

## **Independent Safeguarding Board (ISB) Review: Christ Church Oxford**

### **1. Introductory remarks and context**

- 1.1 The ISB will undertake and report on a forensic review of the quality of previous investigations and reports undertaken into safeguarding issues at Christ Church Oxford.
- 1.2 The review was requested and is jointly commissioned by the Archbishop's Council (AC) and the Diocese of Oxford. The three members agreed to undertake this work as described in these Terms of Reference.
- 1.3 Its findings will be presented in a published ISB report.
- 1.4 The period under consideration begins in early March 2020 and ends in March 2022. The long-standing dispute between the then-Dean and the College authorities is outside the scope of this review.
- 1.5 The ISB will examine individuals' and organisations' roles and involvement, and will review reports or judgements already written on the case. It is not within scope to undertake a review of the primary sources of evidence relied upon in earlier reports and investigations.
- 1.6 Whilst a C of E review process under the remit of the NST commenced a review, due to issues in relation to issues raised about the constitution of that core group the LLR was placed on hold. This will now allow the ISB to complete its review.

### **2. The ISB's review**

- 2.1 The ISB is not a judicial or quasi-judicial body. This being the case, whilst the ISB will complete an independent review and make recommendations arising from its findings, it will then be for others to determine which recommendations are then adopted and implemented, and how any such implementation will be undertaken.
- 2.2 The purpose of an ISB review is to ensure that alleged or proven abusive behaviours or failures in safeguarding and/or its leadership, along with their attendant damage to reputations, relationships, practice and governance in any institution, might in future be prevented.. This part of the ISB remit is particularly relevant given the complex issues this case has raised. The NST's work is therefore central to, but it is not the only body whose work will be considered during, this Review
- 2.3 The NST having been involved in this case under its remit for acting on the conduct of senior clergy in safeguarding matters, it will provide the ISB with all relevant paperwork. This is covered by an information sharing agreement (ISA) between the ISB and the Archbishops' Council (AC.) The ISA will also be used to give assurance on GDPR compliance in necessary exchanges of information between all those involved in this review.
- 2.4 2 The ISB is not a primary review body, but a scrutiny and assurance one. It was established to scrutinise, and publicly to report on, how well the NST's remit is undertaken, including in casework; and to advise the wider Church on safeguarding development and important lessons to be learned.
- 2.5 The ISB's remit reaches beyond its scrutiny of the NST's work. It reports on church-wide safeguarding development and advises on ways of achieving continued improvement, including in future ways of guaranteeing independence in safeguarding scrutiny and oversight. The ISB advises the Church of England on changes needed to ensure safeguarding is central to all activities. The lessons drawn from this review will contribute to the fulfilment of this part of its remit. The review will include an index of all the evidence considered that forms part of the investigation.

- 2.6 The review will report on the quality, completeness and robustness of what C of E bodies have done in work already undertaken, commencing in March 2020 and closing in March 2022. The report will present recommendations on future actions for diocesan and national church bodies to undertake as a result of what it concludes.
- 2.7 The review will serve the purpose of a LLR, as well as extending beyond into making recommendations on work undertaken by the NST, the Diocese of Oxford and Christ Church.
- 2.8 All earlier reviews and their reports will be reviewed. These will include but will not be limited to previous reviews commissioned by the NST and the Diocese of Oxford. Materials from the Clergy Disciplinary Measure (CDM) process evidence will also be considered. However, no previous process will be reopened by the ISB.
- 2.9 The materials which key bodies or individuals already hold that relates to, or records of previous engagement with those most affected by this case, will be reviewed by the ISB. The report will present an objective view of how well such previous work was done.
- 2.10 The ISB's report will centre on:
- How well or badly safeguarding responsibilities have been fulfilled;
  - How well the NST has undertaken its work, or commissioned others to undertake it;
  - Presenting clear findings and recommendations to the parties concerned in Oxford, the leadership of the C of E, and the wider church.
- 2.11 The review will be managed, and the report will be written, by the ISB's three members. They will agree and the ISB will publish the closing report. Editorial control will be the ISB's throughout. Parties involved will see the final report in strict confidence a maximum of 24 hours ahead of publication. Whilst they may comment on factual accuracy they will not have authorial or editorial rights.
- 2.12 The ISB is supported by independent legal advisors who have no connection with the C of E and were appointed following a procurement exercise to support ISB.
- 2.13 As part of the scope of the review those who have submitted previous reports or evidence, and to whom ISB could usefully speak as part of this review, will be invited to be interviewed. If they accept, their interviews will be recorded.
- 2.14 No participant will be named in the report, which will use either pseudonyms or initials. That some involved are publicly known and could be identified by some readers is not disputed. However, not everybody concerned is so known, and the ISB will adhere to generally accepted good practice in safeguarding by striving to maintain their anonymity.

### **3. The ISB's way of undertaking this work**

- 3.1. The ISB's remit requires that its work is objective. It is not part of the C of E's complaints systems, but an independent body. The funding that supports it comes from the Archbishops' Council (AC) acting as a commissioner of this specific piece of work. The AC cannot direct the ISB's work. It can ask for consideration of topics including reviews such as this one, but the ISB does not have to take them up. If it does so, how the work is done is determined by the ISB.
- 3.2 The ISB does not reopen from scratch, or reinvestigate as if from a blank page, any case covered by others that may then come to it for a review. The ISB calls out, in public and where necessary through the media, issues it judges have been poorly addressed. It holds to account those responsible for ensuring improvement, and reports on success and failure in achieving it.

3.3 The report will comment on good practice where relevant, as well as reporting on clear failings in practice, leadership or management. The ISB will also comment on the timeliness, completeness and appropriateness of responses by C of E bodies and NCIs to how this case was handled, and to C of E wide concerns this case raises.

#### **4. Practicalities: Timing, those contributing, outcomes sought**

4.1 The Review will commence on Monday 30 May 2022 .

4.2 On that date, a call for the submission of written evidence will be issued directly to those already acknowledged as having such evidence to contribute:

- The complainant who brought safeguarding allegations
- The former Dean
- Members of the clergy and staff at Christ Church
- The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, their staffs and both their internal and external advisers
- The Diocesan Bishop and Diocesan Secretary, Oxford Diocese
- The Oxford Diocesan Safeguarding Panel (DSAP) and its Chair
- The Oxford Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- Members of the casework team and the Interim Director at the National Safeguarding Team (NST)
- The members of the Archbishops' Council who investigated a complaint made in the summer of 2020, and
- The members of staff against whom that complaint was made.

**The ISB will take NO further written materials that are not presented following this single call for evidence and adhering to its deadline.**

4.3 The call for evidence will close on Friday 01 July 2022. An email address will be supplied for electronic submissions, which will be the preferred means of submitting materials. Evidence should be presented in chronological order and where necessary should include signposting to other materials, which should be included as appendices in the paperwork concerned.

4.4 The ISB Chair will seek updates from the reader/analyst throughout their work, which will focus on reading, making detailed notes, helping to frame a narrative and recommending key lines of enquiry (KLOEs).

4.5 This portion of the work should be completed by 30 September 2022, with the reader/analyst concluding by giving the ISB the lines of enquiry generated, key questions, and likely direction of travel for the review.

4.6 Those submitting evidence who in addition are prepared to be interviewed, will be seen as soon after the end of September as possible. Evidence from interviews will be added to the files mentioned above.

4.7 As appropriate and necessary, the ISB will issue updates on the progress of this review to the commissioning bodies and interested parties.

4.8 The ISB will present a polished draft report by the end of 2022. This draft will be issued in strict confidence, for read and comments on factual accuracy only. Recipients will be limited to those to whom the call for evidence was issued.

4.9 One month will be allowed for comments on the text, editorial control of which will remain with the ISB. The report will be published by the end of January 2023. If readers cannot agree at this final stage, the ISB will publish with their disagreement noted in the text.

**ALL TO NOTE THESE VITAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

- **THE MAXIMUM SLIPPAGE THE ISB WILL ALLOW FOR COMPLETION OF THIS PIECE OF WORK IS ONE MONTH FROM THE FINAL DATE GIVEN ABOVE.**
- **IF THE ISB DEEMS THIS NECESSARY, A READING-IN-PERSON OF DRAFT COPIES OF THE REPORT WILL BE OFFERED IN MID JANUARY 2023. HARD COPIES WILL BE ISSUED AT SUCH A MEETING. INTERESTED PARTIES WILL BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT. “OPPOSITE SIDES” WILL NOT BE EXPECTED TO SHARE A SPACE. READING WILL TAKE PLACE IN ONE HALF DAY SESSION. WRITTEN COMMENTS WILL BE PERMITTED, ON NUMBERED COPIES. THESE WILL BE COLLECTED IN AT THE END OF THE SESSION. NOTE TAKING ON SEPARATE PAPER, SCANNING, PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES, TABLETS OR LAPTOPS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED. THOSE ATTENDING WILL SIGN AN ASSURANCE THAT NO LEAKS WILL TAKE PLACE, INCLUDING ON SOCIAL MEDIA. SHOULD THE REPORT THEN BE LEAKED, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, THE ISB WILL ISSUE REBUTTALS AND/OR TAKE LEGAL ACTION, AS NECESSARY.**

4.9 The ISB has complied with all the necessary statutory frameworks to ensure data and information is securely and appropriately shared.

4.10 The report will be written and published by the ISB’s 3 members, who have complete editorial control.