

Opening Statement

Matthias Kelly QC to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

27.11.17

Ampleforth Abbey, SLET and Ampleforth School

Apology

1. Ampleforth College has 554 students, the junior school St Martin's Ampleforth (SMA) has 98 students. The community of monks in the Abbey number 62.
2. On behalf of Ampleforth Abbey, Ampleforth College, St Martin's Ampleforth and SLET (collectively termed "Ampleforth") I would like to begin by offering a sincere and heartfelt apology to anyone who suffered abuse whilst in our care. All students and parents, past, present and future are entitled to expect that they will be safe and cared for by us. I am deeply sorry that was not always the case. We wish to apologize for the hurt, injury, distress and damage done to those who were abused as a result of our failings. We will strive with every fibre of our beings to alleviate the damage done and to ensure that we do everything we can to ensure there is no repetition.
3. Ampleforth Abbey, Ampleforth College, SMA and SLET recognize that before 2005 and the election of Abbot Cuthbert Madden there were failings and omissions, a lack of transparency, misguided loyalty and misjudgements that led to failings.
4. Ampleforth is committed to strive to improve and to learn from the past. Due to substantial reform and change Ampleforth can no longer be described as a clerical closed shop. Lessons have been learned and there is now a much changed approach.

The Changes

5. Since 1997 the Schools have been run by a separate Educational Trust the St Laurence Education Trust. Initially all the Trustees were monks. Since 2010 the Trust has a majority of lay Trustees and was chaired by a deputy chair who is a lay person whenever safeguarding matters were discussed. Since this year (2017) it has a majority of lay Trustees with a lay chair, Claire Smith. It is the St Laurence Education Trust, not the Abbey which runs the School. The effect of these changes has been to change the composition from an entirely monastic trusteeship to one which is one third monastic and two thirds lay.
6. We consider this to be an important reform in emphasising the fact that the Abbey do not control the School and seeks instead to work in close partnership with lay

people. Historically, the advice of the lay advisors and latterly the lay trustees has been integral to the improvement of the operation of Ampleforth generally and that is appreciated and valued. This change in governance emphasises that point. The structures in place continue to be kept under review to ensure that best practice is in place and an excellent education for all pupils is delivered.

7. The Abbey's function in relation to the School is to ensure that the children receive an education which embodies the values and principles of the Roman Catholic Church and the Rule of St Benedict. The Abbey's influence is focused on the religious backdrop to the education provided by the School (which is the main factor in many parents' decisions to send their children to Ampleforth). We and the parents wish that to be maintained.
8. Gilling Castle Preparatory School ceased to exist as an independent body in 1992 when it merged with the Ampleforth College Junior house to form Ampleforth College Junior School. The current prep school is St Martin's Ampleforth and is the product of a merger between Ampleforth College Junior School and St Martin's Nawton which took place in 2001. This school was at first independent from the College but in recent years changes have been made to bring the junior school into line with the College and provide a seamless governance structure. The junior school is now under the control and supervision of SLET. Amongst other things, this ensured that the two schools have a uniformity of approach to safeguarding with identical safeguarding policies.
9. The Abbey has no direct function in the administration of the School in relation to safeguarding. That is not to say that the School and the monastery work in isolation in relation to safeguarding issues. When safeguarding issues arise from the School, the monastery's Safeguarding Coordinator (Mr Mick Walker), can be consulted by the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Ms Deirdre Rowe (the Associate Head). Any safeguarding concern arising from the School in relation to a member of the Community is always reported to Mr Walker and the school is always informed of any allegation concerning a member of the Monastic community even if it is unrelated to the school.
10. There are now internal structures (CPC DSL & the Safeguarding Commission & Safeguarding Committee) engaged in constant dialogue in respect of safeguarding and protection. That combined with external accountability (this Inquiry, ISI, the Charity Commission and CSAS) has led to a changed culture.
11. The school is inspected and monitored by the Independent School Inspectorate. Ampleforth has received consistently good reports, most recently the ISI report of March 2017 recorded that "*the School meets the Regulations and standard*". It recorded that the school had an appropriate policy for safeguarding, the staff

showed effective understanding of their responsibilities including in respect of reporting any concerns.

12. Today the teaching Staff at Ampleforth College is 12 monastic, 94 lay, of whom 46 are female. In short 11% are monastic, 43 % female lay. This contrasts with the position in 1949 where 60 % were monks and no women, 1989 where 29% were monks and 8% were female. See Appendix 1
13. Now all Housemasters and House mistresses at Ampleforth are lay people, and the majority of the School's senior management team is lay (and includes a significant proportion of non-Catholics).
14. In the past there were failings such as the decision to move Fr Piers Grant-Ferris in 1975 and Fr Gregory Carroll in 1987 to parishes, even though the parish priests were told of their past misdeeds and monitoring continued.
15. In the recent past there have been cases such as that of Dara De Cogan where a lay music teacher groomed and then abused a female student. It is a matter of deep regret that the abuse ever happened. Ampleforth immediately, upon becoming aware, co-operated fully with the Police and in the prosecution of De Cogan.
16. When allegations are made Ampleforth recognizes that those allegations need to be investigated thoroughly and impartially by the statutory authorities.
17. Ampleforth's policy now has been one of full, open, transparent co-operation with the statutory agencies. That has demonstrably been the case since 2005 and will continue to be the case.
18. DS Barry Honeysett (AAT 000051) at a meeting on 20/6/2006 acknowledged the improved relationship and the improved way Ampleforth dealt with matters as did David Molesworth of North Yorkshire County Council (AAT000857) on 28 June 2007 DCI Kell in her statement points out that the current arrangements between North Yorkshire Police and Ampleforth following the establishment by NYP of the Non Recent Child Abuse Investigation team appear to work well in that the Safeguarding Coordinator for Ampleforth Mr Mick Walker is the point of contact for investigators should they require any documentation or information. This facilitates direct access between Ampleforth and NRAIT (paras 39-41)..
19. NYP attend the Bi-annual meetings of AAT Safeguarding Commission and on an ad-hoc basis to safeguarding events at the College involving staff, NYP and NYCC (paras 206-207)
20. Adrian Child (former director of Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable adults COPCA) and later of its successor the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service CSAS) (para 59) describes Ampleforth together with the Jesuits and Buckfast Abbey as being the exceptions in setting up their

own Safeguarding Commissions to address the gap left by the Nolan report which did not address the Religious orders adequately. He points out that the current Abbot, Cuthbert Madden, has been able to establish both a separation of safeguarding structures between the Abbey and school, something he and his predecessor Eileen Shearer wanted to achieve, and communication and mutual sharing between Abbey and school which excessive separation would have prevented. Mr Child points to good communication now between Ampleforth and the Diocese of Middlesbrough [unlike the situation he describes in other Religious communities (para 83)]. He found the Safeguarding Coordinators for Ampleforth and Buckfast Abbey to be “very qualified and very capable”.

21. This demonstrates a change of approach and a commitment to do everything possible to eliminate risk and ensure transparency and effective policies.
22. AAT & SLET have demonstrated their willingness to critically examine their policy and approach and keep up with best practise by commissioning an Independent review of Ampleforth’s policies and procedures by Prof Sue Procter, whose report has been disclosed to the Inquiry, whose statement is available on Relativity and who is scheduled to give evidence before the Inquiry.
23. In addition Ampleforth has, following the DDC case reviewed its policy and procedures and has already made changes and will make more changes, for example, to the structure of the music department, the training and approaches of all teaching staff.
24. Ampleforth’s dramatic change of approach can also be seen in how it has approached the issue of co-operation with and disclosure to this Inquiry. We have disclosed 925 documents. We have had a dedicated team dealing with disclosure and IICSA. By July 2016 we had completed all disclosure requested of us. We have responded promptly to all request for evidence and documents. On 15/1/16 the Abbot Cuthbert Madden wrote to all member of the Community requesting the reporting of any hitherto undiscovered offending. The Procurator wrote to all non-teaching staff in the same terms and the Headmaster also wrote to all present and former teaching staff in the same terms. This was done to ensure that all allegations were before the Inquiry and anyone who had been abused could be offered support and assistance.
25. Ampleforth hope to learn from what is revealed in this wide ranging and comprehensive Inquiry and in that spirit we have worked with the Inquiry and will continue to do so, as well as continuing to fully co-operate with the statutory agencies and all involved in the hope of ensuring the safety of all in the future.

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Appendix1

The table below sets out the composition of the teaching and chaplaincy staff at Ampleforth College historically (for years where data is available). The table does not include non-teaching staff who are employed by the College in non-teaching roles.

	Monastic	Laystaff		Total	Proportion Monastic	Proportion Female
		Male	Female			
1949	37	25	0	62	60%	0%
1963	44	43	0	87	51%	0%
1969	37	52	0	89	42%	0%
1977	38	51	0	89	43%	0%
1989	27	59	7	93	29%	8%
2001	20	58	20	98	20%	20%
2009	12	55	34	101	12%	34%
2017/18	12	48	46	106	11%	43%