

News from the Office of the Archbishop of York

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, has announced the appointment of Her Honour Judge Sally Cahill QC to be Chair of an independent Inquiry into the Church's handling of reports of alleged sexual abuse by the late Robert Waddington, formerly Dean of Manchester.

Her Honour Judge Sally Cahill QC will be assisted in the Inquiry by Joe Cocker, an Independent Social Work Consultant. The Secretary to the Inquiry is to be Mrs Nicola Harding, Solicitor, and Registrar of the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds.

The Inquiry will seek to establish what information suggesting that Robert Waddington had committed sexual abuse was made known to whom in the Church of England and when;

It will focus upon an examination of the way in which the relevant Child Protection Policies were or were not applied between the years 1999 and 2005 in the handling, (a) by the Diocese of Manchester and (b) by the then Archbishop of York, of the information provided to them suggesting that sexual abuse had been committed by the late Robert Waddington;

It will further consider whether and if so to what extent the handling of that information might have been dealt with differently if the current safeguarding Policies of the Church of England as set out in 'Protecting all God's Children' (2010) and in 'Responding Well' (2011) had been in place.

Individuals who may have information relevant to the Inquiry are invited to contact the Secretary, Mrs Nicola Harding at Tunnard & Co Solicitors, Cathedral Chambers, 4 Kirkgate, Ripon HG4 1PA, email: njh@tunnardsolicitors.com

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu said:

'I am very thankful to the Lord Chief Justice for commending Her Honour Judge Sally Cahill to serve as Chair of the Inquiry. Anyone who may have information relevant to the Inquiry should contact the Secretary, Mrs Nicola Harding. In setting up this Inquiry I want to make it crystal clear that the Church is ready to hear what really happened, face the facts, and acknowledge any failure of its systems to protect children from sexual abuse. The Church's policies have been much improved since these things took place – but there is no room for complacency.

Whilst this Inquiry is necessarily limited in its scope, focusing on the reports of alleged crimes committed by the late Robert Waddington, when the Inquiry reports by the end of October the Church must hear its recommendations and assess what further measures need be taken nationally to address survivors concerns and to ensure today's child protection policies are robust and effective.'

The terms of reference of the Inquiry are as follows:

Independent Inquiry

Having consulted the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice, the Archbishop of York hereby:

1. Commissions an Independent Inquiry into the issues surrounding the reports relating to alleged child sexual abuse by the Late Robert Waddington.
2. Appoints as Chair of the Inquiry Her Honour Judge Sally Cahill QC, Mrs Nicola Harding, Solicitor, and Registrar for the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds, will act as Secretary to the Inquiry, and Mr Joe Cocker will act as Independent Social Work Consultant.
3. Calls upon the Inquiry
 - (i) to establish what information suggesting that Robert Waddington had committed sexual abuse was made known to whom in the Church of England and when;
 - (ii) to focus upon an examination of the way in which the relevant Child Protection Policies were or were not applied between the years 1999 and 2005 in the handling, (a) by the Diocese of Manchester and (b) by the then Archbishop of York, of the information provided to them suggesting that sexual abuse had been committed by the late Robert Waddington;
 - (iii) to consider whether and if so to what extent the handling of that information might have been dealt with differently if the current safeguarding Policies of the Church of England as set out in 'Protecting all God's Children' (2010) and in 'Responding Well' (2011) had been in place.
4. The Inquiry will have access to all relevant files held at Bishopthorpe Palace, at the office of the Bishop of Manchester, and at the office of Manchester Cathedral. The Inquiry will liaise with church authorities in the Diocese of North Queensland and the Royal Commission in Australia to ensure that they have had access to all relevant communications between the Diocese of North Queensland, Australia, and the offices of the Bishop of Manchester and the Archbishop of York. The Inquiry will also conduct interviews (if necessary) with those who may have relevant information.
5. If considered necessary the Inquiry will report to the Archbishop about alterations or extensions to these terms of reference.
6. The Inquiry will take in to account any information which may come forward, that is considered relevant by the Chair to the Inquiry
7. All those who believe that they have information relevant to these matters are invited to submit evidence to the Inquiry. This may be done in the first instance by writing to Mrs Nicola Harding at Tunnard & Co Solicitors, Cathedral Chambers, 4 Kirkgate, Ripon HG4 1PA,

email njh@tunnardsolicitors.com

8. The Inquiry will report to the Archbishop of York with recommendations by the end of October 2013. The findings of the Inquiry will be made public.