

STATEMENT BY PHIL JOHNSON 8th SEPTEMBER 2015

I am one of the two individuals in the Bishop Peter Ball case who has not had a guilty plea entered in respect of the charges brought in this case.

I do not know who the other person is and to the best of my knowledge have never met them or spoken to them.

The only thing that we seem to have in common is that our allegations against Peter Ball relate to incidents when we were under the age of 16.

I first told the police about Peter Ball's involvement in the sexual abuse of boys and young men in 1996 and have been through 4 police investigations and 3 supposedly independent inquiries commissioned by the church over the last 19 years.

Throughout this, Peter Ball has denied any wrong doing and the Church, including senior bishops, have until very recently tried to minimise and cover-up what has happened.

Bishop Peter received a police caution in 1993 for an act of gross indecency with a young man called Neil Todd. Neil was 17 at the time of the complaint but he had first become involved with Bishop Peter when he was 14. He had been living at Peter Ball's house in Littlington, Sussex prior to Ball's move to Gloucester in 1992 and had moved there with the Bishop. His grooming and abuse started at Littlington well before the move so was clearly under 16 when Ball's offending in relation to him started.

Neil was brave enough to report what had happened to him, going to the police in 1993, and it appears that around 5 others also made complaints against Peter Ball at that time.

Neil, and the others did not get justice. Deals were done to ensure that the Bishop would not be prosecuted and there would be no embarrassing trial. He was allowed to accept a caution and resign - denying the victims justice and the chance to have their stories heard.

Over the years, Neil has been called a liar, I have been told by bishops that his allegations were false and that they had been withdrawn. The former Bishop of Chichester, Eric Kemp, who was Ball's immediate superior at the time of much of the offending in Sussex called Neil a 'mischief maker' in his autobiography.

The Church and the establishment has colluded in covering-up Bishop Peter Ball's offending at the highest level over very many years.

After resigning in disgrace, Peter Ball was supported by Prince Charles who he describes as 'a dear friend' and was gifted a house which it appears was purchased for him by the Duchy of Cornwall rather than being an established Duchy house as was stated in the press.

In 2012, Neil was contacted by the police again when the current case against Peter Ball was instigated. No safeguards were put in place by the police or the church despite requests by myself and warnings that he was distressed and needed support.

Neil could not face going through another investigation and in July 2012 he took his own life.

We owe it to Neil that the whole truth of this story should be heard in public - His bravery and truth needs to be acknowledged.

Throughout the 2 decades since the original disclosures none of the allegations against Peter Ball have been examined in court. None of the evidence has been tested or fully examined. At every turn there have been deals and cover-ups. The truth has been suppressed and Ball's offending behaviour and involvement with other abusers has been minimised.

Once again I find myself in a position where I do not get to tell my story in court, once again I feel that myself, Neil and the other complainant in this case are being silenced and denied justice.

It is shameful that Peter Ball has denied these allegations for over twenty years only to admit to many of them today. For someone who is a priest, a bishop and has been held up as almost saintly over the years this is the ultimate hypocrisy.

I call upon the Church of England to strip the Right Reverend Peter Ball of his title and privileges and to re introduce the ability to 'disrobe' disgraced clergy.

My evidence and that of the other other complainant who was under 16 at the time was enough to convince the police that we were telling the truth, it was enough for the CPS to bring charges - It should be for a Jury to decide whether Peter Ball offended against boys who were under 16, not him and his lawyers doing deals in yet another attempt to belittle his behaviour and reduce his punishment.

This does not feel like justice.

END