

**IN THE MATTER OF A COMPLAINT AGAINST THE RT REVD JOHN PERUMBALATH,  
FORMER BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL**

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**DECISION**

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1. By a decision dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024, His Honour David Turner KC, the Deputy President of Tribunals, determined an application by the Rt Revd Beverley Mason, Bishop of Warrington ('the complainant') for permission to make a complaint of misconduct out of time against the Rt Revd John Perumbalath ('the respondent'), then the Bishop of Liverpool. Such permission was needed because section 9 of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 provides for a time limit of one year from the date of the alleged misconduct for the institution of disciplinary proceedings. That time limit may be extended if the President or his delegate 'considers that there was good reason why the complainant did not institute proceedings at an earlier date'. The time limit does not apply 'where the misconduct in question is conduct of a sexual nature towards an adult if the president of tribunals considers that the adult was a vulnerable adult at the time of the conduct'.
2. After considering the representations made by the complainant and the respondent, the Deputy President concluded that the complainant was not a vulnerable adult at the time of the conduct and that she had not discharged the burden upon her of establishing 'good reason' why she did not institute proceedings at an earlier date. Accordingly, he refused to extend the time limit.
3. The complaint against the respondent has received considerable publicity. The complainant has disclosed publicly that she was the complainant in this matter. The respondent has resigned as Bishop of Liverpool.
4. On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 the Designated Officer received an oral request from the Secretary General of the Archbishops' Council that the Deputy President's decision refusing permission should be provided to the trustees of the Archbishops' Council and to the senior staff of the Council. That request has been referred to me.

5. On receipt of the request from the Secretary General, I directed the Designated Officer to write to the complainant and the respondent, notifying them of the request and inviting any objections by noon today.
6. The complainant responded by email this morning. She said that if the Deputy President's decision was to be disclosed to the trustees of the Archbishops' Council, there were other points which she would also wish to have drawn to their attention. She also expressed concern that the confidentiality of the process would not be respected. The respondent has not responded.
7. Decisions under section 9 of the 2003 Measure are not generally made public or shared more widely than the parties. By their very nature these decisions deal with preliminary matters prior to the possibility of any complaint being made, at a time when the allegations in question may be disputed. The provisions of the Clergy Discipline Measure Code of Practice, which is approved by the General Synod, require under paragraphs 306 and following that allegations of misconduct are private and confidential, although decisions by disciplinary tribunals are announced publicly and hearings will sometimes be held in public (see paragraph 2 of the Code of Practice).
8. If the parties were prepared to give their consent, I would have no objection to the Deputy President's decision being provided to the trustees of the Archbishops' Council in confidence. Indeed, I would support this course, so that the trustees may consider whether it contains information relevant to the discharge of their duties. However, without the permission of the parties, I am not prepared to authorise such disclosure.
9. Nor am I prepared to make the Deputy President's decision public.
10. While I would attach considerable weight to the need for the trustees of the Archbishops' Council to discharge their duties, and it would be preferable for any further public comment on this matter to be properly informed, the decision refers to representations of a highly personal and sensitive nature which were made by the parties on the basis that the decision would be confidential, in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Practice. In my judgment that must be the primary consideration in the absence of consent to disclosure by the parties. It is also

necessary to bear in mind that the allegations made against the respondent are disputed and have not been the subject of any determination.

11. I direct that the decision which I am making today should be notified to the parties and to the Secretary General of the Archbishops' Council and should be published on the Church of England website.



**Sir Stephen Males**

**President of Clergy Discipline Tribunals**

**3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025**