenged. This must include fostering stronger scrutiny and accountability through training, supervision, and governance structures. We welcome the report’s analysis of the dangers of clericalism and what Fiona Scolding rightly calls the ‘misuse of clergy authority’.

The report’s recommendations and findings will now be taken forward. Where appropriate, they will be incorporated into work already underway. This will include the ongoing process of revision of the Clergy Discipline Measure, as recommended by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). Fiona Scolding clearly sets out the many limitations of the current CDM process for safeguarding matters, and we will draw on her observations as we take this work forward.

As well as highlighting cultural and structural concerns, the Scolding report includes some criticism of individuals. We will examine these criticisms carefully, and, if there is any fresh information within the report relating to individual behaviour, we will respond to it in accordance with the House of Bishops’ guidance.

An important General Synod debate in July, raised through a Private Members’ Motion, drew attention to some of the issues raised in this case, including the importance of healthy cultures. It urged further theological reflection in guarding against potential abuses of power and promoting safe and wise leadership. In order that the Church might learn all it can from this case and ensure that such a shocking abuse of power, perpetrated over many years, is not repeated, we will explore what further work needs to be done, including a specific focus in relation to the governance and scrutiny of new worshipping communities across all traditions in the Church of England.

I would like to thank Fiona Scolding for the review, and for foregrounding the experiences of those who have been hurt by the appalling and deeply damaging actions and behaviour of Mike Pilavachi. I note and affirm her commendation of the moving documentary, *Let There be Light*, made by Matt and Beth Redman, and thank them and other survivors for shining a light on aspects of the Church of England’s culture, structure, and practices which we must now take urgent responsibility for improving.

Our statement at the time of the documentary included a repetition of the Church's apology to survivors and we continue to be truly sorry for the hurt caused."

Church of England lead safeguarding bishop, Joanne Grenfell.

Further reading

- [Soul Survivor statement](#)
- [St Albans Diocese statement](#)

Finding support

If you or anyone you are in contact with are affected by the publication of this report and want to talk to someone independently please call the Safe Spaces helpline on 0300 303 1056 or visit safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk.

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the [diocesan safeguarding team in your area](#) or the National Safeguarding Team at safeguarding@churchofengland.org.

There are also [other support services](#) available

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