

A letter from the reviewers

To the readers,

This review is dedicated to the victims of John Smyth. The courage they have shown over the past 40 years cannot be overstated. Those who made disclosures at the time played a pivotal role in breaking the cycle of abuse. Those who have carried the weight of their experiences for so many years have shown extraordinary strength. And those who have tirelessly pursued justice and called for their story to be heard are standing up not only for those who suffered at the hands of Smyth, but for victims of abuse everywhere.

We are deeply grateful to the victims and we hope that this report is able to do some justice to the stories which they have shared and to their bravery.

This review has been commissioned to serve two purposes. First, it is intended to record the accounts of victims and witnesses and to tell the story of the events involving Winchester College in the 1970s and 1980s. This is their story and we have tried to ensure that the voices of the victims, unheard for so many years, are at the heart of the report.

Second, it has been undertaken as a formal safeguarding process to identify lessons to be learned from what occurred and ensure the safety of current and future pupils of Winchester College. Some of the events which are described in the report took place more than 40 years ago, in the earliest days of child protection. As the 2021 inspection which was undertaken as part of this review demonstrated, the school has changed dramatically since that time.

Nonetheless, the events described in this report were devastating and their impact is still being felt by those who lived them, including former pupils, former teachers and family members of Wykehamists. The impact of the abuse is described in powerful language by Victim 002 and Victim 004 in their impact statements, which are included as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to the report. We would urge all those who view this report to read those statements.

There is no room for complacency or for dismissing what occurred as a product of its time or the actions of one criminal individual. Instead, safeguarding frameworks should be subject to constant review and improvement. All institutions must diligently and impartially scrutinise their child protection cultures, and history has taught us that those institutions which are highly respected or beloved by many past and present members – such as Winchester College – must be even more diligent. This is because in some cases that loyalty and respect may result in opportunities to detect and act on abuse being missed.

Winchester College's safeguarding procedures today are the subject of regular internal and external scrutiny which has found them to be robust, as did the inspection undertaken as part of this review. However, like every institution, the College must continue to review and improve its arrangements to keep pupils safe.

But the events set out in this report reinforce the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The reviewers would urge the community of Wykehamists and all those who support the school to embrace and participate in its child protection work, from this report to everyday safeguarding – watching carefully and raising concerns, challenging strangers without school ID, and supporting pupils in making disclosures where appropriate.

The reviewers wish to thank the present Warden and Fellows of Winchester College for commissioning this report. The College has cooperated fully with the review and the accompanying inspection. Considerable time and effort has been spent liaising with the reviewers to ensure that information has been shared and the report is as robust and complete as possible.

The report concludes that John Smyth was primarily responsible for the harm which was done to pupils of the school in the 1970s and 1980s, but the systems which were in place at the time failed to monitor or deter his abuse and his coercive influence. The response of the College in 1982, when the abuse was disclosed, did not prevent Smyth from moving overseas to minister at other schools and continuing to work in positions of trust, where he committed horrific abuse against children.

The terms of reference were drawn up in relation to Winchester College only. The Warden and Fellows were clear from the time when the review was commissioned that the reviewers must not reach conclusions about the actions of other institutions and the review should be read in this context.

The scope of this report is limited only to those events related to Winchester College, but the harm which Smyth inflicted took place on a much larger scale - in summer camps across the UK, against young people in other schools and in other countries. The story of those who suffered abuse by Smyth but who were not involved with Winchester College is also painful and important. It is a story that was untold in the public forum prior to the publication of the book "Bleeding for Jesus" by Andrew Graystone in 2021. We are hopeful that the upcoming independent review commissioned by the Church of England will continue the process of bringing these events to light.

We are grateful for the patience shown by the victims of Smyth while work has been completed on this review. Drafting a report of this breadth and complexity is always a difficult undertaking and the reviewers continued to be contacted by new witnesses until late September 2021. Some delays were caused by the impact of the global pandemic and by challenges in contacting and engaging with key witnesses.

We have worked hard to progress the review and done our best to avoid extending the date of publication, while also ensuring that the report is as robust and complete as possible. However, we recognise the frustrations that the length of the review has caused to those who have been involved with this project from the beginning. We apologise and we thank you for your patience.

We are also grateful to the witnesses who have participated in this review. They have come forward for a variety of reasons, often unaware of the importance of their recollections, often giving their time without expectation of anything in return. The

information they have shared has helped us to tell the story of what took place, to explore and understand the factors which may have contributed to those events and to ensure that the College is as safe as possible for pupils in future.

In the final days before publication, the reviewers received new evidence related to their enquiries. As this material was received at a late stage, it has unfortunately not been possible to incorporate it into the report. Following publication, the reviewers and the commissioner of the review will assess this material and any further information or disclosures which may be received and determine whether an update to the report, or the addition of an annex or addendum may be required.

We recognise that it may be distressing to read this report, which includes detailed descriptions of child abuse and the treatment of the victims in the aftermath. For some readers, it may trigger memories of abuse in any of its many forms: physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual. It can sometimes be difficult to see a relationship with objectivity from inside it, particularly where there has been grooming or where very strong emotions are involved, and it may be that reading the accounts of those who were abused by Smyth leads to recognition that the behaviour of others has been controlling and coercive or abusive.

If you find yourself recognising some aspects of this report in your own lives or memories, or in those around you, we would encourage you to seek support. You should speak to whomever makes you feel most comfortable, whether that is a friend, a family member or a professional. If what you are remembering is linked to Winchester College, you can contact their safeguarding team at the following email address:

Ali Harber
Deputy Head Pastoral
aeh@wincoll.ac.uk

You may also wish to contact your GP, a professional counsellor or a specialist organisation. Some examples of organisations which can offer support to victims or survivors of abuse are set out below:

NAPAC (the National Association for People Abused in Childhood) offers support to all adult survivors of any types of childhood abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect. The support line is confidential and free to call 0808 801 0331 and NAPAC also offers support by email: support@napac.org.uk. There are also free resources available on the website: <https://napac.org.uk/>.

Stop it Now! (managed by The Lucy Faithfull Foundation). Anyone with a concern about past or current child sexual abuse and its prevention can anonymously call the Stop It Now! helpline. This includes survivors of sexual abuse as well as parents, teachers and other school staff with concerns about possible abuse, including about the behaviour of an adult or child, whether online or offline.

The free helpline is on 0808 1000 900 on Monday – Thursday: 9am – 9pm; Friday: 9am – 5pm. Alternatively you can use the confidential live chat, send a secure message or look at advice online: <https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/helpline/>.”

Jan Pickles OBE

Genevieve Woods

Independent Reviewers

Two handwritten signatures in cursive script. The first signature is on the left and the second is on the right, both appearing to be in black ink.

**REVIEW INTO THE ABUSE BY JOHN SMYTH OF
PUPILS AND FORMER PUPILS OF WINCHESTER
COLLEGE**

**JAN PICKLES OBE
GENEVIEVE WOODS**

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1. Statement of independence

Jan Pickles is an Independent Registered Social Worker who is governed by the British Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. She has held senior appointments in several agencies, including Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales Police. Jan is currently chair of the Advisory Board at the UK's Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse and a member of the National Independent Safeguarding Board of Wales. She has had no previous contact with Winchester College or its Headmaster or Governing Body.

Genevieve Woods is a criminal barrister specialising in safeguarding law. She has been involved in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in the UK and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Australia. She regularly advises schools, charities and sports organisations on safeguarding policy and practice. She has had no previous contact with Winchester College or its Headmaster or Governing Body.

The review was commissioned by Winchester College and it is the property of the College. The terms of reference were drafted by Jan Pickles in June 2019. They were reviewed by Winchester College, and by a victim of abuse known to Jan Pickles at the time and they had been approved by 5 August 2019.

2. Background to the review

In the 1930s, a Christian charity called the Iwerne Trust began funding evangelical holiday camps for young boys. The camps, which were managed by a charity called the Scripture Union, provided a range of activities including Bible studies and discussion groups on the Christian faith. The camps were designed to promote evangelicalism in the Church of England and more widely in the British establishment.

Students from Winchester College and other leading public schools participated in the camps.¹ Attendance was by invitation-only. At Winchester, most attendees were drawn from the members of a religious students' group called the "Christian Forum", which was particularly prominent at the College in the 1970s and 1980s.

Between 1974 and 1982, the Chairman of the Iwerne Trust was John Smyth, who was an evangelical Christian and a prominent barrister who became a QC in 1979.

Between 1982 and the present day, a number of boys who had attended the summer camps during the 1970s and 1980s have made allegations that they had been the victims of violent beatings by John Smyth in a shed in the garden of his family home in Hampshire.

In 1984, John Smyth left the UK and moved to Zimbabwe, where he set up similar evangelical camps. It is alleged that he was involved in the physical abuse of up to 90 children in Zimbabwe. In 1997, John Smyth was arrested following the death of a 16-

¹ According to Victim 004, other schools whose students attended Iwerne Camps included Eton College, Harrow School and Charterhouse School.

year-old boy at a camp. The case was dropped prior to trial and John Smyth subsequently moved to South Africa.

In 2017, a documentary was broadcast on Channel 4 which revealed the extent of his offending. It was reported that John Smyth had abused up to 30 boys and young men in the UK. The allegations include grooming, emotional and spiritual abuse, caressing and kissing, as well as severe physical abuse.

In 2018, Smyth died in Cape Town, South Africa. At the time of his death, he was wanted for questioning by the police in the UK and was the subject of consideration of a request for extradition to the UK.

This review was commissioned by Winchester College to determine what took place by examining contemporaneous documentation and obtaining the accounts of pupils who were affected by the actions of John Smyth, staff employed at the College and others connected to the school at the time. The review was designed to establish a factual narrative of events, to gain an understanding of the relationship between John Smyth, the Iwerne Trust and the College and to review the response of the school at the time.

At time of writing, there are two other independent reviews into the abuse perpetrated by John Smyth which have been commissioned by other organisations: The Church of England and the Scripture Union. The review commissioned by the Scripture Union was undertaken by Gill Camina of Universal Safeguarding Solutions, while the review commissioned by the Church of England is being undertaken by Sarah Lawrence and Keith Makin.

Contact and information sharing between the authors of this report and the independent reviewers engaged by the Scripture Union and the Church of England has been undertaken in accordance with a draft agreement containing principles for information sharing which was proposed by the reviewers commissioned by Winchester College, and which has been included as Appendix 5 of this report. Although the proposed agreement was not formalised, at all times, the reviewers have worked to ensure that the confidentiality of victims and witnesses is protected and that information is shared only where relevant and with their prior consent.

There have also been a number of previous reports into aspects of the abuse perpetrated by Smyth which are referred to in the body of this report. The extant reports include:

- i. The "**Ruston Report**", which was drafted by Mark Ruston in 1982 following the initial disclosure of the abuse to provide information to the leaders of the Iwerne Trust. This report has been included as Appendix 3 of this report.
- ii. The "**Coltart Report**", which was written in 1993 by lawyer David Coltart, who undertook an investigation into the activities of John Smyth in Zimbabwe; and
- iii. The "**2014 Titus Trust Report**", which was written in 2014 by James Stileman, then CEO of the Titus Trust, to provide a summary of the events to the leaders of that organisation.

3. Aims of the review

The overarching aims of the review are set out in the Terms of Reference as follows:

- To establish a factual narrative and disclose as many relevant known facts as possible;
- To identify safeguarding learning from these events.

In the process of gathering evidence and drafting the report, the reviewers hope to achieve the following aims:

- To engage with and learn from those victims of John Smyth who were pupils of Winchester College;
- To establish a clear factual chronology which sets out the events of the relevant period;
- To identify any learning which could assist the College in its present-day safeguarding and minimise the likelihood of similar events occurring in future.

This review is an independent safeguarding report and it has not been drafted as part of a statutory inquiry or judicial proceedings. The reviewers have no power to compel the production of information or the attendance of witnesses.

In accordance with the aims set out above, it is not intended to be a quasi-judicial report which adopts a strict legal approach. While it seeks to establish a factual narrative of events by setting out the evidence given by victims and witnesses, the report does not determine the civil or criminal liability of any person and it is not intended to undertake a rigorous critical analysis of the evidence of those who were victims of abuse perpetrated by John Smyth or to make findings about their credibility.

Instead, pursuant to the Terms of Reference, the purpose of this report is to engage with victims of abuse and provide an opportunity for their accounts to be shared and their voices to be heard. The report is also intended to acknowledge the events of the past, to identify lessons learned and to review current arrangements at the College to ensure that the events which are the subject of this report cannot occur under the existing safeguarding framework.

In drafting this report, the reviewers have strived to ensure that, as far as possible, no harm is caused to victims or witnesses who respond to the review and to avoid re-traumatising those who come forward.

The review was subject to a number of limitations, particularly in relation to the availability of witnesses and documentary material from the relevant time period. The information which it contains should be read as being subject to these limitations. In some cases, the reviewers have not been able to make specific findings due to the absence of relevant evidence. The available evidence (and the steps taken to obtain such evidence) is set out in the following section of the report.

4. Methodology

This review was commissioned by Winchester College in 2019. Winchester College agreed at the outset to cooperate fully with the reviewers, sharing all relevant documentation held by the College and facilitating access to witnesses where possible.

The Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were drafted by Jan Pickles in June 2019 and are included as Appendix 6 of this report. They were shared with and approved by Winchester College and Victim 004, and were subsequently shared with Victims 002, 003, 005, 025 and Victim A as these individuals became known to the reviewers.

The Terms of Reference were reviewed by Winchester College and the authors of this report following the conclusion of the initial evidence gathering process. As a result, the Terms of Reference were amended on 3 July 2020 to reflect the appointment of Genevieve Woods as a reviewer and to confine the focus of the review to:

- i) Events at Winchester College, including the nature of the contact and relationship with John Smyth and the Iwerne Trust;
- ii) How Winchester College was informed of the allegations in 1982 and the nature and methods of its responses, including any response to statutory authorities;
- iii) The contemporaneous response by Winchester College to the victims of abuse reported to it prior to 2017;
- iv) Safeguarding learning from these events.

Documentation

Searches were undertaken by the College Archivist in January 2017 and in August 2019 to identify material relevant to the allegations of abuse. The search material included all pupil records for the period from 1975-1982, the minutes of the Governing Body from 1979-1985 and supporting papers, the Headmaster's annual report to the Governing Body, the minutes of the Housemasters' meetings, notices or the termly diary of the meetings of the Christian Forum, the College magazine and the House Annals. No pupil files were found in the archive for boys admitted to House K prior to 1981 and there were no lists of members of the Christian Forum.

Jan Pickles attended Winchester College to review material drawn from the school archives on 3 September 2019. All documents discovered during the search by the College Archivist were reviewed and additional documents from the relevant period were dip-sampled. Due to the volume of material, the authors did not review every document contained in the archive from the period from 1975-1985. The reviewers searched for material which demonstrated knowledge of the abuse or concerns about John Smyth, information about the growth and influence of the Christian Forum within the College and any other information which would assist in establishing a factual narrative of the events within the Terms of Reference.

Neither the reviewers nor the College Archivist have been able to locate any personal correspondence written by John Thorn. It is clear that the Headmaster did engage in written correspondence, as one victim has provided the reviewers with a number of letters from the relevant period which were addressed to his father. The reviewers have been unable to determine the reasons why this correspondence is not held in the College Archives.

Some historical documentation has been provided to the College and/or to the reviewers by victims and witnesses.

Open-source information has been relied upon where available, where relevant and where its provenance can be determined. For example, with the consent of the author, the reviewers have quoted sections from the foreword to Oakley, L. and Humphreys, J. *Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures*, which was written by Mark Stibbe, a former pupil of Winchester College who was a victim of abuse perpetrated by Smyth.

As noted above, the reviewers have had some communications with those undertaking other independent reviews into abuse perpetrated by Smyth. Where documents or information contained in this report are derived from contact with the other independent reviewers, this is indicated in the references.

At all times, the reviewers have ensured that no witness accounts, personal or identifying information has been shared between the reviews without the prior informed consent of those affected. The reviewers have been careful to avoid re-traumatising victims by re-interviewing them.

The reviewers have not had access to documents held by the Titus Trust or the Scripture Union, although a number of documents attributed to members of the Titus Trust have been shared with the reviewers by the independent reviewers commissioned by the Church of England.

A copy of the report which was drafted for the Titus Trust in 2014 by its CEO James Stileman was not shared with Winchester College at the time, but it has subsequently been provided to the reviewers by a victim participating in the review. It will be referred to in this report as the "**2014 Titus Trust Report**".

The reviewers have seen a copy of the document known as the "**Ruston Report**", which is a report into the abuse perpetrated by Smyth which was drafted by the late Mark Ruston in 1982. Mark Ruston, who was the Vicar of the Holy Sepulchre Church in Cambridge (known as "**the Round Church**"), interviewed 13 young men who had been victims of John Smyth at the request of the Iwerne Trust. The report contains handwritten amendments. This document was provided to the reviewers by a victim participating in the review and is included at Appendix 3 of this report.

The reviewers have also seen a separate typed version of the report, which is an open-source document available online containing comments in brackets. The author of the comments is not known.²

The reviewers have also been provided with a copy of a 1993 report written by lawyer David Coltart, who undertook an investigation into the activities of Smyth in Zimbabwe. This is also an open-source document which is available online.³

An internal investigation was undertaken by the College in 2017. The reviewers did not play any role in that process, but some material from that review has been provided to the reviewers by the College, including an email dated 30 January 2017 containing a record of telephone calls between Winchester College and Mary Sabben-Clare and Euan MacAlpine, an email sent by Euan MacAlpine on 28 January 2017, notes of a meeting with Peter Krakenberger dated 26 January 2017 and notes of a meeting with John Thorn dated 30 January 2016.⁴

Documentation was also sought from the police. The formal witness statements of three victims were provided to the reviewers with their knowledge and consent.

Involvement of victims and witnesses

With the assistance of Winchester College, on 5 March 2020 a letter was sent to all former pupils of Winchester College from the relevant period inviting them to contact the review team with relevant evidence. In March 2020, a letter was sent to former staff members who had been identified as having been present at Winchester College in the relevant period.

In the body of this report, the victims are identified by numbered cyphers. As stated above, this has been done with the agreement of a small group of victims in order to protect their identities. One victim informed the reviewers that they preferred to be referred to as "Victim A" and this has been complied with. Another victim who was not part of the group who agreed to the specific cyphers has been referred to as "Victim B". The reviewers have not named or otherwise identified victims to one another or to any other witnesses.

No teaching or other pastoral care staff who were employed by Winchester College when the events of this report took place were members of staff at the time of this review. The College assisted in facilitating contact with former staff members where possible, but the reviewers were reliant on the voluntary cooperation of those individuals. Some of those who were present at the time of the abuse are now deceased or are unable to participate in this review due to health-related reasons.

² Available online at:

<<http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/970485/27843482/1519929269713/The+Ruston+Report+on+John+Smyth+1993.pdf?token=b5ZM1XU9leAUV05%2BfBelEJFZCiE%3D>>.

³ Available online at:

<<https://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/970485/27843432/1519927496303/The+Coltart+Report+on+John+Smyth+1982.pdf?token=dyRWv11mKQQvB88TjKFZ7wfhQDs=>>>.

⁴ The reviewers consider this is likely to be an incorrect date, as the Channel 4 programme referenced in the note was not broadcast until 2017.

Between the commissioning of the review and late September 2021, Jan Pickles spoke with a number of individuals who were victims of abuse perpetrated by John Smyth and 57 witnesses who were present at Winchester College at the time when the events took place. The reviewers were also provided with a copy of the witness statement of an individual who had cooperated with the Church of England review, but who did not wish to repeat his account.

Where possible, Jan Pickles met with victims and witnesses in person. Some individuals preferred to communicate remotely, for example by telephone. From March 2020, due to the restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the reviewers were required to communicate with victims and witnesses remotely, including by telephone and using virtual communication platforms.

This review is primarily focused on events relating to Winchester College, but where available the reviewers have incorporated information which has been provided by victims who were not connected to the College.

There were a number of individuals who were involved in the events but are now deceased, including Geoff Hewitson, Mark Ashton, Mark Ruston and James Sabben-Clare. These individuals have been named in this report. The reviewers spoke with Fiona Ashton, the widow of Mark Ashton, and with the former partner of Geoff Hewitson. The College contacted Mary Sabben-Clare in January 2017 and May 2020, but she has not communicated directly with the reviewers.

Victim 001 is now deceased. His father is also deceased, but the reviewers have spoken with his mother and she has given an account of her recollections of the disclosure of the abuse. The review does not include any direct account from Victim 001, but he has been mentioned in the statements of other victims and witnesses.

John Thorn is alive at the time of writing, but the reviewers were informed at the outset of the review that he would not be able to respond to questions due to concerns related to his health and welfare. In order to obtain an objective determination of his ability to participate in the review, a formal capacity assessment was undertaken by independent medical professionals. The results confirmed that John Thorn was not able to participate and that the causative conditions had persisted and worsened over the course of several years prior to the assessment.

Given the findings of the capacity assessment, the reviewers wanted to ensure that a 'Maxwellisation' or representations process was undertaken for John Thorn to ensure the report was as fair and fully informed as possible. Extracts from the report which related directly to John Thorn were therefore shared with an independent legal representative instructed to act on his behalf. The responses provided were taken into account by the reviewers and incorporated into the report where appropriate.

The reviewers have also been provided with the written notes of the account which John Thorn provided to the College in 2017.⁵

Peter Krakenberger has been contacted by the College and the reviewers in relation to this review, but declined to participate. He was offered the opportunity to review sections of the report relating to him prior to publication, but he declined. The reviewers have been provided with a copy of written notes setting out the account which he gave to the College in 2017.

Use of language

Throughout this review, the authors will refer to John Smyth as "Smyth" and occasionally as the "abuser". Although he was not convicted of any offences, there is a significant amount of material in the public domain relating to the abuse which he perpetrated, particularly following the broadcast of a documentary relating to Smyth on Channel 4 in 2017.

Those who have given accounts of suffering harm at the hands of John Smyth are referred to in this report as "victims". This term was chosen following consultation with those who have come forward to participate in the review, who expressed the view that they preferred to be referred to as "victims" rather than another term, such as "survivors".

Within this report, victims have been referred to using numbered cyphers to protect their identities. This system was initially agreed by a small group of victims known to the reviewers and has been confirmed by each participant prior to completion of the report. One victim chose to opt out of the numbered categorisation and they are referred to in this report as "Victim A". Another victim who was not a part of the group which agreed to the numbering system is referred to herein as "Victim B". The use of numbers and letters is designed to protect their identities from disclosure and is not intended to diminish or dehumanise these individuals.

The word "abuse" has been used to describe the conduct of Smyth, as opposed to the term "alleged abuse". The reviewers have not encountered any evidence, whether oral or documentary, which suggests that John Smyth did not commit the acts described within this report.

This report occasionally uses the phrase "young boys" to refer to those who were groomed and subjected to abuse by John Smyth. The reviewers have been asked to consider using a different term than "young boys" to refer to the victims in this review, such as the phrase "young men". The original term is used in this review in accordance with the legal definition of a "young person", meaning someone under the age of 18.

This report refers to multiple individuals who are members of the clergy in the Church of England, including Mark Ruston, Mark Ashton, David Fletcher, Eric Nash and others. In

⁵ The note is dated 30 January 2016, but the reviewers consider this is likely to be an incorrect date, as the Channel 4 programme referenced in the note was not broadcast until 2017.

order to avoid repetition, they will be referred to by their full names and not by their formal titles (e.g. "The Reverend").

Representations process

Victims have been given the opportunity to review the sections of the report relating to their evidence and to provide comments to the reviewers.

The reviewers have also undertaken a representations process to ensure that those who have been subject to criticism in this report and who are living at the time of the review have been given the opportunity to provide comments to the reviewers prior to the report being finalised. Comments were taken into account and incorporated into the report where appropriate.

Assessment of historical material

The events which are the subject of this report took place primarily in the 1970s and 1980s. When drafting the report, the reviewers have taken into account the passage of time as it relates to the development of cultural expectations and standards and of safeguarding best practice.

In relation to the action taken in response to the abuse, the reviewers have actively considered 'hindsight bias'; the fact that the events are being viewed through the lens of current standards, awareness and understanding. In relation to each action taken, we have asked whether it would have been reasonable to have expected individuals to respond in a certain way at the time when the events took place, for example by making a report to the police.

Where it has been necessary to make findings about historical material, for example, in identifying when staff members of Winchester College first became aware of the abuse, the reviewers have made an assessment using the civil standard of proof, namely "on the balance of probabilities". The civil standard has been described as meaning that the finding is "more probable than not".⁶ Findings have only been made where, on the basis of the evidence available to the reviewers, an event is more likely than not to have happened. In reaching conclusions, the reviewers have taken into account the inherent probability or improbability of the events in question,⁷ the existence of contemporaneous documentation and the accounts given by each victim and witness.

⁶ Per Denning J in *Miller v Minister of Pensions* [1947] 2 All ER 372 at [374A].

⁷ Per Lord Nicholls in *In re H (Minors)* [1996] AC 563 at [586].

Part 1: Factual Narrative

Part 1 of this report seeks to set out a factual narrative of events based on the accounts of victims and witnesses, as well as contemporaneous documentation.

It describes the background of Smyth and the context of relevant institutions, as well as the development of the Christian Forum and the involvement of Smyth in events at Winchester College.

Section 10 of the report includes each victim's account of the abuse they experienced at the hands of Smyth. Wherever possible, the victims' original wording has been used in order to ensure that their accounts are accurately reflected and their voices can be heard.

Sections 11 and 12 of the report address the circumstances in which the abuse was disclosed to staff members of Winchester College and the actions which were taken in response.

Part 1 concludes by making certain factual findings about the events which took place, in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

5. Background to relevant institutions

Winchester College

Winchester College is an independent boarding school for boys, located in Winchester, Hampshire. Founded in 1382, it has operated in its present location for over 600 years.

Winchester has approximately 700 male pupils aged between 13 – 18 years old. The school is "full boarding", meaning that almost all students are resident at the college for seven days a week. All teachers reside on site with their families.

The College is led by a Headmaster. The Headmaster of Winchester College from 1968 – 1985 was John Thorn. The Governing Body of the College is known as "The Warden and Fellows". It consists of the Warden, who is the Chair of the Governing Body, and up to 14 Fellows. The Warden and Fellows are the trustees of the school.

The school community has developed a unique set of words and phrases, referred to as "Notions", which are used by staff and pupils on an everyday basis. The main notions which are referred to in this report are teachers being referred to as "dons", boys at Winchester College as "men" and school governors as "fellows".

The majority of this report relates to incidents which occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. At that time, the College was divided into eleven houses of approximately 60 pupils each. Each house was managed by a Master or a "House don" who oversaw the academic progress and well-being of students in their house. Houses were central to the life of the boys. "It is where boys across year groups eat each meal. This is also where they establish lifelong friendships, prepare for many inter-house teams, socials and competitions and learn how to get along with people from a variety of backgrounds."⁸

The school had four Chaplains who formed the Chaplaincy Team.

The College is located in the city of Winchester and in the 1970s - 1980s the physical barriers between the school campus and the city were limited. The College owned numerous residential properties in the city which were used by the dons as accommodation and for tutorial spaces.

In the 1970s and 1980s, there was an evangelical group which met at Winchester College called the "Christian Forum". Many boys who belonged to the Christian Forum attended Iwerne camps. The Christian Forum was founded by John Woolmer and during the late 1970s and early 1980s it was run by a mathematics teacher named Peter Krakenberger.⁹

⁸ Winchester College: Houses. Accessed online 1 June 2020. <<https://www.winchestercollege.org/living/houses>>.

⁹ Account of Victim 004.

The Iwerne Trust/The Titus Trust

The Titus Trust has been a registered charity in the UK since 1997.¹⁰ It is an organisation which runs evangelical Christian holiday camps for children and supports evangelical teachers working in independent schools.

The Titus Trust was previously called "The Iwerne Trust".¹¹ The Iwerne Trust was formed in 1945 and formally registered as a UK charity in 1963.¹² It has funded evangelical camps for schoolboys since the 1930s, when it was known as the "Home Missionary Trust". The organisation's stated aim was "the promotion of the Christian faith among schoolboys and students whether by independent work or by supporting (financially or otherwise) any existing or future agency or agencies carrying on work amongst schoolboys and students".¹³

The Iwerne Trust has been described as a "religious Sandhurst", choosing and developing leaders from a select group of evangelical Christian boys. In the words of Charles Moore, they were "the next generation's Christian elite".¹⁴

The evangelical camps were founded by an Anglican minister named E. J. H. (Eric) Nash, also known as "Bash". In 1932, he was appointed by the Scripture Union to work among public schoolboys.¹⁵ His goal was to capture the "high ground" of the Church of England and to populate it with men of "sound" evangelical Christian beliefs: to promote evangelicalism in the Church of England and in the wider British establishment. The attendees were drawn from a number of leading public schools in the UK, including Winchester College, and some went on to hold senior positions in the Church of England.

Eric Nash led the camps until his retirement in 1965, though he continued to attend and speak at the camps until 1968. David Fletcher, who was also a minister in the Church of England, then became leader of the camps and continued in that role until 1986.¹⁶

The camps were financed by fundraising undertaken by the Iwerne Trust but were under the overall management of the Scripture Union. The Iwerne Trust employed a bookkeeper to manage the funding of the camps, but other staff were employed by the Scripture Union.

¹⁰ Registered charity no. 1066751.

¹¹ The Iwerne Trust is described on the Charity Commission Register as the "previous name" of the Titus Trust. The Charity Commission Register, The Iwerne Trust. Accessed online 1 June 2020. <<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/3940726/governance>>.

¹² Registered charity no. 215862.

¹³ The Charity Commission Register, The Iwerne Trust. Accessed online 1 June 2020. <<https://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/RemovedCharityMain.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=215862&SubsidiaryNumber=0>>.

¹⁴ 'As in the case of John Smyth QC, an abusive theology can lead to terrible actions', Charles Moore, *The Telegraph*, 17 August 2018. Accessed online 01 June 2020: <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/13/case-john-smyth-qcan-abusive-theology-can-lead-terrible-actions/>>.

¹⁵ Eddison J. (Ed.) *A Study In Spiritual Power* (1982) Highland Books. p. 33.

¹⁶ 2014 Titus Trust Report.

The Iwerne Camp was primarily based in the village of Iwerne Minster in Dorset, on the site of Clayesmore School. There was a smaller group which met at a house in Wales to select Officers.¹⁷

Within the camps there was a strict hierarchy, with each person assigned a militaristic role such as "Commandant", "Adjutant", "Officer", "Senior Camper" or "Junior Camper". Each camp consisted of approximately 150 men and boys, with 25 Officers, 75 Junior Campers and 50 Senior Campers.¹⁸

Senior Campers were usually undergraduate university students who had attended the camps as boys. They were responsible for managing the Junior Campers. Officers were responsible for making and maintaining contact with Junior Campers when they returned to school or to their homes.

In 1997, the Titus Trust was created and took over the fundraising functions of the Iwerne Trust. In 2000, the Titus Trust took over control of the holiday camps from the Scripture Union.¹⁹ On 3 April 2020, the Titus Trust announced that it had reached a settlement with three of the victims of abuse perpetrated by Smyth. The Charity announced that it was undergoing a reorganisation. On 20 May 2020, it was announced that the Iwerne and Forres camp groups would be closing and responsibility for boarding school's ministry would be shared across the Trust.²⁰

The Iwerne Trust continued to exist as a non-active trust for the purpose of receiving legacies until 2016.

The Scripture Union

The Scripture Union is an international evangelical charity which was founded in 1867. It aims to help children and young people to explore Christianity through the creation of religious resources and through work in schools, camps and missions. It operates in over 120 countries, recruiting and training volunteers to spread the message of Christianity to young people.

The Scripture Union was responsible for managing the Iwerne Camps. The majority of staff at the camps were either volunteers or were employees of the Scripture Union.²¹

6. Background of John Smyth

John Jackson Smyth was born on 27 June 1941 in Canada.

According to information contained in the 2014 Titus Trust Report, John Smyth started attending Iwerne camps in a leadership role at some point before 1965, while Eric Nash

¹⁷ Account of Victim 004.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ Titus Trust: About. Accessed online 01.06.20 at: <<https://www.titustrust.org/about/>>; 2014 Titus Trust Report, p. 7.

²⁰ Titus Trust: Statement About Trust Reorganisation. Accessed online 01.06.20 at: <<https://www.titustrust.org/statement-about-trust-reorganisation/>>.

²¹ 2014 Titus Trust Report, p. 7.

was still running the organisation. The two men had met at Cambridge, where Smyth studied law.

In the 2014 Titus Trust Report, the role of Smyth in the Iwerne Camps was described as follows:

"Leaders had to be personally invited by 'Bash' and were expected to serve as Senior Campers first. John Smyth, to many people's surprise, went straight into the Leaders' room. John Smyth was undoubtedly very talented (he became a QC at just 37) and boys were especially drawn to him. He was very possessive of those for whom he was responsible at Camp. He could be manipulative, selfish and lacked humility but was an extremely able leader and gifted speaker."

From 1970 – 1982, Smyth played a leadership role in the Iwerne Trust. He took on the role of trustee of the organisation in 1970, then became the Chairman of the Trust in 1974/5. He became Chair of the Scripture Union in 1971.

Smyth was also a lay reader at Christ Church in Winchester between 1974 -1978 following his training in 1972.²²

Smyth was a self-employed barrister who became a Queens Counsel in 1979, at the age of 37. He became a Recorder (a part-time circuit judge) in 1978 and held the position until 1984.

He used his role as a barrister to promote his religious views and his opposition to homosexuality. In 1977, he acted on behalf of Mary Whitehouse, a conservative Christian campaigner, in a high-profile private prosecution of *Gay News* magazine for the offence of blasphemous libel concerning the Christian religion.²³ In 1982, he was instructed to act on behalf of Mary Whitehouse in her private prosecution against the director of the play "The Romans in Britain" for the offence of gross indecency in respect of a scene depicting homosexual rape. In 2005, he appeared as an *amicus curiae* of the Constitutional Court of South Africa on behalf of the organisation Doctors For Life International to oppose the legalisation of same-sex marriage on the basis that it would discriminate against people with deeply held religious beliefs.²⁴

He practised law in London and lived with his wife, Anne, and his young children in Winchester.

Witness 013 described Smyth as being distinctive and much talked about within Winchester College. They said that he "wore sharp smart suits and bright coloured shirts".²⁵

Witness 014 said that Smyth was arrogant. They said that when they first met, he said, "My name is Smyth, nothing common like Smith". They described his expensive clothes

²² Annual returns to the diocese made by lay readers (1974 - 1980), Parish of Christ Church minutes and electoral rolls.

²³ R v Lemon [1979] QB 10; R v Lemon [1979] AC 617.

²⁴ Case CCT 60/04.

²⁵ Account of Witness 013.

and belongings and said he was rude to his wife in the presence of others.²⁶
Witness 041 said that Anne seemed "cowed" by her husband.²⁷

Victim 003 described Smyth as "a charismatic and clever barrister" who showed an interest in the boys and listened to them.²⁸ Victim 002 said he was the "kingpin", a pivotal figure at Iwerne.²⁹ Victim 004 said that Smyth was:

"A very glamorous and robust person who came into our grey lives. He offered humour and listened to me, he made me feel like I had important thoughts and feelings."³⁰

Victim 008 described him as follows:

"John Smyth could be good fun; his family was lovely; he was a very attractive almost celebrity and he made you feel special. He was a prominent QC in the newspapers, known to be an active Christian with the blond wife and the blond children and house with a pool, all very glamorous. He was naturally good at persuading people as he was a successful barrister, he gained your confidence and listened to you."³¹

Victim 015 described Smyth as "a very charismatic individual, very sporty, good-looking, wealthy, successful, brilliant speaker and very inspiring about Christian faith, he used to give inspiring talks... he became the youngest QC in the country".³² He said that in retrospect, he was a manipulative man.³³

Smyth offered members of the Christian Forum opportunities to observe him in court and arranged work experience in his chambers. Victim 005 said:

"He was an impressive guy and he took me under his wing and over the following months I suppose I had an unofficial pupillage with him where he took me into court, not just in Winchester Crown Court but other places too, so I was in Chambers with him, mingling with these gowned and wigged Barristers, feeling ever so important for a 16 year old."³⁴

Witness 006, a former pupil of Winchester College, said that when he was 14 years old, Smyth invited him through the Christian Forum to observe him during a trial involving rival Hells Angels gangs in Winchester Crown Court. He said that he was very impressed.³⁵

²⁶ Account of Witness 014.

²⁷ Account of Witness 041.

²⁸ Account of Victim 003.

²⁹ Account of Victim 002.

³⁰ Account of Victim 004.

³¹ Account of Victim 008.

³² Account of Victim 015.

³³ Account of Victim 015.

³⁴ Account of Victim 005.

³⁵ Account of Witness 006.

Witness 008 was also a former pupil of Winchester College. He said that Smyth offered him an internship in his chambers when he was 17 years old. He had lunch with Smyth during his internship and recalled having a very intense conversation with him.³⁶

7. 1970 - 1978 John Smyth and the growth of the Christian Forum at Winchester College

According to the accounts of victims and witnesses, as well as records held by Winchester College, John Smyth used his role as the Chairman of the Iwerne Trust to engage with pupils at Winchester College. He gained access to the College as a guest speaker at events hosted by the evangelical student group, the Christian Forum.

This section of the report will set out the founding of the Christian Forum, the history of its increasing influence within Winchester College and the role which Smyth played in the group.

John Woolmer was a mathematics teacher at Winchester College from 1963 – 1970.³⁷ He left to complete his ordination and subsequent training at St John's College in Nottingham.

John Woolmer stated that he first encountered the Iwerne Trust when he was training at St John's in 1970. He described the organisation as "very exclusive" and said that when David Fletcher came to visit his Iwerne officers, he asked to meet him, but was brushed aside.

John Woolmer stated that while he was away at St John's from 1969/1970 – 1971, a "famous evangelical barrister" and influential member of the Iwerne organisation had started a Christian group in his house near Winchester for Wykehamists "with a direct link to Iwerne". He said that he did not know how Smyth made contact with pupils of Winchester College.

Witness 052, a former staff member at the College, said that he had socialised with the Smyth family. He told the reviewers that Smyth was "very interested" in Winchester College and that as a result he had agreed to show him around the College. It is not known whether this initiated Smyth's contact with the College or whether he had already established a connection.³⁸

After he returned to the College in January 1972, John Woolmer founded the Christian Forum with the consent of John Thorn. He has stated that this was a direct move to bring the secretive group at Smyth's house into the open. He said, "I felt that such groups were intrinsically problematic and this was one of the reasons that I gave to John Thorn for the founding of the Christian Forum". It therefore appears that the

³⁶ Account of Witness 008.

³⁷ The information in this section related to John Woolmer is taken from the account given by John Woolmer to Jan Pickles, the written account of John Woolmer to the Church of England review which was shared with the authors of this report, and from a document drafted by John Woolmer titled "The Rise and Fall of Christian Forum with deepest apologies to those whose lives were severely affected by the activities of JS".

³⁸ Account of Witness 052.

Christian Forum was founded in deliberate opposition to the activities of Smyth and the Iwerne Trust.

According to John Woolmer, the Christian Forum was intended to be an extension of existing bible study groups at the College. It was an evangelical Christian group which met after Chapel on Sundays with a weekly evangelical speaker. The first meeting had approximately 25 boys in attendance, most of whom were scholars.

In the early 1970s, the Christian Forum had an attendance of between 1 – 20 pupils and there was a weekly prayer group attended by 10 boys.

In September 1973, Peter Krakenberger joined the staff of Winchester College and became involved in the Christian Forum. According to John Woolmer, he was an Officer of the Iwerne Trust. He was described by Victim 003 as "an excitable individual, a bit of an outsider, a good teacher but not respected by boys or staff".³⁹ Victim 004 described him as "a maths teacher who was very ordinary".⁴⁰ David Steele, the Housemaster of Morsheads, said that he was "a difficult person to get to know", but he endeared himself to the boys with impressions of football commentary.⁴¹

Witness 011 said that Peter Krakenberger was a brilliant maths teacher and a gifted soccer referee, which gave him credibility. He said that he was passionately committed to the evangelical life and "for him it was black and white".⁴² Witness 013 said that he had a Spanish lesson in Peter Krakenberger's flat⁴³ and described him as being "odd" and as being under the influence of Smyth.⁴⁴

The influence of the Iwerne organisation increased over time and Smyth remained involved in the Christian Forum. He spoke at the College with the agreement of John Woolmer. John Woolmer said that Smyth's access to the Christian Forum as a speaker was dependent on him. He allowed him to speak once a term just like any other speaker and said that he attended 30-40% of the events.

In 1974, membership of the Christian Forum dwindled. In an effort to increase numbers, John Woolmer invited Keith de Berry, Vicar of St Aldates Church in Oxford, to give a series of talks at the College. Talks were given over three evenings in October 1974. Over 200 people attended each evening, some 70 students stayed behind for meetings afterwards and on the third evening approximately 30 pupils made a commitment to Christ, including several of the victims who have spoken to the reviewers.

³⁹ Account of Victim 003.

⁴⁰ Account of Victim 004.

⁴¹ Account of David Steele.

⁴² Account of Witness 011.

⁴³ Multiple witnesses have referred to the fact that lessons were held at Masters' houses in the 1970s. For example, Victim 004 described attending a class taught at the home of a Master in the evenings where pupils were allowed to drink wine and use the Master's swimming pool. Victim 002 told the reviewers that they had attended evening lessons in the home of a teacher, where beer was given to the boys. He also recalled going round to the same teacher's house one morning only to find the teacher in his dressing gown. The teacher invited him upstairs where he started taking off his pyjamas and then dressing in front of Victim 002. Witness 013 also referred to Spanish lessons being held in the house of a don.

⁴⁴ Account of Witness 013.

The Christian Forum grew to a membership of 50 pupils. The growth of the group is confirmed by the Headmaster's Report to the governing body of the school in August 1975, describing the Christian Forum as 'flourishing'.⁴⁵ Several victims spoke about the importance of the talks in 1974 and several attributed the growth of the Christian Forum to the "charismatic presence" and influence of speaker Keith de Berry.⁴⁶

Christian Forum meetings happened every Sunday in a first-floor library room, where speakers gave inspirational short talks about Christian commitment. Victim 004 described the meetings including "comfy chairs and snacks", but also said "it gave me powerful ideas and a sense of purpose".⁴⁷ Victim 015 said that the meetings were "lively and inspiring".⁴⁸

Victim 003 described the Christian Forum as an enjoyable experience where boys could enjoy the rare treat of comfy chairs, tea and biscuits. He said that "it made me feel special, part of an inner circle". He described the talks as "engaging and energetic, some inspirational".

Smyth spoke at meetings regularly and he was described as being humorous and sporty. Victim 003 said that he felt younger and seemed more in touch with the boys, as he sometimes had sexual references in his jokes. He said that Smyth was "a presence" and often attended, even when he was not the speaker.⁴⁹

Victim 002 also described Smyth as being a powerful and charismatic speaker who attended Christian Forum even when he was not the guest speaker. Witness 043, a former pupil, said that Smyth attended on some Sundays just to listen. He said that he remembered thinking it was odd that he was just sitting in the library listening at Christian Forum meetings as he was not a member of Winchester College staff.⁵⁰

By 1974, Smyth was already exerting considerable influence over some students. John Woolmer recalled that he was berated by a house don (who was not identified) because of Smyth's "influence over two of his senior prefects" and his house-captain. John Woolmer apologised and agreed with him. He stated:

"I knew them well and am quite convinced that nothing untoward was happening, but I acknowledged that JS had considerable influence over them. JS was impossible to get to know. Beneath a charming smile, there seemed to be a blank wall. Boys, however, were clearly deeply influenced by him".⁵¹

After John Woolmer left the College in April 1975, Peter Krakenberger grew the membership of the Christian Forum to approximately 100 pupils, which was nearly one sixth of the school.⁵² Victim 005 recalled that in 1973 there were only a handful of

⁴⁵ Headmaster's report to the Warden and Fellows dated August 1975.

⁴⁶ Accounts of John Woolmer and Victims 003, 004 and 025.

⁴⁷ Account of Victim 004.

⁴⁸ Account of Victim 015.

⁴⁹ Account of Victim 003.

⁵⁰ Account of Witness 043.

⁵¹ Written account of John Woolmer.

⁵² *ibid.*

members of the Christian Forum, but by 1977 there were nearly 100 students attending.⁵³

Peter Krakenberger started organising groups in most houses, some of which were linked to confirmation courses run by John Woolmer. There is some evidence of an active recruitment campaign for the Christian Forum, as Housemaster Euan MacAlpine stated that Peter Krakenberger and Smyth targeted new boys and told them that "if they fell out of membership they would be damned".⁵⁴ Witness 042, a former member of staff at Winchester College, said that Martin Scott, the Second Master at the time,⁵⁵ had described to him how new boys who were vulnerable were invited to tea by Peter Krakenberger and recruited to the Christian Forum. He said that if they chose not to be involved, they were side lined, which was "a hard thing for a new boy to take".⁵⁶

The increase in the popularity of the Christian Forum was described by John Thorn in his autobiographical book, *The Road to Winchester*. The book describes how Smyth used his force of personality to become a regular visitor to the College.

As a high-profile barrister, a QC with a national profile, he was a "powerful persuasive" speaker⁵⁷ and using these skills he became involved with The Christian Forum and its activities at Winchester College. He was able to bring other high-profile speakers to the group, including Lord Denning, then Master of the Rolls.⁵⁸ Other persons who were listed as speakers included David Fletcher, Jonathan Fletcher, John Eddison, the Bishop of Winchester, Keith de Berry and Mark Ruston.⁵⁹

During this period, Smyth attended as a speaker at the Christian Forum approximately once a term from 1975 until his last speaking appearance on the 7 February 1982.⁶⁰ Victim 005 said of Smyth's attendance at the Christian Forum, "He was nearly always standing at the front surrounded by what looked like people who had huge respect for him".⁶¹

The influence of Smyth was described by John Thorn as follows:

"And then a neighbouring barrister, a Queen's Counsel, a happily married family man, began to take an interest in the group. Many of them went out to his home for Sunday lunch. It gave them relief from boarding-school life in the atmosphere of a loving home. I could not be very worried, even when the housemasters told me they were. I spoke to the barrister. He undertook to keep me in close touch with his doings. He asked me to join the family for lunch one day. I didn't.

And the numbers in Christian Forum grew. In the mid-seventies it could claim about eighty attending members. In a way, they seemed a kind of backbone of

⁵³ Account of Victim 005.

⁵⁴ Record of telephone conversation between Winchester College and Euan MacAlpine on 30 January 2017.

⁵⁵ Martin Scott is now deceased.

⁵⁶ Account of Witness 042.

⁵⁷ Account of Victim 004.

⁵⁸ Account of Witness 041.

⁵⁹ List of Christian Forum speakers 1975 – 1982.

⁶⁰ List of Christian Forum speakers 1975 – 1982.

⁶¹ Account of Victim 005.

virtue in the place. They seldom smoke or drank. They were above suspicion of any involvement in drugs. Many were people of great influence in the school, and it seemed a good influence. How could a school which claimed to be Christian refuse at least to tolerate a group who wished to take the commands of Christ literally and not just give to Him the lip-service which seemed enough for the ecclesiastical establishment? It was uncomfortable, of course, that they spoke so much of conversion, of 'Becoming a Christian', a phrase smacking of intolerance and doctrinal exclusiveness; uncomfortable that they were inclined to be secretive, that they would in their worship have nothing to do with those they called 'unsound', among them two of the school chaplains, most of the local clergy, all the housemasters, and the headmaster. They were polite about it and would reason with you about it, but no discussion with them resulted in any change of view or policy.

Many parents of the boys in the group became worried. The boys sometimes became estranged from their families. Their moral tutors, as it were, were not parents or most of the schoolmasters but the few who controlled the group and some people outside who ran things called 'Varsity and Public School Camps' for similar-minded boys (solely of the middle class, it was interesting to note) at a school in Dorset. I shared these worries, but I was reminded that this kind of thing was just what Jesus Christ Himself had prophesied for His devoted followers."⁶²

Victim 004 said that the Christian Forum ran in parallel to and in competition with the school Chaplaincy. He said it "sort of claimed to have purer, holier, better Christians than them".⁶³

Witness 042 said that they remembered John Thorn asking the Housemasters if they had any concerns about John Smyth, as he felt things were going on that he could not get into.⁶⁴

Due to these concerns, in autumn of 1977 John Thorn employed Mark Ashton, a former Head Boy of Winchester and evangelical clergyman, to join the Chaplaincy Team and assist in managing the tensions arising from the Christian Forum.⁶⁵ Fiona Ashton said his first job when joining Winchester College was "to take back control of the Christian Forum". She said that she had sometimes attended meetings of the Christian Forum and witnessed Smyth being possessive of the boys. She said it was obvious to all that they were "his boys" and said that Smyth was the power behind the Christian Forum, while Peter Krakenberger was the administrator.⁶⁶

David Conner became the Senior Chaplain in the autumn of 1980. He told the reviewers that by the time he joined the College, the Christian Forum was a flourishing organisation which had grown following a Christian mission led by evangelist Michael Green. He said that the mission had caused significant division in the staff body and

⁶² Thorn, J. (1989) *The Road to Winchester*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson. p. 154.

⁶³ Account of Victim 004.

⁶⁴ Account of Witness 042. (Witness 042 stated that this occurred prior to the appointment of Mark Ashton, which was the consequence of the Headmaster's concerns.)

⁶⁵ Thorn, J. (1989) *The Road to Winchester*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson. fn. 62 supra.

⁶⁶ Account of Fiona Ashton.

when he arrived, he was regarded with suspicion by members of the Christian Forum, who considered him to be "unsound".

He recalled that when he was a Chaplain at a different school prior to joining Winchester College, there was a Christian Union group which was similar to the Christian Forum. A pupil at the school had showed him a letter from Iwerne Minster in which he had been warned off the Chaplain on the basis that he was not "sound".

David Conner told the reviewers that the Christian Forum was a significant component at the school, but that he was not involved and the other Chaplains who may have known Smyth at the time were now deceased. He said that he himself had never met Smyth.⁶⁷ The reviewers have seen documentary evidence that he was listed as a speaker at the Christian Forum on a number of occasions, including in March 1982 and January 1983.⁶⁸ When asked by the reviewers, David Conner stated:

"Clearly, I have not remembered things accurately. I am still pretty sure that I never met Smyth. I am also quite sure that I was not involved with the running of The Christian Forum, and that in that circle I was not considered 'sound'. For whatever reason, I must have been invited to speak. Of this, I have no memory."

Similarly, Smyth did not encourage members of the Christian Forum to confide in their housemasters or to view them as "sound". David Steele, a housemaster at the time, said, "I gathered that the subversive Smyth preached against the authority of housemasters, so, being one such and a High Anglican at that, in his eyes I suspect I was devil incarnate".⁶⁹

As his contact with the school and the Christian Forum increased, Smyth was able to build a trusting relationship with the boys who attended the Christian Forum in plain sight of the College. Meetings with Smyth took place in the College, at the house of Peter Krakenberger, near the school and at his family home. Contact took place mid-week and also on weekends. Victim 004 said of Smyth:

"I think we laughed at the time how on earth he could ever do any work because he seemed to constantly be between Winchester in the week, mentoring boys, or at Iwerne camps. There didn't seem to be enough holiday to cope with all that."⁷⁰

Smyth began to invite selected boys to his home on Sundays. The purpose of this was ostensibly to share lunch with his family, which was, as John Thorn stated in his book, appreciated by the boys as a break from school.⁷¹ John Thorn himself was invited but did not take up the offer of Sunday lunch at Smyth's home with his family.

It is not known whether formal permission was granted for boys to visit Smyth's home, or whether staff at the College, other than Peter Krakenberger, were aware of the level of contact between Smyth and its pupils.

⁶⁷ Account of David Conner.

⁶⁸ List of Christian Forum speakers 1975 – 1982.

⁶⁹ Account of David Steele.

⁷⁰ Account of Victim 004.

⁷¹ Thorn, J. (1989) *The Road to Winchester*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson. p. 154, fn 62 supra.

From the accounts provided to the reviewers, it appears that pupils were not expected to seek permission to leave the College premises, though some houses asked younger boys to sign out if they were leaving after 7pm. It appears to have been known and accepted that boys would have contact with members of the public and masters from the school in town and would sometimes visit their homes.⁷² According to Victim 002, he needed to seek permission to visit outside the College on a Sunday, but the rules were inconsistent as “each house was a law unto itself”.

Witness 057 said that he was driven from the College to Smyth's house for Sunday lunch several times and was returned to the College by car. He stated that his housemaster would ask who was going to lunch at Smyth's house and said that it was all above board and not hidden.⁷³

Witness 049, the former partner of Geoff Hewitson, said that he told her that the boys could just sign out for Sunday lunch.⁷⁴ Victim 002 said that the boys had to sign out for lunch on Sundays, but sometimes when the boys visited Smyth's home at other times of the week, nobody from College would know where they were.⁷⁵

Peter Krakenberger told the College in 2017 that boys would have required their parents' permission to go to Smyth's house for lunch on Sundays and for any contact with Smyth during the holidays.⁷⁶ Victim 004 told the reviewers that he disagreed with this observation and said that no parental permission was required to attend Smyth's house for lunch on Sundays.

David Steele said that he had no direct dealings with Smyth, but when boys were asked to attend lunch at John Smyth's house, they sought his permission to attend. At first, he allowed it as he thought it seemed acceptable, but as it became a pattern, he discouraged it and eventually refused to give pupils permission to attend.⁷⁷

Witness 006 told the reviewers that when he was invited to Sunday lunch at Smyth's house in 1979, he asked his housemaster, Jock Macdonald, for permission. He refused to let him attend because his parents had told him they did not want their son to attend, which led to an argument. Jock Macdonald told Witness 006 in 2017 that at the time he had an unpleasant telephone call with Smyth as a result.⁷⁸

When asked about this incident, Jock Macdonald told the reviewers that he did not think the boys should be going off campus and his instinct was that 'it was not right'. He said

⁷² As noted at fn 43, multiple witnesses have described visiting Masters' houses as pupils in the 1970s. For example, Victim 004 described attending a class taught at the home of a Master in the evenings where pupils were allowed to drink wine and use the Master's swimming pool. Victim 002 told the reviewers that they had attended evening lessons in the home of a teacher, where beer was given to the boys. He also recalled going round to the same teacher's house one morning only to find the teacher in his dressing gown. The teacher invited him upstairs where he started taking off his pyjamas and then dressing in front of Victim 002. Witness 013 also referred to Spanish lessons being held in the house of a don.

⁷³ Account of Witness 057.

⁷⁴ Account of Witness 049.

⁷⁵ Account of Victim 002.

⁷⁶ Notes of a meeting with Peter Krakenberger dated 28 January 2017.

⁷⁷ Account of David Steele.

⁷⁸ Account of Witness 006.

that he had conversations with Euan MacAlpine about the Christian Forum and, to a lesser extent, John Smyth having too much influence.⁷⁹

Euan MacAlpine said that although care must be taken, he thought it was perfectly reasonable for house dons to let pupils out for lunch and to have contact with the outside world, on the basis that the school should not be a closed community.

Witness 031, a former pupil of Winchester College, said that he was invited to Smyth's house. He said that normally Smyth would collect them from the College, but on one occasion he cycled to his house himself.⁸⁰

Witness 011, a former pupil of Winchester College, said that he had been invited to Sunday lunch at Smyth's house, but afterwards his mother became suspicious. His parents arranged to meet with Smyth and thought he was "a creep". His father warned Smyth not to see Witness 011 anymore. When Witness 011 was at university out of England, Smyth visited him and tried to cultivate him, however, Witness 011 said Smyth was afraid of his father and he believes this helped to protect him.⁸¹

Witness 022 was a parent of a pupil who was abused by Smyth who became worried about their son's involvement in the Christian Forum and about the influence of Smyth. They wrote to Smyth in January 1979 following a request for their son to become involved in his family's life. Smyth responded on 21 January 1979 stating:

"We have withdrawn the invitation to [your son]; we are disappointed but quite understand and you have my word we shall be absolutely loyal to you about it. I am so glad you went on to raise the matter of all the burdens on [your son].

Please believe we are your greatest allies over this – and very much share your concern. [Your son] has an open invitation to come out to us simply to give him an escape from the pressure for an hour or two. He always puts work first and of course there's never any question of any Christianity or further responsibilities – it's to get away from all that. I'd love to tell you more; my position is a very delicate one vis a vis the school.

But we really are absolutely behind you in this concern. Perhaps I could meet [your spouse] for lunch one day – or even, if it's not too great an imposition, come to you one week-day night?"

Smyth later invited Witness 022 and their spouse to meet with him at an event, but they found him "sinister" and noticed him staring at their son while he was sleeping in the car.⁸²

Some boys attended meetings arranged by Smyth in the home of Peter Krakenberger. The residential building was owned by the College, but Peter Krakenberger had a flat within the house. The meetings took place in a spare bedroom of the house between

⁷⁹ Account of Jock Macdonald.

⁸⁰ Account of Witness 031.

⁸¹ Account of Witness 011.

⁸² Account of Witness 022.

supper and prep during the week and sometimes on Sundays.⁸³ Victim 003 said that the meetings were a highlight in his week because Winchester College was a tough school. He recalled that the boys were given crisps and allowed to play games and watch TV, saying "I remember thinking we were breaking the rules".

Witness 053, who was a pupil at Winchester at the time, said that he attended bible study at Peter Krakenberger's flat and at the flat of a friend of Peter Krakenberger who also attended meetings of the Christian Forum. The man lived above a book shop and Witness 053 described him as being "very creepy". He said he never went back to the man's flat as he felt unsafe there. He said that Peter Krakenberger "worshipped" Smyth. He remembered him giving the boys Jaffa cakes, fizzy drinks and sweets.⁸⁴

Witness 057 said that he went to Peter Krakenberger's house regularly. He recalled drinking cherryade.⁸⁵

Victim 002 said that around 1974 he was invited to Peter Krakenberger's home. He said that by 1975 the meetings were an established event at which they played games and were offered fizzy drinks and snacks, all things which were not part of everyday life within the College. He said it felt "special and safe". In addition, Peter Krakenberger would invite Victim 002 and Victim 003 to watch the New Avengers with him. Peter Krakenberger's home in Culver Mews was a place where Victim 002 would frequently meet Smyth on his own and with others.⁸⁶

Victim 004 said that 35 of the 50 boys in his house were attending Bible studies every week.⁸⁷ Victim A said that eight out of the ten boys in his year and in his house had attended Christian Forum and that those boys went to a weekly meeting at Peter Krakenberger's house for bible study and food and drink.⁸⁸ Witness 011 said that he believes Peter Krakenberger was a "gateway" who was used by Smyth, as he knew that pupils were meeting with Smyth in bedrooms.⁸⁹

When interviewed by Winchester College in 2017, Peter Krakenberger said that he had allowed John Smyth to use his home to meet boys during the week. His flat was located in Culver Mews, several minutes' walk from the College. He accepted that he allowed John Smyth to meet with boys alone in a room, undisturbed.⁹⁰

According to the notes of his interview with the College in 2017, he stated that he "began to suspect when he interrupted one day. Boy on chair, JS sat on the floor looking up at boy. Did not say anything – not for a junior don like him to question a senior member of the Church."⁹¹ The notes do not indicate when this incident occurred.

⁸³ Account of Victim 003.

⁸⁴ Account of Witness 053.

⁸⁵ Account of Witness 057.

⁸⁶ Account of 002.

⁸⁷ Account of 004.

⁸⁸ Account of Victim A.

⁸⁹ Account of Witness 011.

⁹⁰ Notes of a meeting with Peter Krakenberger dated 28 January 2017.

⁹¹ *ibid.*

As set out in the extract from *The Road to Winchester* above, it is clear that John Thorn had some awareness of the contact, including the fact that boys were attending Sunday lunch. He was reassured by meeting John Smyth, whom he described as 'happily married', and by the fact that the barrister "undertook to keep [him] informed of his doings".⁹² Smyth continued to invite boys to his home for Sunday lunch or for a swim in his pool. Smyth's wife, Anne, and the presence of his children at their family luncheon provided a shield of conventional normality and made his home seem like a safe place for boys to visit to enjoy "ordinary family life".

Victim 015 said that when he attended Sunday lunch at Smyth's home, he and Anne appeared to be happy, successful and wealthy. He said they were hospitable, especially to the boys that boarded at the College.⁹³

Witness 050 was close friends with Victims 001, 003 and 005, but was not a member of the Christian Forum. After repeatedly refusing his friends' requests to join the group, he eventually agreed to go to Sunday lunch at Smyth's home. He said there were 20 boys of all ages present, as well as the Smyth family. He said that it was clear that Smyth was attempting to recruit him into the group, as he was given pride of place at the table and was invited into Smyth's study after lunch for a one-on-one talk. Witness 050 said that he did not feel charmed by Smyth and he made it clear to him that he was not interested in becoming involved. As a result, he became separated from his friends. He said it was impossible to speak to them about his concerns regarding Smyth, as he was "met with a wall of defensiveness". He said that none of his friends ever disclosed the abuse to him.⁹⁴

Victim 002 said that he attended Sunday lunches at Smyth's home from 1974 onwards.⁹⁵ Victim 004 said that he was invited to Sunday lunch at his house, which became a focal point for the Christian Forum attendees as a way of getting out of school, having a nice Sunday lunch and playing games in the garden.⁹⁶ Victim A described how he attended Sunday lunch at Smyth's house on several occasions in 1974 and 1975.⁹⁷

Victim 003 said that he thought Smyth used his family as a cover for his abuse. He described attending Sunday lunch at Smyth's house and playing with his younger children. He said that they went skinny dipping in his pool. He recalled using the toilet in the family bathroom while Smyth was in the bath.⁹⁸ Victim 002 also recalled naked swimming in the pool at his house and said that boys could go into the bathroom while someone else was in the bath.⁹⁹ Victim 015 recalled a conversation between Smyth and another victim which took place in the bathroom.¹⁰⁰ Victim 008 said that Smyth normalised nakedness using activities at his house like 'skinny dipping' in the pool.¹⁰¹

⁹² *The Road to Winchester*, quoted fn 62 supra.

⁹³ Account of Victim 015.

⁹⁴ Account of Witness 050.

⁹⁵ Account of Victim 002.

⁹⁶ Account of Victim 004.

⁹⁷ Account of Victim A.

⁹⁸ Account of Victim 003.

⁹⁹ Account of Victim 002.

¹⁰⁰ Account of Victim 015.

¹⁰¹ Account of Victim 008.

Witness 025 said that he remembered going on a sailing outing with Smyth during an Iwerne camp when he was 15 years old. After the sailing, the boys were spraying each other with water from a hose and running around naked in the communal shower when Smyth joined in. He said Smyth had said something like, "we should all be proud to be men", which he took as a way of excusing their embarrassment about seeing one another naked. On multiple occasions, Smyth told him and other boys that they should be proud of their bodies when in the communal showers at the College and spoke to them about whether they felt shy being naked.¹⁰²

Similarly, Victim 004 said that he spent many hours at Smyth's house playing and swimming in the pool, occasionally naked. He said, "it felt like a family home, but there was a darker side". He recalled that in the summer of 1977 Smyth took him into his bedroom and showed him that he kept condoms in the bedside drawer. He said he talked to Victim 004 about his sex life with his wife and it made him feel very uncomfortable.¹⁰³

Victim 004 described finishing his tea in College mid-week and then "racing off" to Smyth's home so that he could be back at the College in time for prep at 7pm. He said that when he returned to the College, nobody would know that he had gone. Sometimes Smyth would wait to pick him up from the College in his car.¹⁰⁴

Victim 025 described how he became involved in the Christian Forum between 1975 and 1978. He said:

"John Smyth was always around the Christian Forum and so I assumed he was a decent person who the school approved of. John Smyth was clever and able; he controlled the group of boys within the Christian Forum."¹⁰⁵

Victim 025 said that he regularly saw Smyth at his house, at Peter Krakenberger's house and in the Christian Forum meetings at the College.

Smyth used the meetings to build intense relationships with the boys and to have conversations with them about sexual activities. Victim 025 stated that during meetings he was asked to describe his sexual thoughts, feelings and activity.¹⁰⁶ Victim 008 said that Smyth exploited the boys' preoccupation with masturbation.¹⁰⁷ Victim 002 said that he encouraged discussion and disclosure of masturbation and impure thoughts so that it became normal conversation within that special group.¹⁰⁸ Victim 004 said some boys were encouraged in conversations with Smyth both to confess and to spy on others in the group.¹⁰⁹

Victim 025 said that he felt compelled to tell Smyth everything he asked of him and he believed that he used techniques of cross-examination on the boys. Victim 025

¹⁰² Account of Witness 025.

¹⁰³ Account of Victim 004.

¹⁰⁴ Account of Victim 004.

¹⁰⁵ Account of Victim 025.

¹⁰⁶ Account of Victim 025.

¹⁰⁷ Account of Victim 008.

¹⁰⁸ Account of Victim 002.

¹⁰⁹ Account of Victim 004.

described how difficult this experience was as a gay teenager, because Smyth advised him to inflict pain on himself in order to control his sexual thoughts. The meetings left him feeling so distressed that sometimes he was unable to return to school.¹¹⁰

Victim 002, Victim 003 and Victim 004 each described the conversations as "intense". Victim 003 said that he knew the conversations were secret and that Smyth did not like it if the boys mentioned anything about the talks in front of others and would shut him down as if he had betrayed a secret. He said this made the conversations feel more special.¹¹¹ Victim 002 also said that the fact that the conversations were secret made them and him special.¹¹²

Victims 002, 003, 005 and 025 described attending meetings with Smyth at the house in Culver Mews when Peter Krakenberger was absent. The boys were questioned about their sexual thoughts, feelings and actions and tested on whether they had read their daily scripture passages.¹¹³

When Victim 003 was criticised for only reading what was asked of him, Smyth told him, "You are not really giving yourself to Jesus and yet you have the capacity to be a great leader".¹¹⁴ He described how receiving positive messages of that kind was in contrast to his experience of staff at Winchester College. When Smyth told Victim 003 that he reminded him of himself as a young man, he felt flattered.

Smyth took a selected group to Bosloe in Cornwall for house parties. The group was known as the "Bosloe boys". The first holiday in Bosloe took place in 1980 and was attended only by university students and not current Winchester pupils. The reviewers have seen no evidence that the College was aware of the trips to Bosloe. However, Victim 002 stated:

"I doubt if what followed would have happened if John Smyth had not been allowed access to Winchester College. Having established his tight circle of disciples by 1979/80 at Winchester College, he then spread his tentacles through them to universities and of course Iwerne Minster".¹¹⁵

8. The Iwerne Camps

Through Smyth, who was a Iwerne trustee from 1970 and later became Chairman of the Trust, and Peter Krakenberger, who was a Iwerne officer, the Christian Forum was linked to the Iwerne camps. Some pupils were invited to attend the Camps, also referred to as "Varsity and Public-School Camps", during the summer holidays.

There was an annual Easter camp, which was marketed to the parents as being an opportunity for revision, and there were three consecutive summer camps, each about

¹¹⁰ Account of Victim 025.

¹¹¹ Account of Victim 003.

¹¹² Account of Victim 002.

¹¹³ Accounts of Victims 002, 003 and 005.

¹¹⁴ Account of Victim 003.

¹¹⁵ Account of Victim 002; as noted elsewhere in the report, Smyth worked with the Iwerne Trust for some time prior to becoming involved with the Christian Forum at Winchester College.

ten days to two weeks long. The camps were based in the grounds of Clayesmore School in the village of Iwerne Minster in Dorset.¹¹⁶

Invitations were extended to selected boys by evangelical leaders and the boys approached their parents for their permission to attend.

Within the camps there was a strict hierarchy, with each person assigned a role such as "Commandant", "Adjutant", "Officer", "Senior Camper" or "Junior Camper". Each camp consisted of approximately 150 men and boys, with 25 Officers, 75 Junior Campers and 50 Senior Campers.¹¹⁷ The camps were staffed by teachers and Chaplains from various schools, who were helped by undergraduates who had attended the camps as boys.

John Woolmer visited the Iwerne summer camps for one week in 1972 as an Officer and again in 1975 and 1976. He described the camps as "both encouraging and disturbing". He observed that "control is at the heart of Iwerne" and said:

"There were daily meetings for officers dominated by David Fletcher and John Smyth who sat on large chairs facing the rest of us. EJ Nash kept a watchful and sometimes critical eye over proceedings... There was a very strong 'shepherding' system. When boys left school, if they went to Oxford/Cambridge they were firmly steered towards St Ebbe's Oxford/the Round Church Cambridge. Discipling was quite fierce...

Why was I disturbed? (1) There was a huge sense of possessiveness. The C of E was just a useful vehicle for influencing a wider circle of potential converts... (2) Much more importantly, the fundamentalist theology would inevitably cause intellectual Wykehamists (and others) to rebel... (3) There was no openness to other points of view. I ran Christian Forum with a wide range of speakers – some from Iwerne (and they were usually very good) ...

On the other hand, Iwerne gave friendship and support to boys whose faith was often under fire in a hostile public-school environment..."¹¹⁸

Victim 004 attended six or seven Iwerne camps between 1978 and 1983. He said that in his opinion, more than 95% of Junior Campers had already converted to evangelical Christianity. He said that the camps were not intended to convert young boys, but to identify boys with the right values and the potential to become part of the elite in the Church of England, the Army and other areas of the establishment and to motivate and encourage them to go on to be "successful" while remaining loyal to the evangelical movement.¹¹⁹

Activities included outward bound and sporting activities with bible studies and discussion groups in the early evening. The speakers were evangelical Christians, including Smyth.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Account of Victim 004.

¹¹⁷ Account of Victim 004.

¹¹⁸ Account of John Woolmer to the Church of England.

¹¹⁹ Account of Victim 004.

¹²⁰ Account of Victim 004.

Victim 004 said that he felt flattered to be invited to the camps and described it as a "heady and powerful experience".¹²¹ Witness 008 said that it was "rather an intense atmosphere... heavy duty happy clappy stuff".¹²² Victim 002 described how he arrived at the Iwerne camps in 1974 or 1975 and felt flattered that young Oxbridge men would be interested in him and listen to his thoughts and ideas. He said, "they were like demi-gods to me". Victim 003 spoke about how Smyth used the camps to exert more influence over him. He said the Iwerne camps were "very Chariots of Fire". He described "being surrounded by older boys giving him attention" coupled with "ice cream and sweets and not much Bible reading".

Both Victims 002 and 003 said that there was an absence of women at the camps and they were only seen in the kitchen.¹²³ Fiona Ashton said that she attended Iwerne camps, where women were referred to as "Lady Helpers" and worked in the kitchen.¹²⁴

The Iwerne Trust Camp Handbook advised Officers to write to boys regularly after they had returned to their homes and schools. The Handbook recommended the Officers write a two-page letter and provided guidance on the content of each paragraph. This was to maintain the bond created at camp, contribute to the boy's feeling like he was part of a "special group", and ensure that membership lasted beyond the camp.¹²⁵

The reviewers have not seen any evidence that pupils were referred to the camps by Winchester College itself, although Witness 034 stated that he was invited to attend by Mark Ashton.¹²⁶ Multiple victims and witnesses stated that invitations were extended to members of the Christian Forum. Victim 008 said that his original invitation to the camp came from the Christian Forum, before he knew Smyth.¹²⁷ Witness 046 recalled attending a Christian Forum meeting at Peter Krakenberger's flat when Peter Wells, a Iwerne leader, came to give a talk on the camps with a slideshow encouraging the boys to attend.¹²⁸

Victim 002 stated that the College was indirectly aware of which pupils attended Iwerne Camps, as staff member Peter Krakenberger and Chaplain Mark Ashton also attended regularly.¹²⁹ Victim 002 recalled an incident where Mark Ashton approached him at a Iwerne Camp and told him that he disapproved of the close relationship with Smyth and the influence he had over him and others.¹³⁰

However, Victim 004 stated that he believed that Winchester College would probably not have known who was attending, as it was seen as a summer activity. He believed that boys were invited to attend on the basis that they had "leadership potential" which would translate into success in their chosen careers in the established profession.¹³¹

¹²¹ Account of Victim 004.

¹²² Account of Witness 008.

¹²³ Accounts of Victim 002 and Victim 003.

¹²⁴ Account of Fiona Ashton.

¹²⁵ Account of Victim 004. The reviewers have not seen a copy of the Handbook.

¹²⁶ Account of Witness 034.

¹²⁷ Account of Victim 008.

¹²⁸ Account of Witness 046.

¹²⁹ Account of Victim 002.

¹³⁰ Account of Victim 002.

¹³¹ Account of Victim 004.

9. Concerns regarding the Christian Forum

This section of the report sets out the background of concerns raised in relation to John Smyth at Winchester College, as recalled by victims and witnesses who participated in this review.

Members of the Christian Forum used their own private phrases and terms, beyond the ordinary 'notions' shared by members of the school community. Non-members were referred to as being "unsound". According to *The Road to Winchester*, both of the College chaplains were considered to be "unsound", as were all of the local clergy and all of the schoolmasters.¹³² Victim 002 and Victim 004 said that they referred to others as "sound" or "keen" or as a "Iwerne man", terms which meant a person was actively evangelical.¹³³

As the Forum grew from 1974 onwards, the effects of its activities spilled over into the College. Discussions held in the Sunday meeting would continue within the school throughout the week. The group began to be seen as divisive by some staff due to its exclusivity and evangelism.

The first evidence of this tension is a cryptic note in the minutes of the Housemasters' meeting on 6 July 1974, in which it was noted under 'Chapel attendance' that, "There was some discussion of private groups".¹³⁴

At the start of the following term, the notes of the Housemasters' meeting of 10 September 1974 stated, "There is some anxiety about the effect on boys of various 'fringe' religious activities. Exchange of information here is important".¹³⁵

The matter was scheduled to be discussed at the next Housemasters' meeting when Paul Bates, who was Senior Chaplain at the time, was to be present, however the minutes of the next meeting, dated 23 September 1974, contain no mention of this issue.

A further reference to the potentially divisive impact of the Christian Forum is contained in the handwritten Annals of House K, dated 16 December 1977:

"However, it is unfortunate to note that there does seem to be signs of dissent lower down the house. This generally concerns the Christian Forum and is an extremely difficult problem to solve. The crux of it is about half the house go to these religious gatherings but are disliked by the others for being hypocrites... This year a compromise has been reached because of the excellent attitude of some members of both parties but I fear that in the next two years there are some people who will not moderate their views. This could lead to further conflict between the two factions."¹³⁶

¹³² *The Road to Winchester*, quoted fn 62 supra.

¹³³ Accounts of Victims 002 and 004.

¹³⁴ Minutes of the meeting of Housemasters, dated 6 July 1974.

¹³⁵ Minutes of the meeting of Housemasters, dated 10 September 1974.

¹³⁶ Handwritten Annals of House K, dated 16 December 1977.

This was written by Witness 051, who was a staff member at the time, but left the College shortly afterwards. He told the reviewers that there was an "us and them" split in the house between the evangelicals and the others. He said that no concerns arose about abuse, but there were concerns about "cultural issues", namely the divisive influence of evangelicalism.¹³⁷

From 1978 onwards, there was a cluster of concerns among parents and staff members at the College regarding Smyth's relationship with pupils.

The first indication of concern is contained in the Annals written by the Head of House K, which stated:

"... The nature of the house has perceptibly changed in the five years I have been here. Whether this is due to the strong Christian core or not I cannot be sure. At one stage previous Heads of Houses were uncertain as to the desirability of such an element in the House. As an outside observer of it I have seen it do no harm provided that the people have been sensible about it and have realised how others may see it if it becomes unnecessarily "evangelical". I am uncertain as to how Mr Smyth fits into all of this: of his work as a counsellor I approve, but I feel that a too frequent intrusion on his part into the life of a House that has no logical connection with him threatens to be detrimental to the Unity of that house."¹³⁸

This indicates that Smyth was providing "counselling" to pupils without any approval process and with the knowledge of the staff. It is unclear exactly what was meant at the time by describing him as a "counsellor", but such a role would normally involve time spent alone with children in a position of trust and authority.

The Housemaster for Kingsgate House from 1970-1985 was Geoff Hewitson. A number of victims and witnesses have referred to his having concerns about Smyth and the Christian Forum.

One victim told the reviewers that they believed that Geoff Hewitson was concerned that the Christian Forum had created a parallel structure to the house system in the College, but that the matter was seen as an issue with evangelism rather than with Smyth himself.¹³⁹

Victim 008 told the reviewers that Geoff Hewitson seemed deeply uncomfortable that Smyth had too much influence, but that he did not challenge this because religion was seen as a positive influence on boys at Winchester College.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Account of Witness 051.

¹³⁸ Handwritten Annals of House K, dated 1978.

¹³⁹ Account of a victim of Smyth who is known to the reviewers, but whose cypher has not been linked to this information to prevent jigsaw identification.

¹⁴⁰ Account of Victim 008.

Victim 002 recalled that his mother had spoken to Geoff Hewitson as she was concerned about the influence of Smyth. He reassured her, saying that it was probably only a passing phase.¹⁴¹

Witness 050, who was a pupil in Kingsgate House, said he was one of only three boys in the House who were not members of the Christian Forum. He said that he had spoken with Geoff Hewitson, whom he described as being "a good man", to express his concern that the house was being taken over by Smyth. He said that later Geoff Hewitson asked to speak with him because Smyth had made a complaint that Witness 050 had been bad-mouthing him and his "organisation". Witness 050 told Geoff Hewitson that he should be rewarded and not punished for expressing his concerns. He said that he was concerned that boys were being "brainwashed" and that boys as young as 13 were being recruited and pressured to attend the Christian Forum as soon as they joined the House.¹⁴²

Victims 002 and 025 told the reviewers that Geoff Hewitson's wife had been terminally ill at the time and he was preoccupied, which they believe could account for the fact that he did not take his concerns any further. Witness 048, who was a pupil in Kingsgate House, supported this assessment. He said that as a result the house was really run by the older boys, although Geoff Hewitson would wander through the house every evening and was accessible to pupils.

Geoff Hewitson is now deceased, and the reviewers spoke with his former partner. She said that when the abuse was made public in 2017, he was horrified, as he had no idea at the time that it was taking place. She also said that he was "pressed" at the time because his wife was dying and that he had broad responsibilities at the College, as he was also Head of Sport.¹⁴³

Geoff Hewitson was interviewed by the College on 21 January 2017 as part of its internal investigation. He said that he was aware that Euan MacAlpine had told Smyth not to come near boys from his house.¹⁴⁴

The second indication of concern in 1978 was described by a victim whose identity is known to the reviewers. He said that his father had reluctantly shown him a letter which he had received from Euan MacAlpine, the Head of Hawkins house from 1977-1981, asking whether he would allow his son to be named as a Godparent to one of Smyth's children. His parents refused the request, which he attributed to their meeting Smyth at a school event and finding him "rather odd".¹⁴⁵

Similarly, Victim 003's parents were also asked if their son would agree to become a Godparent to one of Smyth's children after John and Anne Smyth spent a weekend with Victim 003's family.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ Account of Victim 002. Victim 002 was uncertain when this conversation occurred.

¹⁴² Account of Witness 050.

¹⁴³ Account of Witness 049.

¹⁴⁴ Notes of a conversation with Geoff Hewitson dated 21 January 2017.

¹⁴⁵ Account of a victim known to the reviewers (who asked not to be linked to this information by their cypher).

¹⁴⁶ Account of Victim 003.

The third concern raised in 1978 was described by Euan MacAlpine in an email dated 28 January 2017, as part of the internal investigation conducted by the College. He stated that in 1978 he had confronted Smyth and accused him of inviting "only good-looking boys" to his house. He stated that Smyth "curled into a ball and admitted he had gone too far".¹⁴⁷ He said he was sitting in an armchair and then "slowly went into the foetal position, knees right up to his chest and arms holding them".¹⁴⁸ He said, "we all suspected but never got together to discuss it."¹⁴⁹

One victim who spoke with the reviewers attributed this comment to hindsight bias, as he does not believe that the staff at Winchester College suspected that Smyth was abusing boys.¹⁵⁰

The fourth recorded concern from that period is contained in the minutes of the Housemasters' meeting dated 22 January 1979: "John Smyth: there seemed to be a lack of communication between JS and the Housemasters, who like to be kept informed".¹⁵¹ This seems to support many victims' description of the Christian Forum and its speakers as a close-knit and secretive group which operated independently.

The final recorded concern was that Witness 022, a parent of a pupil who was abused by Smyth, said that they had written to Euan MacAlpine in 1978 about the influence of the Christian Forum and the risk posed to their son by homosexuality.¹⁵² The reviewers were shown a copy of the response from Euan MacAlpine, dated 24 January 1979, which stated:

"Many thanks for your letter and I am very sorry you are still having some sort of bother with John Smyth. The whole thing really is most awkward since none of us Housemasters can tackle Smyth directly.

Last night we had a House Don's meeting, at which one of the Chaplins who knows John Smyth very well, Mark Ashton, was present and one or two of us related quite a few instances of Smyth's slightly irresponsible behaviour, without mentioning the names of any boys. We hope that we can eventually get reasonable communication and understanding between Smyth and us but it really is most difficult since people like him are motivated by their blind faith and, obviously, are totally insensitive to other people's views.

In the meantime I will, of course, try to keep an eye on [your son] and see that he doesn't get too closely involved with Smyth. Incidentally, I think your letter to Smyth is an absolute model of tact and, if he carries on with his proposals, he really must be the most insensitive man in the world. I am sorry about all this and I hope we, Winchester College, will not appear quite so helpless in the future."
[sic]

¹⁴⁷ Email from Euan MacAlpine dated 28 January 2017.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Account of a victim known to the reviewers (who asked not to be linked to this information by their cypher).

¹⁵¹ Minutes of meeting of Housemasters, dated 22 January 1979.

¹⁵² Account of Witness 022.

In a subsequent letter dated 30 January 1979, Euan MacAlpine said that John Thorn would be seeing Smyth that day, but Witness 022 said that the family received no feedback from that meeting:

"A brief note about Smyth. The Head Man is seeing him today and, when everything has blown over, I shall go and see him and try and establish decent guidelines within which he should work, but I shan't go until the business about [your son] and being God-parent is settled. Could you possibly let me know as soon as this is resolved one way or the other?"

Apart from the concerns expressed by staff and parents, the Christian Forum was the subject of comment in the student paper, called *The Dosser's Organ*. The reviewers have considered this material on the basis that student publications can be a useful method of identifying the contemporaneous views of the pupils.

The June 1979 edition of *The Dosser's Organ* contained an editorial referring to the Christian Forum.¹⁵³ The article stated:

"As the survey in the late 'Wykehamist' revealed, the school is deeply divided over the issue; but it also revealed a more pertinent fact, that the school is very much divided into Christian and non-Christian houses. Or should I say Christian Forum and non-Christian Forum houses?"

This is an institution which, although in principle should provide a good opportunity for Christians to meet and discuss their faith together, has turned into a dangerous clique, the members of which assume an air of radiant holiness every Sunday morning and lose it equally quickly at 12:45.

The reasons for this are difficult to pin down, but the main one is that the leaders of the Forum are totally disconnected from the official school chaplains. This means that to be a Christian and a member of Christian Forum does not necessarily go hand in hand and that, quite apart from their rift with the rest of the school, the members are separated off even from other Christians. For to join the Forum is not a natural result of being a Christian, but a conscious decision to join a club: and any club of a spiritualist kind is bound to involve its members more closely and intimately."

The Editorial recommended placing the school chaplains in charge of the Christian Forum so that it would cease to be a "breakaway group with a severely tarnished reputation" and so the school could be relieved of "a source of much bitterness and divisiveness". It identified that there were certain houses where almost all pupils were members of the Christian Forum ("Chawker's and Beloe's are members almost to a man") while others which were united in opposition to the group.

Under an article entitled, 'Tolerance', it said:

"The Christians of Winchester College lead what would be for those of us without their faith, a life of unbearable asceticism. They isolate themselves from three-

¹⁵³ *The Dosser's Organ*, Issue No. 1, dated 22 June 1979.

quarters of the school and nine-tenths of the country. Many of them stay up all night praying and meditating. ... Some of them are even said to scourge each other with whips. Their extraordinary austere existence is lightened only once a week; for half an hour before Christian Forum when they eat a joyous feast of coffee and custard creams... The main hope seemed to be that the whole school could eventually be converted to a form of Christianity in which everyone would share the same ideals: no sex, no sex, and no sex (in that order)."

The article also cryptically referred to Peter Krakenberger and to John Smyth's legal client Mary Whitehouse:

"The Christians desire to set up under Ayatollah Cracklingburger [sic], a "Christian Republic" man, on principles taken from the holy publications of Mary Whitehouse's "National Viewers and Listeners Association", does not hold any appeal for most Wykehamists."

Witness 013, a former pupil of Winchester College, shared similar criticisms of the Christian Forum. He said that it was "a mini cult" and he found it obnoxious. He said that he shared his concerns with a retired curate who had been brought in to support the chaplaincy at the College and they talked about the Christian Forum and Smyth having too much sway in the school. He said they were seen as "godly children" and that senior boys were seen as more important than junior masters.¹⁵⁴

While information sharing among staff was limited, Witness 042 recalled that there was a discussion in a Housedons' meeting about the recruitment methods used for the Christian Forum. He told the reviewers that someone said that Smyth and Peter Krakenberger targeted new boys when they were very vulnerable... invited them to tea and made them feel special... got them 'signed up' to the Christian Forum and if any then left they were 'damned'. A colleague of Witness 042 said that he had one boy, who had experienced this, in a terrible state. Witness 042 described the discussion as relating to concern about the lack of involvement of the College Chaplains.

The reviewers have seen no information which suggests that the above concerns led to any action being taken by the College, other than the appointment of new chaplaincy staff by John Thorn in an attempt to link the Christian Forum into the school. As John Thorn stated to *The Times* in 2017, he "may have dropped his guard because, as head of a Christian school he felt his job was not to "dim" the "evangelical" fire of the Christian Forum, "but rather to keep an eye on it".¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Account of Witness 013.

¹⁵⁵ 'Headmaster: I wish I'd told police of Smyth abuse fears', Nicholas Hellen, *The Times*, 12 February 2017. Accessed online 23.09.21: <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/headmaster-i-wish-id-told-police-of-smyth-abuse-fears-cc55lmhhq>>. Just as for other comments attributed to John Thorn in 2017, the reviewers have taken into account the recent findings in relation to his capacity to participate in the review, and acknowledge that these factors may have been extant in 2017 and may have affected his recall or his approach to questioning regarding Smyth.

10. 1977 – 1982 Emotional, spiritual, sexual and physical abuse perpetrated by John Smyth

This section of the report provides a narrative account of the emotional, spiritual, physical and sexual abuse suffered by the victims of John Smyth.

Victim 001

As stated above, Victim 001 is now deceased and was therefore unable to provide any account to the reviewers. He was a pupil of Winchester College who became involved in the Christian Forum and developed a very close relationship with Smyth from a young age.

He has been referred to in the accounts of other victims and witnesses. For example, Victim A said that Smyth focused on Victim 001 because he was so good at sport. He said that the film *Chariots of Fire* was part of their culture. Similarly, Victim 015 said that he was "a Captain of [sport] and very dashing".¹⁵⁶ Witness 047 said that he believes Smyth chose Victim 001 because he was charismatic and was a powerful boy in the school. They described him as being good at everything and also good looking.¹⁵⁷

Witness 013 also said that they believed John Smyth's recruitment of Victim 001 was strategic, as he was a senior boy with great influence. They said that senior boys often had more influence than junior masters and his involvement would have neutralised opposition from the housemasters.¹⁵⁸

Witness 014 said that Smyth asked Victim 001 to become the godfather to his son. They said that Victim 001's parents were furious, but that he did eventually become his godparent.¹⁵⁹

Victim 015 described Victim 001 as becoming part of an "inner core" around Smyth with Victim 002 and Victim 003. He said that he felt uncomfortable about the intensity of their relationship. He said that he went on holiday with Smyth and a number of other victims, including Victim 001, including a sailing trip to France, a holiday in North Cornwall and a larger holiday to South Cornwall in the spring of 1981.¹⁶⁰

Victim 005 said that after he left Winchester College, Smyth's control came through Victim 001, whom he described as being "like the victim of victims" and as being brainwashed by Smyth. He said:

"There came a point where you were talking to people like [Victim 001], you knew you weren't talking to [Victim 001], you were talking to Smyth but he wasn't there in the room. He wasn't where the conversation was taking place, he was back in Winchester or he was in court in London, wherever but he was there

¹⁵⁶ Account of Victim 015.

¹⁵⁷ Account of Witness 047.

¹⁵⁸ Account of Witness 013.

¹⁵⁹ Account of Witness 014.

¹⁶⁰ Account of Victim 015.

because it was his language, it was his control, it was his manipulation, it was his words."¹⁶¹

Victim 004 said that he remembered Victim 001 telling him that he had been beaten by Smyth for years. He told him that he was beaten before a game of Winchester Football in 1978 for the sin of pride. Victim 001 was forced to play the game while wearing dressings because of the injuries he had suffered.¹⁶² He said that Victim 001 tried to normalise the beatings in conversation with Victim 004, that he told him it was all fine, that it had been happening for years and that it was what people did.

Victim 004 was beaten by Victim 001 and Smyth on 2 January 1982.¹⁶³

Although there is evidence that Victim 001 inflicted severe beatings on other victims at the direction of Smyth, including Victim 002, Victim 004 and Victim A, it is clear from the accounts provided to the reviewers that he was subjected to grooming and was also himself the victim of brutal physical abuse by Smyth. Smyth kept him in what would today be described as a coercive and controlling relationship. For the purposes of this review, he is therefore being treated as a victim, first and foremost.

Victim 002

Victim 002 met John Smyth when he was 13 years old. He was invited to Sunday lunch at his house and said that he welcomed this because Sundays were particularly lonely and unstructured at school.

He said that the College provided no pastoral care and described the boarding environment as "a place of immense emotional deprivation and brutality". Women were rarely seen and were not viewed as being academically equal. He said that many housemasters were bachelors and there was no attention to well-being or warmth or material care. Victim 002 said that he was desperate for affection and for adult direction.

He described a process of grooming, with Smyth giving him individual attention. He said that he would see him in the holidays, even outside of the Iwerne camps, and that he had taken him sailing and skiing. Smyth built up a relationship with other members of Victim 002's family, including his father, even visiting him overseas. One day Victim 002 found his father and Smyth praying together. He said, "John Smyth took over my life".

He said that Smyth's favourite book was called *Quiet Talks on Power* and he referred to this and other Bible passages frequently in conversations in which he described sexual thoughts and acts as the blockage preventing people from experiencing God's love, power and forgiveness. This led Victim 002 to feel guilt about masturbation and sexual thoughts throughout his teenage years.

Smyth told the boys that they had been chosen by God to do great things and that he had been sent by God to be his "spiritual father" on Earth. As their spiritual father, he

¹⁶¹ Account of Victim 005.

¹⁶² Account of Victim 004.

¹⁶³ Account of Victim 004.

said he had the right and duty to discipline "his sons". He quoted the proverb, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him diligently". He told the boys that they could show gratitude to Jesus by nailing their sins to the cross. This was the rationale he used for the infliction of physical abuse.

Victim 002 said that before Easter 1977 a small group of boys met with Smyth in his study at his home in Morestead and agreed a deal not to masturbate over the holidays and a punishment to be imposed if they did.

He was first beaten by Smyth at the age of 17, in the autumn of 1978. He was beaten with six strokes using a gym shoe. The beatings progressed to the use of a cane. On one occasion, he was subjected to a beating of 800 strokes, which lasted all day. This took place in a dormitory of a school house of Clayesmore School, where the summer Iwerne Camps took place. Victim 002 said that he thought it had been rented for the purpose by Smyth and took place on the day following the end of the Iwerne camps one year.

Some aspects of the abuse were sexual in nature. Smyth encouraged the twisting of nipples among the group and also did this himself. Victim 002 was beaten on the buttocks, but if Smyth marked his legs or back, he would apologise. He kissed and caressed Victim 002 on his neck after the beatings.

Victim 002 said that he recalled "melanin" type pads being used to stem the flow of blood after beatings. He said that he wore dark or black trousers so that the blood stains could not be seen. The corduroy fabric stuck to the wounds as they healed, which he described as being immensely painful, and sometimes when he was obliged to return to Morestead from his university weekly he was not beaten because his previous wounds had not healed sufficiently.

Initially, the beatings took place in the garden shed at Smyth's house. The original shed was replaced with a larger, purpose-built soundproofed shed in 1981.

The beatings continued after he left Winchester College, when he moved to university. This was when it intensified. He remained part of Smyth's inner circle and participated in the trips to Bosloe. He said that the first Bosloe holiday was in 1980 and was attended only by those who were then at university. Smyth rented a large National Trust property for a "Christian house party". Victim 002 was beaten by Smyth in a shed in the garden of Bosloe House.

Victim 002 travelled overseas after leaving Winchester College. Smyth arranged for him to travel with another member of the group during his time away so he could keep an eye on him. While overseas, he fell in love with a young woman, but Smyth made him end the relationship. He forced him to eradicate all memories of the woman, including by destroying her letters and photographs and obliging him to return a gift of silk pyjamas that she had given him.

During his first term of university, when Victim 002 had returned to the UK, he tried to break away from Smyth but suffered intense psychological distress as a result, feeling like he was defying God and was sentenced to eternal damnation. He said that every

moment of every day was like a living hell and he was close to a nervous breakdown, as he felt unable to break the code of loyalty and secrecy imposed by his abuser.

When, under enormous pressure from his abuser, he "returned to the fold", he was required to keep in touch regularly with John Smyth to show that he was fully committed. He said, "I had surrendered to John my ability to make important decisions for myself. He essentially controlled my life. I was in his grip".

He said that in order to prove his repentance for trying to break away, Smyth made him travel back to his home near Winchester each week for a check and, if his wounds permitted, to be beaten with the cane to "keep him on the straight and narrow". He said he believed that Smyth knew that he would do anything to avoid the psychological despair of feeling abandoned by God and of being outside the group. For Victim 002, the real damage done by Smyth was the mental hell he created for his victims by instilling a sense of overwhelming guilt and then creating a psychological framework where it appeared to the victim that the only way to remain accepted and to experience relief was to be beaten.

Victim 002 was also sent to check on other members of what he called their "tight secret group". On one occasion he travelled out of England because Smyth feared someone was "backsliding".

The last time Victim 002 was beaten was in December 1981 or January 1982. In the early 1980s the number and severity of the beatings increased and on one occasion he was given over 1,000 strokes and on another occasion the beating lasted all day.

He said that initially Smyth had a fixation on what he perceived as sexual sins, including masturbation, but over time anything and everything became a justification for a beating, including pride, lack of gratitude, lying, lack of commitment and also having improper thoughts. Victim 002 described this as "Orwellian", with Smyth policing his thoughts.

In the summer of 1982, Victim 002 attended a Christian camp in North Foreland Lodge (an Independent Girls School used in the holidays for camps run by the Stewards Trust). At the camp, he disclosed the abuse to David MacInnes, a Canon in the Church of England, who told him never to see Smyth again. He attributed the fall of Smyth's "mad sick cult" to the courage of Victim 003.

Victim 002 described in detail the impact of the abuse upon his life. He told the reviewers that it had taken years to recover and to rediscover his identity with the aid of intensive therapy. He said:

"... that horrific experience cast a dark painful shadow throughout my twenties and beyond. What started nearly forty years ago in that garden shed is a lifetime away now but is also ever present."

Victim 003

Victim 003 was a member of the Christian Forum and attended the Iwerne Camps for six years.

He spoke of Winchester College in the 1970s as a hard place, saying that boys did not receive positive messages from staff and were instead told to "just get on with it". Victim 003 said that he felt a constant worry that he was not good enough.

John Smyth groomed Victim 003 and made him feel special by focusing attention on him and reinforcing their relationship with secret talks and positive comments. He described how Smyth spent a weekend with his parents, which made him feel special. He said that Smyth would wait for him the car outside on a weekday at 5:30pm to collect him from College and return him by 7pm. He said that it was incredible because a top barrister was prioritising their meetings and waiting just for him. He said that Smyth would practice his opening speeches and summing up of cases with Victim 003, who was "very bowled over" that a famous barrister who was on TV was singling him out as special.

Smyth first physically abused Victim 003 when he was 17 years old. Victim 003 confessed to him some wrongdoing and told him he was feeling disgusted by his behaviour. Smyth put his arms around him to comfort him while he cried. He agreed he would not tell the College or others and negotiated a punishment. Victim 003 said that he was terrified of being publicly exposed.

Victim 003 said that he had been beaten by John Smyth in the shed at his house over the course of 4 years, until it almost became normal. He said that in 1981 Smyth had replaced his shed with one which was soundproofed so that nobody could hear the beatings. He said that he was careful to ensure that the wounds on Victim 003 were not visible.

The abuse continued after Victim 003 left to attend university. He said that he could not get away from Smyth even there. He had to call him every week from a telephone box and said, "I could not get away from him, he always knew what you were doing, it was as if all of us were informants".

The beatings came to an end in late January or early February 1982, when Victim 003 attempted to commit suicide. In early January, he told Smyth that he felt suicidal. He described feeling desperate and like he was going mad. He said that Smyth had said that he was to come to him in Winchester for his 21st birthday beating and that others would be present. Victim 003 said that he was "sick with fear" and knew he could no longer do it. He tried to kill himself because of his pain and guilt and because he was terrified of being beaten again.

Ten days before his suicide attempt, Victim 003 sent an anonymous letter to the Commandant of the Iwerne Trust, David Fletcher, saying "When will someone stop this disgusting activity going on in John Smyth's garden shed?" He also wrote to Smyth saying that he would not be coming and that it had to stop, but Smyth continued to make arrangements for him to attend and be beaten.

He described himself as having been "badly damaged by what Smyth did to him". He said that he blamed himself for being too weak to protect himself from his abuser.

Victim 004

Victim 004 said that he found that Winchester College offered an excellent academic education in the 1970s and stated, "a lot of the dons were academics, still actively researching and writing textbooks... we were lucky to be taught by great minds, the educational offer was rounded". He said that sport was encouraged, however he felt that boys "were not looked after" or given pastoral care.¹⁶⁴

He said that many teachers did whatever they wanted and gave the example of a teacher who taught a class in the evenings at his home near the College allowing them to use the Master's swimming pool and share a glass of wine with him.

Victim 004 described joining the Christian Forum at Winchester College. He became an evangelical Christian in approximately 1976, after converting during a meeting at Peter Krakenberger's house. He started attending Iwerne Camps in 1977 or 1978. He became an officer and was running Bible studies in his house at school.

He said that a cult was allowed to develop in the school, with its own policies and language and its own ways of doing things, which continued when the members left for university. He said that members felt they were special and elite. He said:

"We would come and go around the school rules and were never challenged by staff. I think those that were difficult about it such as [his Housemaster] were seen as being anti-Christian".

Smyth gave him time and attention, having lunch with him regularly and attending his house nearly once a week by the time he was 17 years old. He would also see Victim 004 weekly at Peter Krakenberger's house. He attended events with Victim 004 and even spent time with his parents. Victim 004 contrasted the attention and positive reinforcement he received from Smyth against the approach taken by the College, which did not make him feel like his thoughts or feelings were important.¹⁶⁵

Victim 004 said that before he left Winchester College, he was unaware that Smyth was beating other boys. He travelled overseas after leaving school and stepped away from the evangelical movement. When he returned to the UK, he went to university and re-joined the friendship group of some of the boys who had been involved in the Christian Forum. Many of them attended the Round Church, where Mark Ruston was the preacher. Victim 004 also reconnected with Smyth.

In late 1981, Victim 004 was asked to go to Smyth's house near Winchester. It was during this visit that he was beaten for the first time. He was now over the age of 18. He was given 20 strokes with a cane and he described it as "excruciatingly painful".

Victim 004 said that he was beaten by Smyth for a second time in the shed at his house on 2 January 1982. He undressed beforehand. He said that first Smyth beat him and then Victim 001 beat him. He said that Victim 001 beat him "with horrendous severity". The beating followed disclosure to Smyth of the fact that Victim 004 was still in touch

¹⁶⁴ Account of Victim 004.

¹⁶⁵ Account of Victim 004.

with a girl he had met while he was overseas. Afterwards, he got into Smyth's swimming pool to try to stop the immediate pain of his injuries.

He said that the second beating was ten times more severe than the first and his injuries following that beating were extraordinarily bad welts that seeped blood. He had to wear dressings and Victim 001 had to come to his rooms at university several days later to change the dressings.

Victim 004 spoke about another student who Smyth asked to agree to be beaten, but who refused. He was consequently cast out of the group.

Victim 004 said that in January or early February 1982, he became aware that a non-Winchester victim had approached Mark Ruston at the Round Church and disclosed the abuse to him. Shortly afterwards, Mark Ruston contacted Victim 004 and they met to discuss what was happening. Mark Ruston told him, "this is crazy, this is evil, this is absolutely wrong". He met with Mark Ruston regularly over the course of the following months and he offered him support.

Victim 004 said that Smyth had an almost hypnotic influence and made him feel like he deserved to be beaten and that it was right. He said, "we would have walked on hot coals for him".

Victim 005

Victim 005 said that when he came to Winchester, he had no religious faith, but he saw that there was a Christian revival going on in the school and many of his contemporaries were becoming Christians. When he was 16 years old, he converted to Christianity and started attending Christian Forum.

Before he joined the Christian Forum, he had no knowledge of John Smyth, but he said that he was a regular attendee at the meetings. He met Smyth when he was invited to attend Sunday lunch at his house, after he learned through other members of the group that Victim 005 wanted to become a barrister. Smyth picked him up from the College in his Volvo and took him home to meet his family.

Victim 005 said that after that date, Smyth took him under his wing and gave him a kind of unofficial pupillage (training to become a barrister).¹⁶⁶ He took him to court and into his chambers. He said, "I was incredibly flattered, incredibly privileged, fascinated with the law, fascinated by the cases, fascinated by court experience and he was clearly very good at his job."

Around the summer of 1978, Smyth started talking to Victim 005 about total commitment to the Christian faith. After he left Winchester College, Smyth stayed in regular touch with him. He would speak to him about sexual purity and holiness and was concerned about Victim 005 having lustful thoughts or becoming involved in masturbation.

¹⁶⁶ Supra, fn. 34.

Victim 005 attended Iwerne camps in the summer of 1978 and 1979 because his friends were attending, and this renewed his contact with Smyth. He said that "Iwerne was embedded in the culture at Winchester College" and in relation to Smyth he said his friends were "very, very intimately involved in his life, they were almost like disciples of his". He described them as losing their identity and individuality because they were so overwhelmed and controlled by Smyth.

Smyth continued to contact and visit him at university. He forbade him from watching films other than the movie *Chariots of Fire* and controlled his participation in university activities. He said:

"It was very strict, it was very controlling, it was very religious, it was very legalistic. All the advice, all the coaching, all the mentoring that was coming from him during that timeframe, it felt like it was becoming more and more of a cult."

He said that the cult was shrouded by secrecy. He said, "You never took a vow of secrecy with your mouth but everyone was secretive; we were secretive in relation to the school and each other, so we didn't even know each other's stories as victims at all."

Victim 005 said that much of Smyth's control came through Victim 001, who was attending the same university as him and who he described as being brainwashed by Smyth. He said, "there came a point where you were talking to people like [Victim 001], you knew you weren't talking to [Victim 001], you were talking to Smyth but he wasn't there in the room... he was there because it was his language, it was his control, it was his manipulation, it was his words".¹⁶⁷

After Victim 005 began a relationship with a woman at university, Smyth began a concerted campaign to bring him back into the sphere of his control. A fellow student was so disturbed by the harassment and the level of control directed at Victim 005 that he confronted Smyth. The student "got the full wrath of Smyth" and was so disturbed by the experience that it destabilised him emotionally and he failed his university exams as a result.

The psychological pressure from Smyth became so great that Victim 005 agreed to stop seeing his girlfriend temporarily. The separation was monitored by Victim 001 and ultimately Victim 005 ended the relationship at the direction of Smyth.

After the breakup, Smyth asked Victim 005 to visit him in Winchester. He told him that he had to 'nail the sin of his relationship to the cross and do something for Jesus'. He left a copy of the book *Quiet Talks on Power* by Victim 005's bed and instructed him to read a chapter that evening. The following morning, Smyth read to him from the Bible, from Hebrews Chapter 12, about fathers disciplining children. He then began to talk about beatings, referred to the need to "not spare the rod" and told him that he had beaten his friends. He said:

¹⁶⁷ Supra, fn. 161.

"I take them up to the shed in the garden and this is their way, and this will be your way of nailing all your sins to the cross and doing what Jesus did".

He then asked Victim 005 to consent to be beaten. Victim 005 describes how he felt that he had no choice because of the enormous pressure placed on him, because of Smyth's control over him and because of the implications of saying no. He said yes, but he believed he was agreeing to the kind of mild corporal punishment which was, at the time, lawful: "six of the best".

He was taken to the shed, where he saw canes in the corner, adult nappies, bandages, creams and ointments. Smyth told him to pray and locked arms with him. He told him that a "moral fall" as serious as his relationship "requires serious measures". Victim 005 became very frightened and felt paralysed. Smyth made him strip and bent him over a bench. He struck him with the cane so brutally and so many times that he bled, and he was afraid that Smyth was going to kill him. He collapsed onto the ground and it was only then that the beating stopped.

Afterwards, Smyth was unusually kind to Victim 005, which he believes is because he was afraid that he would report him.

Victim 005 said that he was able to escape from Smyth because he met a woman and became engaged to her. He said that Smyth believed that when you got engaged or married then there was no need for the beatings because you would be in a relationship with what Victim 005 described as Smyth's ideal of the "good Christian woman, nice and submissive, she's going to do what she's told...".

In February 1982, Victim 003 tried to commit suicide. Victim 005 said that he knew immediately that Smyth had driven him to that point. He visited Victim 003 in hospital. Afterwards, he had no further contact with Smyth.

Victim 005 was critical of the state of safeguarding in the school under John Thorn's leadership. He disclosed to the reviewers that he had previously been the victim of a separate sexual assault at Winchester College. He said that because he had been a boarder from a very young age, he had not experienced family or known what it was to have a father's regular input and presence and that this made him more vulnerable to Smyth's attention. He recalled Smyth telling him that God was their father in heaven, but he was their "spiritual father" on earth and that the boys were like his sons. Victim 005 described the actions of Smyth as being "religious abuse".

Victim 007

Victim 007 has not been in contact with the reviewers. The reviewers are aware that he was the victim of abuse because his account was included in the Ruston Report in 1982.

Victim 007 met John Smyth at Iwerne Camp. In the summer of 1977 or in 1978, Smyth caught Victim 007 shoplifting. He offered him a choice: either he would report the theft

to his parents and the school, or he would keep the matter secret if Victim 007 submitted to a beating at Smyth's home.¹⁶⁸

The beating was administered with a cane in the summer house of his home near Winchester.¹⁶⁹ Further beatings took place in the following two school terms.

Victim 008

Victim 008 was a member of the Christian Forum and attended Iwerne camps several times. He recalled John Smyth attending meetings as a regular speaker and was invited to Sunday lunch at his home.¹⁷⁰

As noted above, he said that Smyth had an 'intense conversation' with him in his study where he explained that some of the other boys used beating as a way of making amends for transgressions. He used biblical references to justify the beatings.

Victim 008 was first beaten by Smyth when he was 15 years old. The beatings occurred four or five times each year until he was 19 years old. He said that the fact that others were doing it legitimised the activity and he did not question it.

During more than one of the beatings Smyth was naked. Victim 008 recalled him sitting on the bed next to him after he had been beaten, naked and with his penis visible.

Victim 008 said that he interpreted the beatings as being God's will and the rationale appeared to be rock solid. He did not realise that what was happening was wrong for several years afterwards. He described Smyth as pushing the idea that he was part of a special group and that God had great plans for them. He said, "it was a cult".

Victim 008 travelled overseas after leaving Winchester College. When he returned, he said he knew he had to make amends for his transgressions, so he went to the camp at Iwerne Minster to meet Smyth for a beating. He was beaten in a small house in the grounds of Iwerne Minster.

After that date, Victim 008 was able to break away from Smyth. He said that he had a very difficult time and it was almost a crisis of faith. He cut himself off from the Evangelical group, which included his friends. He described losing his faith in institutions as a result of the abuse and said that he was no longer religious.

Victim 010

Victim 010 has not been in contact with the reviewers. The information about his experience of physical abuse by Smyth has been provided by other victims.

¹⁶⁸ Victim 004 informed the reviewers that this took place in 1977, but in the Ruston Report the date given for this incident is 1978. The reviewers were unable to speak with Victim 007 to confirm the date when this took place.

¹⁶⁹ The Ruston Report, paragraph 2.

¹⁷⁰ Account of Victim 008.

Victim 004 said that John Smyth would visit young men at university without warning, especially if he thought they were "drifting away" from him. On one occasion in February 1981, he drove several hundred miles to visit Victim 010 for 48 hours.¹⁷¹

Victim 004 said that Victim 010 was beaten in the shed at Smyth's house in April 1981 while Victim 015 was present, although Victim 015 denied that this took place.¹⁷²

Victim 015

Victim 015 attended Winchester College from the age of 13. Most of the other pupils were boarders. He said that approximately half of the boys in his house, which was Beloes or House K, attended Christian Forum.

He said that after attending Christian Forum meetings, at the age of 14 he was invited to attend the Iwerne summer camps. He said that he met Smyth at the camps, where he was among the leadership group.

He was invited to Sunday lunch at Smyth's house, along with other boys from the Christian Forum. He said that over lunch Smyth would encourage the boys in their Christian life and would share in bible study.

After leaving Winchester, he went to Cambridge University and continued to attend Iwerne camps as a leader. He went on holidays with Smyth and other members of the Christian Forum, including Victim 001, Victim 003 and Victim 005.

He was beaten by Smyth in his garden shed in 1981. Smyth told him that other people had found the beatings helpful for self-discipline. He made him remove his trousers and underpants and invited him to confess to a number of different sins. He was beaten with between 40-50 strokes of a cane. He suffered severe bruising as a result of the beating.

He did not return to Smyth's house afterwards, although he was encouraged to do so.

In February of 1982, a friend of his at Cambridge, who had not been a pupil at Winchester College, came to visit him and disclosed that he had been beaten by Smyth. He told him that he had disclosed the abuse to Mark Ruston and Victim 015 shared with him that he had also been beaten.

As a result of this meeting, he visited Mark Ruston and told him about the abuse. He said that Mark Ruston was "clearly shaken and shocked by the whole thing" and said that he would deal with it.

David Fletcher visited him, and Victim 015 disclosed the abuse to him. He said that after that meeting, "everything went quiet". He said:

"Peter Krakenberger had apparently offered his resignation to the Headmaster John Thorn as he had headed up the Christian Forum, but John Thorn refused, believing (quite rightly in my understanding) that it had had nothing to do with

¹⁷¹ Account of Victim 004.

¹⁷² Account of Victim 004.

Peter. I never heard what happened to John Smyth, other than he had no more involvement with Iwerne and had moved away from the Winchester area."¹⁷³

He said that he believed that Peter Krakenberger genuinely knew nothing about the abuse.

Victim 015 said of the influence of John Smyth, "I have almost over the years, in my mind, put it in the category of cult, it is almost like a cult in that we weren't obviously vulnerable adults in one sense but we had been groomed through quite a long phase".¹⁷⁴

Victim 025

Victim 025 described his involvement in the Christian Forum from 1975 – 1978. He was questioned intensely by John Smyth about his reading of passages from the Scripture, about his sexual thoughts and actions.¹⁷⁵

In 1978, he disclosed to Smyth that he was gay, which was something he had been struggling with. Victim 025 said that Smyth abused him by using the Bible and Scriptures to make him hurt himself. He said that Smyth advised him to inflict pain upon himself to control his sexual thoughts. He told him he had to "do anything to give himself pain" to stop the "sinful homosexual yearnings".

He told Victim 025 that his homosexuality meant he would not be able to enter "the kingdom of heaven nor live among the righteous on earth". He described in graphic detail the pleasure of heterosexual sex to Victim 025 and used Bible verses to support his statements.

Victim 025 said that on at least one occasion in the spare bedroom in Peter Krakenberger's house, Smyth lent across and squeezed Victim 025's genitals tightly. Smyth told him that they should be "a source of pain not pleasure".

Victim 025 described the actions of Smyth as being "spiritual abuse". He explained that for a long time he blamed himself and his sexuality and that this meant Smyth had total control over him, because he held his biggest secret.

As a result of Smyth's abuse, Victim 025 attempted suicide by poisoning in 1978. He said that he felt unable to cope or to see any way out of the mess.

He was very ill following his suicide attempt and a friend alerted a Housemaster.¹⁷⁶ While recovering, Victim 025 was able to develop the strength and distance to pull away from Smyth's influence. In doing so, however, he had to step away from his inner circle of friends at a time when he needed them most.

¹⁷³ Account of Victim 015.

¹⁷⁴ Account of Victim 015.

¹⁷⁵ Account of Victim 025.

¹⁷⁶ The identity of the Housemaster is known to the reviewers, but has been removed from this section to prevent jigsaw identification.

Victim A

As described above, Victim A said that he went to Sunday lunch at Smyth's house several times in 1974 and 1975. He said that he went to weekly meetings at Peter Krakenberger's house for bible study and food and drinks and that Smyth sometimes attended those meetings. He did not attend Iwerne camps while at Winchester College.

He reconnected with Smyth while he was at university and attended the winter session of the Iwerne camps, which was for those of university age and older. He said, "I went on to become a committed disciple of his".

He was beaten multiple times. His final beating was of 400 strokes and was administered by Smyth and Victim 001, because Smyth did not have the energy to deliver all the strokes himself.¹⁷⁷ He was beaten on four different areas of his body because after a certain number of strokes his skin became too broken.

Victim B

Victim B attended the Christian Forum at Winchester College in the 1970s. He also attended Iwerne camps. He described going to prayer meetings and eating crisps at Peter Krakenberger's house, but did not recall Smyth attending.

Victim B met Smyth at Winchester College and was invited to lunch at Smyth's house with other boys. He said that the meals were "friendly family lunches" and the school had no problem with him attending as it was seen as being "family time". He said that he never witnessed any inappropriate behaviour there.

After leaving Winchester College, he received an invitation to spend the weekend at Smyth's family home. After his wife had gone to bed, Smyth had a conversation with Victim B in which he asked him whether he had sinned since leaving the College. He offered to be a spiritual father to Victim B and suggested beating him "to make amends".

Smyth said that other boys Victim B knew did this. He said, "they come here and take their clothes off and I beat them and they become expiated". Victim B said that he felt horrified and shocked when he heard this and he refused.

Victim B said that Smyth's reaction to his refusal was "quite extreme". He burst into tears and sobbed and put his head on Victim B's shoulder. He made Victim B promise not to tell anyone and said that if he did tell anyone it would damage his friends.

Victim B said that he left early the following morning. On the way to the train station, Smyth stressed secrecy, saying that Victim B would ruin the lives of others if he told anyone.

Several weeks after he had visited Smyth's house, Victim B came back to his room to find Victim 002 waiting outside. He said that Victim 002 raised the subject of Smyth and

¹⁷⁷ Fn. 422 below.

reinforced the need for secrecy. Suddenly Smyth burst into Victim B's room "in a real state". Victim B said that he felt angry and asked them both to leave his room.

Not long afterwards Victim B confided in one of his friends who had also been a pupil at Winchester College. The friend was very concerned and told John Woolmer who then asked Victim B to meet with him in St Aldate's Church in Oxford. Despite John Woolmer pleading with him to disclose Smyth's identity and report the matter, Victim B would not agree to do so because he felt he could not break the promise he had made to Smyth. Victim B said that this took place in approximately late 1979 or early 1980.

Smyth contacted Victim B again in the summer of 1982 by telephone and told him that he was going to Africa. Smyth apologised to Victim B for what had happened at Smyth's house at the end of 1979.

In late 1983 or early 1984, Victim 005 disclosed to Victim B that he and others had been beaten by Smyth and that this had affected one particular mutual friend very badly.

Victim B said that his parents had no contemporaneous knowledge of the abuse, and were only told of the events described above by him several years later.

Descriptions of abuse in other reports

The Coltart Report

The Coltart Report primarily focuses on the actions of John Smyth in Zimbabwe, which is beyond the scope of this review. However, in giving contextual background, the report describes the abuse of two victims in the UK. The reviewers have not had contact with either of these individuals and, as far as the reviewers have been able to determine, neither was a pupil of Winchester College. However, both accounts provide insight into the methods used by Smyth to harm young men and the impact of the abuse upon his victims.

The first victim described being beaten by Smyth at his home in Hampshire in the spring of 1981. Smyth showed the victim biblical texts to support his assertion that he could help him by beating him. He told him not to tell others about it as they could misinterpret what was happening. Smyth beat the victim in his shed with a stiff bamboo cane which had a towelling grip made for it. The victim removed all of his clothing except for a t-shirt. After the beating, the victim had to pray in confession and praise. He said:

"The beating was very painful and one's buttocks were very raw and bleeding by the end. Sitting down was not immediately possible. We used to wear absorbent medicated pads under our under-clothes to keep the blood from leaking and to provide a cushion for our sore behinds. After that first weekend I was probably beaten once every month for the next 8 or 9 months or so. On one occasion I had 80 strokes, but the normal amount was about 50. We were beaten sometimes for particular falls; others were just to show keenness".¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ Coltart Report, page 2.

The second victim was a university undergraduate who was pressured by Smyth to visit him at his home near Winchester. There was discussion of the "Lord's discipline" in biblical texts. When he returned to university, other students told him that Smyth administered corporal punishment to help people in their faith. He visited Smyth in Winchester a second time shortly afterwards. He was taken to the shed in the garden of his house, stripped naked and bent double over a bench. The abuser hit him six times with a cane. He stayed overnight at Smyth's house and was in physical discomfort for a number of days afterwards. The victim stated:

"It is to my considerable embarrassment that I could have fallen for all this. However, to us involved at the time, new Christians, young, impressionable and gullible, he seemed to be offering a pathway to holiness. Only after a few weeks agonizing reflection, following my beating, did I realise that this was a million miles from the New Testament Christianity, that every verse Mr Smyth had used he had twisted beyond recognition. Nor, I am afraid, did I realise that the secrecy, the nakedness, the psychological domination and the brutality were all marks of perversion of a most vicious kind."¹⁷⁹

The Graystone Book

In August/September 2021, Andrew Graystone released a book entitled *Bleeding for Jesus* which describes the abuse experienced by victims of Smyth, including a number of individuals who have participated in this review.

The book is approximately 240 pages in length. It contains detailed accounts of the experiences of multiple victims and the reviewers do not intend to extract or reproduce sections of the book herein.

The book has a broader scope than this review, as it includes descriptions of abuse perpetrated by Smyth when he was involved in ministry at institutions other than Winchester College. This includes abuse perpetrated while he was involved with organisations located in Africa after his abuse was disclosed to Peter Krakenberger, John Thorn and others in the UK in 1982.

The Ruston Report

As set out above, Mark Ruston spoke with 13 victims of Smyth in 1982 and drafted a report summarising their experiences. The Ruston Report described the abuse as follows:¹⁸⁰

"For a term or two, it continued with four 17-year old's, on the bare bottom with a gym shoe (because it leaves less evidence) but was voluntarily accepted as a deterrent to masturbation. Beatings varied from a dozen to 40 strokes. (In all ... mention of figures I quote what they have told me, in every case taking the lower figure). These were technically all criminal offences under the Offences Against the person act of 1861, Sec.47.

¹⁷⁹ Coltart Report, page 3, taken from a letter written by "Alistair" dated 7 July 1993.

¹⁸⁰ Appendix 3 of this report.

Since summer 1979 it has gradually escalated, in frequency and severity of beatings and in the number of men involved.

The motives were always seen as good by operators and participants – the sanctifying of young Christian men, and the blessings of fatherly discipline. I believe this but cannot really understand it. Prayer, praise and loving Christian concern in Christ's name were evident at every point. There was never the slightest evidence of overt sexual excitement or interference. But the psychiatrist describes it as suppressed masochistic sexual activity (or sadistic I suppose in the operators). Several men said, 'I trusted J', 'I went into it on trust'.

The scale and severity of the practice was horrific. Five of the 13 I have seen were in it only for a short time. Between them they had 12 beatings and about 650 strokes. The other 8 received about 14,000 strokes: 2 of them having some 8,000 strokes over the three years. The others were involved for one year or 18 months. 8 spoke of bleeding on most occasions ('I could feel the blood spattering on my legs' – 'I was bleeding for 3 ½ weeks' 'I fainted sometimes after a severe beating'). I have seen bruised and scored buttocks, some two-and-a-half months after the beating. Beatings of 100 strokes for masturbation, 400 for pr... and one of 800 strokes for some undisclosed 'fall' are recorded. The beatings are with garden canes, with some sort of a handle. [Victim 001] wanting 'to be the best for God' beat as hard as he could.

A year or so ago 'training' beatings of some 75 strokes every 3 weeks were instituted, as being better than only going down after a 'fall', though these persisted. One told me he was receiving beatings at least every 4/5 days one vacation. The custom of semi nakedness gave way to complete nakedness 'to increase humility'. For training beatings, a man undressed himself, for 'falls' he submitted to being undressed by the operator. ...

Immediately after the beating the man lay on the bed, while J and/or [Victim 001] would kneel and pray, linking arms with him and kissing him on the shoulder and back.

Quite separate from these post-beating embraces, several have spoken of J's putting his arms around them at emotional moments, and one of being kissed on the neck."

The report described the impact of the abuse on the victims, referring to extreme feelings of guilt, a "known suicide attempt" (possibly that of Victim 025 or Victim 003¹⁸¹) and stating that another victim "got as far as writing a suicide note and sitting looking at a bottle of pills because he could not go on with the beatings and 'this was the only way of holiness'." He stated, "It keeps young men as children (the cane and the cuddles might be suitable between a father and a small boy). It keeps them immature and unable to make their own judgments and fight their own battles". He said, "All Christian leaders would condemn the practice".

¹⁸¹ Pp. 47 and 44 supra.

Mark Ruston observed in his report that the system seemed to have 'conned' men into accepting the beatings through the use of religious talks on personal failings, sin and sexuality. He said that it magnified small sins and built up a guilty conscience in the victim when everything was not shared with Smyth. He said, "it had almost become a cult, with a powerful group dynamic".

The location of the abuse

The reviewers have not seen any evidence from the accounts given by victims or the information contained in the reports referred to above that any boys were beaten by Smyth on Winchester College property. There is evidence that physical and sexual abuse took place at locations other than Smyth's home, including a house in Iwerne Minster. Victim 025 told the reviewers that he was assaulted by Smyth in the house in Culver Mews.

However, Smyth was able to gain access to the College site in order to attend Christian Forum meetings and the house of Peter Krakenberger, which was owned by the College, was used to facilitate the grooming of pupils. It is clear from the accounts of the victims that emotional and spiritual abuse of boys took place at that location.

The role of Anne Smyth

Some of the victims commented to the reviewers on the role of Anne Smyth in the abuse perpetrated by her husband. It has not been suggested by any victim that she played a direct role by participating in the physical abuse of boys. However, there is some evidence that she was aware that her husband was abusing young boys.

Victim 002 told the reviewers that he was "as certain as he could be" that Anne Smyth was aware of the beatings.¹⁸² Victim 003 said that she knew when beatings were taking place because she was able to keep her children away. He said that he remembered returning to the house after being beaten and sitting politely with Anne Smyth on the sofa, which would be stained with his blood.¹⁸³ He said that she bought bandages and iodine so she could dress the wounds inflicted by her husband.

Victim 004 said that when he was beaten, Anne Smyth was in the house and was fully aware of what was happening. He said that he remembered that a flag was displayed on the lawn of Smyth's house to act as a warning to Anne and her young children not to approach the shed.

Victim 015 said of Anne Smyth, "there is absolutely no way she didn't know this was happening... the shed was in their garden... and boys were coming out of that very shaken".¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Account of Victim 002.

¹⁸³ 'As in the case of John Smyth QC, an abusive theology can lead to terrible actions', Charles Moore, *The Telegraph*, 17 August 2018. Accessed online 01 June 20: <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/13/case-john-smyth-qcan-abusive-theology-can-lead-terrible-actions/>>.

¹⁸⁴ Account of Victim 015.

As part of the independent review commissioned by the Scripture Union, a statement was taken from the wife of David Fletcher. Suzie Fletcher described herself as being close friends with Anne Smyth and stated that Anne Smyth had been fully aware of the abuse and said that she had helped to dress the boys' wounds.¹⁸⁵

Multiple victims and witnesses said that they believed Anne Smyth was strongly influenced by her husband.¹⁸⁶ The reviewers have not been able to speak with Anne Smyth and therefore we are unable to reach conclusions regarding the extent of her knowledge and involvement. It is not known whether she was complicit or whether she was herself a victim of coercive and controlling behaviour and/or abuse by her husband.

11. 1981 – 1984 Disclosure and response

This section will set out the accounts given by victims and witnesses regarding when and how the abuse was first disclosed to persons connected with Winchester College. It will consider the timeline of disclosure which is contained in other reports and accounts given by various witnesses and contrast that information with the available contemporaneous documentation.

In the context of this section, the term "persons connected with Winchester College" includes staff members and former staff members who became aware of the disclosure of abuse, including John Thorn, Mark Ashton, Peter Krakenberger, Geoff Hewitson and Witness 037. The reviewers note that Mark Ashton was not an employee of Winchester College at the time of the disclosure, as he had left the school in approximately July 1981.

The section will then set out the actions taken by those who learned of the abuse in response to the disclosures.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, it will not address any actions taken by other organisations such as the Church of England or the Iwerne Trust, except insofar as that information is relevant to whether and when persons connected to Winchester College became aware of the abuse and how they responded.

Knowledge of the disclosures within Winchester College

In January 1982, John Smyth was still playing a key role in the Christian Forum. Peter Krakenberger wrote to members in a January 1982 prayer letter, "John Smyth continues to be marvellously used to some of the boys here. May God protect this invaluable link."¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ The reviewers have not had sight of this statement and have not spoken with the witness directly, so have not been able to independently confirm the veracity of this account. This information was shared by the independent reviewer commissioned by that organisation. The information about Anne Smyth helping to dress wounds is consistent with the accounts given by some victims, including that of Victim 003.

¹⁸⁶ For example, on page 15 of this report, Witness 041 said Anne Smyth seemed "cowed" by her husband, John Smyth.

¹⁸⁷ Winchester Prayer Letter, Peter Krakenberger, dated 31 January 1982. [sic]

On 7 February 1982, Smyth was listed as a presenter at the Christian Forum in the termly diary of speakers.¹⁸⁸ He had been listed as a speaker in every previous term from 1975 - 1982, but this is the last recorded instance of Smyth attending Winchester College in that capacity.

In January of 1982, Victim 003 sent an anonymous note to David Fletcher, who was the leader and a trustee of the Iwerne Trust. The note read, "when will someone stop this disgusting activity going on in John Smyth's garden shed".¹⁸⁹ The 2014 Titus Trust Report confirms that this note was received by David Fletcher.¹⁹⁰

Also in January of 1982, a non-Winchester victim spoke with Mark Ruston and disclosed the abuse. Victim 004 said that shortly afterwards Mark Ruston met with him. He told him that he had been beaten in November/December 1981 and they continued to meet over the following months.¹⁹¹ Victim 015 also met with Mark Ruston in early 1982 and disclosed to him that he had been abused by Smyth.¹⁹²

After he was told of the abuse, Mark Ruston telephoned David Fletcher. According to the 2014 Titus Trust Report, which relies on a verbal account given by David Fletcher in 2014, Mark Ruston told the victim who had first disclosed the abuse to him to speak with David Fletcher. They met in a lay-by halfway between David Fletcher's home and the university, where the victim informed David Fletcher of the abuse in person.¹⁹³

The report states that David Fletcher confronted Smyth, but no details are given about the date of the confrontation, what was said or what response was given. Neither the anonymous letter nor the information shared in their meetings with the victim led David Fletcher, Mark Ruston or the Iwerne Trust to contact the police or children's services.

The 2014 Titus Trust Report addressed this question, relying on the account given by David Fletcher in a meeting with the CEO of the Titus Trust in July 2014. The report stated:

"The desire of [David Fletcher] and other trustees at the time to protect the identity of the victims

JS's protégé and several other victims are now high-profile individuals. At the time of the practice some of the parents were well known public figures. No parent has ever been in touch about the affair but it would appear that some knew about it."¹⁹⁴

The report also stated:

¹⁸⁸ List of Christian Forum speakers 1975 – 1982.

¹⁸⁹ The reviewers have not seen a copy of the original note, but its contents are referenced in the account of Victim 003 and it is referred to in the 2014 Titus Trust Report.

¹⁹⁰ The 2014 Titus Trust Report, p. 2.

¹⁹¹ P. 42 supra.

¹⁹² P. 46 supra.

¹⁹³ Log attached to the 2014 Titus Trust Report, dated 18 July 2014. p. 5.

¹⁹⁴ The 2014 Titus Trust Report, p. 2.

"The parents of the victims were top names in the country. It was as much for their protection as for the protection of the victims that events were not disclosed to the authorities."¹⁹⁵

At the request of the Iwerne Trust, Mark Ruston met with 13 victims of John Smyth. This did not include Victim 003, who had sent the anonymous letter to David Fletcher. The 2014 Titus Trust Report states that when Mark Ruston spoke with them, "each victim defended JS to the hilt", but this is not stated in the Ruston Report itself and is disputed by a number of victims.

After meeting with the victims in 1982, Mark Ruston drafted a report which was 2.5 pages long. The report set out the nature of the abuse in some detail and made an assessment of the abuse, likening it to the activities of a cult. The reviewers have been provided with a photocopy of the Ruston Report which contains handwritten amendments. In the records contained within the 2014 Titus Trust Report, David Fletcher stated that the handwriting was that of Mark Ruston.¹⁹⁶

The report has a typed circulation list of John Eddison, Dick Knight, Tim Sterry, Peter Wells, David Fletcher, Roger Coombes, Mark Ruston and David Wilkinson.¹⁹⁷ None of those individuals were employed by Winchester College and the reviewers have not found any evidence that they were associated with the College.

In his 2017 statement to the College, Peter Krakenberger said that Mark Ashton had shown the report to him and that he had "most likely" told John Thorn about it.

The reviewers have not found any evidence that the Ruston Report was passed to the College and no copies of the report were found in the Archives.

When he was asked as part of the College's internal investigation, John Thorn stated that he could not remember who told him about Smyth's actions or when he had first been informed.¹⁹⁸

As set out above, Victim 002 stated that he disclosed the abuse to David MacInnes in the summer of 1982.¹⁹⁹ David MacInnes told the reviewers that he does not recollect receiving a disclosure. There is no evidence that any such disclosure was shared with Winchester College.

The reviewers have been provided with a number of contemporaneous documents which indicate College staff members' state of knowledge about the abuse in 1982. Relevant extracts of the documents have been included in the paragraphs which follow. Where the documents contain information related to the knowledge and actions of other organisations, such as the Iwerne Trust or the Scripture Union, this material has not been included as it is outside the Terms of Reference of this report.

¹⁹⁵ Log attached to the 2014 Titus Trust Report, dated 18 July 2014. p. 7.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.* p. 5.

¹⁹⁷ The full names of those to whom the report was circulated are set out in the 2014 Titus Trust Report, *ibid.* at p. 5.

¹⁹⁸ Note of meeting with John Thorn, *supra*.

¹⁹⁹ P. 39 *supra*.

The first document of relevance is a copy of a typed document with a handwritten date of July 1982. The document is part of a longer memo²⁰⁰ written by David Fletcher summarising actions taken following receipt of the Ruston Report in February 1982. The document appears to be a draft, as the handwritten text says, "please edit as much as you like".

The typed text stated that the author had discovered that John (presumably Smyth) was "continuing to contact students and in one case a boy (not at Winchester)". It said that there had been a meeting on 29 June to discuss what further action should be taken in light of his activities. The note stated:

"Schoolmasters had been informed that John had been asked to leave Camp, but only a few individuals had been told about the beatings.

We decided we would still not inform John Thorn, but that Dick Knight²⁰¹ would inform [Victim 001] that if [his father] asked Dick directly about [Victim 001] and Camp, Dick would tell his father what had happened. In that case we would inform Thorn through Mark Ashton. We did not tell school authorities directly because we felt that such information would soon be passed around and would damage Camp and that when this news eventually leaked out we could show that we had taken all possible steps, both to protect the young men and help John. We decided that if John engaged in Christian youth work, the leaders ought to be informed. We decided to make another attempt to meet John to explain misunderstanding and to hear his grievances of being unfairly treated and apologise where appropriate."

The letter states that, as late as June or July 1982, a deliberate decision was made not to inform the school authorities on the basis that this "would damage Camp".²⁰²

The reviewers have been provided with a copy of a letter from Church of England minister John Eddison²⁰³ to David Fletcher dated 13 August 1982.²⁰⁴ The letter refers to attending the cricket with "Dick"²⁰⁵ and states:

"Dick and I talked about Smyth. His chief fear is that John could break out in this way again, that he only saw how wrong it was when he realised that it threatened

²⁰⁰ The reviewers were provided with the excerpt by the independent reviewers in the inquiry into the abuse perpetrated by John Smyth commissioned by the Church of England. The reviewers have not seen the complete memo and have not been able to independently verify its provenance.

²⁰¹ Richard Knight was a trustee of the Iwerne Trust and was also the former headmaster of Oundle School and of Monkton Combe School in Bath. He is now deceased. The reviewers have not been able to identify any evidence directly linking him to Winchester College.

²⁰² The actions and motivations of members of the Iwerne Trust and Scripture Union fall outside the scope of this report.

²⁰³ John Eddison was a Church of England minister who was a staff member of the Scripture Union from 1942 - 1980. He helped to run the Iwerne Camps and also started his own camps at Forres School in Swanage for boys from preparatory schools. He served as a governor of more than a dozen independent preparatory schools. He was the Chair of the Iwerne Trust from 1981 – 1987. He died in May 2011.

²⁰⁴ The document was shown to the authors of this report by the independent reviewers commissioned by the Church of England under the terms of the draft information sharing agreement. Its provenance has not been independently verified.

²⁰⁵ Given the circulation list attached to the Ruston Report and references in related correspondence, this may be a reference to Dick Knight. However, the reviewers have not been able to confirm this.

his career, and that we ought to get assurances about his future relationships with young people. He also thinks, as you do, and I agree, that he should see a doctor. He is not keen to tell Silk, and I am inclined to think that if any HM should be told it ought to be Thorn, and perhaps we could leave Mark Ashton to do as he feels best about that..."²⁰⁶

The reviewers have seen a letter from David Fletcher to John Eddison dated 17 August 1982 which appears to be a response to the above correspondence. It states:

"... I agree with you about Ashton's seeing Thorn. I think you should get that memo into Alan Martin's hands as soon as possible..."

Alan Martin was the Director General of the Scripture Union from 1978 – 1986. He has not participated in this review, as he died in 2011. On 24 August 1982, he drafted a memorandum which was addressed to John Eddison, David Fletcher and Derek Warren.²⁰⁷ In relation to Winchester College, the document stated:

"I have read Mark Ruston's account of the situation (copy number 5) together with David Fletcher's summary of steps that have been taken by the Iwerne committee... I entirely agree with Mark Ruston's assessment of what has been taking place and fully endorse the sanctions which have been applied to J.S.

...

The other query in my mind is the decision not to tell the H.M. of Winchester, or the father of [Victim 001] what has been going on. I do not know the H.M. or the full circumstances surrounding the events, so I am not criticising the decision to withhold information from him. My gut reaction however after reading the documents is that it may well be best to put him fully in the picture, especially as I gather JS has recently been in touch with two boys from the College. I am assuming that it is almost inevitable that the affair will become public knowledge before long, but even if that is not the case, I would still favour a frank disclosure.

The argument against this is no doubt that such a disclosure would bring both the Gospel and Iwerne into disrepute, but I am not sure that that is necessarily the case. I assume that the H.M. is a reasonable man who knows perfectly well that, if one of his staff is involved in a scandal, it does not mean the whole college is corrupt. I am sure that he would think more of Iwerne hearing about it first-hand, than on the grape-vine.

As JS is apparently still seeing Winchester boys, it is difficult to escape the belief that we have a responsibility to share the facts, as they are obviously at risk.

²⁰⁶ It is possible that the word "Silk" here is a reference to Dennis Silk, the Warden of Radley College from 1968 – 1991, though this has not been verified.

²⁰⁷ The document was shown to the authors of this report by the independent reviewers commissioned by the Church of England under the terms of the draft information sharing agreement. Its provenance has not been independently verified. The Executive Summary of the Scripture Union Report which was published on 25 March 2021 states that Derek Warren was a trustee of the Scripture Union (at paragraph 6.5).

Similarly, I believe that we could well be under an obligation to share the facts with [Victim 001]'s father. I do not know how old [Victim 001] is or if his father is a Christian, but [Victim 001] is obviously at risk as a person and is in need of help. Again I do not think his father would thank us for holding out on him if the events became public knowledge.

The same consideration may well apply to the third person who is part of the 'ministry' with JS and who I gather has been involved for four years. I know nothing about him, and it may well be that he has dropped out in favour of [Victim 001]. All this is a matter of judgment of course, and I repeat that I am not being critical of decisions that have been made, as they were made by people very close to events. I am just recording my impressions from the touch-line.

...

In conclusion, I would just repeat that JS is heavily involved in perverted practices which can have disastrous results for the participants. This has been demonstrated already by one attempted suicide, and by the other case mentioned in Mark Ruston's paper.

The seriousness of the situation cannot be over-emphasised, and my own belief is that extreme pressure should be put on John to seek professional help. We are in a strong position to apply that pressure and I hope it will be possible to do so."

This letter makes clear that prior to 24 August 1982 members of the Iwerne Trust had made a deliberate decision to withhold the information contained in the Ruston Report from John Thorn. It indicates that on that date members of the Iwerne Trust and Alan Martin believed that John Thorn was not aware of the disclosure and were discussing whether the information should be shared.

The reviewers have not been able to confirm the identity of the "third person" referred to in this letter.

It is not clear whether the reference to Smyth having "recently been in touch with two boys from the College" and "still seeing Winchester boys" is a reference to contact with current or former pupils of Winchester College. Apart from the information contained in this chain of correspondence, the reviewers have not seen evidence of contact between Smyth and current students of Winchester College after the disclosure of abuse 1982.

On the same date, David Fletcher sent a handwritten letter to Alan Martin.²⁰⁸ The letter stated:

"... Both Mark Ashton (a camp officer and Chaplain of Winchester until last year) and I have spoken with J.S. about the suspicions voiced concerning him. John told me he was aware that accusations like that might come: he said there was

²⁰⁸ The document was shown to the authors of this report by the independent reviewers commissioned by the Church of England under the terms of the draft information sharing agreement. Its provenance has not been independently verified.

no truth to them; he attributed them to hostility to the Gospel and said that he and Anne prayed they might be delivered from anything like that.

The suspicions were expressed so strongly to Mark Ashton that Mark asked him if there was anything he was doing which could be construed as homosexual. John assured him there was not.

At camp we have strict rules that officers and boys bathrooms are separate; that no personal counselling is done in cars or dormitories; that boys are not "handled" (i.e. arm on shoulder) and that the word "love" is not used in signing off letters. Unfortunately, John did sign letters like that and one came into the hands of the housemaster at Winchester and I had to have a big session with John over it. He liked to think he was above camp rules. I do hope this doesn't take up too much of your time."

The reference in this letter to a concern being raised by a Winchester housemaster regarding an inappropriate letter from John Smyth is not recorded in the Winchester archives and was not included in any of the accounts provided to the reviewers by witnesses or victims. The date of this incident is not stated in the letter, but the concern appears to relate to the use of the word "love" and the potential existence of a homosexual relationship between Smyth and a pupil of Winchester, rather than physical abuse. The name of the housemaster(s) involved is not mentioned and there is no explanation of the outcome in relation to Winchester College.

This letter is also significant because, like the correspondence between John Eddison and David Fletcher on 13 and 17 August 1982,²⁰⁹ it suggests that Mark Ashton was aware of the disclosure and had spoken to John Smyth about homosexual relationships as early as August of 1982.

Similarly, a letter sent to Mark Ruston by John Eddison on 25 August 1982 refers to the involvement of Mark Ashton.²¹⁰ It stated:

"... Alan takes a very tough line, and you can see, and I'm bound to say I find my attitude hardening. It seems that [REDACTED]²¹¹ wrote to see Mark Ashton, and I think Mark is still determined to see Thorn, if only to clear his own lines. I see no reason for restraining him."

Again, this indicates that on 25 August 1982 both Mark Ruston and Mark Ashton believed that John Thorn was not aware of the disclosure in relation to Smyth. It also suggests that Mark Ashton wanted to share the information with John Thorn.

²⁰⁹ P. 57 supra.

²¹⁰ The document was shown to the authors of this report by the independent reviewers commissioned by the Church of England under the terms of the draft information sharing agreement. Its provenance has not been independently verified.

²¹¹ The reviewers understand that some documents provided to the independent reviewers commissioned by the Church of England had been redacted prior to disclosure. The reviewers are not aware of the name which has been redacted in this document.

On the same date, Mark Ruston responded to the memorandum of Alan Martin by typed letter marked "Strictly Confidential".²¹² He stated:

"... I only write now because I have a feeling that you may think that the actual beatings are still continuing. I certainly have no evidence that this is so, and assurances that it is not. It is possible that John Eddison or David has more recent information which has not reached me yet, but in the absence of that I am working on the assumption that the actual practice has been discontinued. And I think this actually is the reason why we have not gone to the various people you mention. In the early days of the affair we hoped that John would pull right out of work with young men and in the light of that assumption we made the decisions that we did.

Since then we have had this problem of John's still being in touch with some of them (though it seems that a number of them are 'leaving him') and that he has also not observed what we thought was his undertaking to steer clear of boys at school at present. And I think this gives us our dilemma. At what point do we expose John to responsible people? Can we persuade him even now to change his ways? Can we persuade him to go to a psychiatrist... so as to protect the young men, and Iwerne and the Scripture Union and John himself.

It may well be that the time is coming when we must act, but we have very much wanted, as you will understand, to give him every chance of changing.

One of the reasons we did not tell [Victim 001]'s father is that Dick Knight is a close personal friend and his judgment was that this was the better way and that he could explain to his father why he had done this, if the thing became public. All the young men involved are technically adults, though the new contacts with boys at school is, once again, a complicating factor. ..."

The actions of members of the Iwerne Trust and of Mark Ruston in responding to the disclosure of abuse fall outside the Terms of Reference of this report and will be considered by independent reviewers commissioned by other organisations. However, this correspondence is relevant to this report in two respects.

First, it states that in August 1982 Smyth was continuing to have contact with boys who were currently in school. It is not clear from this letter whether this is a reference to Winchester College or to other schools involved with the Iwerne camps. The July 1982 memorandum of David Fletcher refers to Smyth having contact with boys who were not at Winchester, however the memorandum of Alan Martin dated 24 August 1982 refers to Smyth having contact with Winchester boys. Apart from this correspondence, the reviewers have not seen evidence of intentional contact between Smyth and current students of Winchester College in 1982.

²¹² The document was shown to the authors of this report by the independent reviewers commissioned by the Church of England under the terms of the draft information sharing agreement. Its provenance has not been independently verified.

Second, the letter explains that a deliberate decision was made by members of the Iwerne Trust not to inform the father of Victim 001 about the abuse, contrary to the advice of Alan Martin in the memorandum of 24 August 1982.

The reviewers have also been provided with a copy of a letter from John Eddison to Mark Ruston, dated 13 September 1982.²¹³ The letter refers to the disclosure of the abuse to staff at Winchester College. The letter stated:

"... 1. Mark Ashton rang to say that he had got JJS to agree to a meeting with David and his own two advisers (Anthony Cordle and David MacInnes) and that John has agreed to abide by their decision. Mark had seen both of these advisers who of course saw the wisdom of the course of action we were taking.

2. The next day Peter Krak. rang me (having failed to get you). The upshot was that the housemaster of the house to which Peter is attached had asked to be told the full facts and Peter had given them to him. This meant that Thorn too must be told, the only question was by whom. In the event Mark Ashton was the obvious man, and he goes there today.

The housemaster (who had [Victim 001] in his house) wants to get in touch with him about it all, and of course [the father of Victim 001] himself will now have to know, and it will probably be Dick who had better tell him.

3. Meanwhile David Fletcher is back from holiday and has been brought up to date. He feels, and I think I agree, that it may now be necessary for this group to meet JJS. We both think that Mark Ashton may be able to get Thorn, as a price of his silence, to endorse the conditions we have laid upon JJS..."

The above letters clearly indicate that, to the knowledge of members of the Iwerne Trust, John Thorn was unaware of the abuse prior to 13 September 1982, when Mark Ashton was asked to inform him. It also suggests that the conditions which were imposed upon Smyth by John Thorn had been agreed in advance and proposed by Mark Ashton and members of the Iwerne Trust, or mirrored conditions which had been imposed by the Iwerne Trust at an earlier stage.

When asked in 2017, John Thorn said that he could not remember drafting the undertaking himself or recall who had drafted it. He said that he thought it bore the marks of others as well as him, but could not remember how it had been drafted. In the absence of clear evidence, the reviewers have not been able to reach a conclusion about whether the conditions in the undertaking were drafted by John Thorn or suggested by others.

Peter Krakenberger was attached to Morsheads house, where the housemaster in 1982 was David Steele. The reviewers have spoken to David Steele, who said that he was not aware of the abuse at the time and was not informed of the "full facts", as described in the letter above. It is possible that John Eddison was mistaken about which house

²¹³ The document was shown to the authors of this report by the independent reviewers commissioned by the Church of England under the terms of the draft information sharing agreement. Its provenance has not been independently verified.

Peter Krakenberger was attached to and that his comment was intended to be a reference to Geoff Hewitson or a different housemaster. John Eddison passed away in 2011, so it is not possible to confirm what he understood or intended at the time of this letter.

Mark Ashton is also now deceased, but the reviewers have had contact with his widow, Fiona Ashton. She said that in 1982, her husband had received an early morning telephone call from Mark Ruston at their London home. Fiona was unable to give an exact date for this call. He had told her that Mark Ruston had said that John Smyth had beaten boys in his shed at his home. He told her he had to go immediately to meet with John Thorn. He left London and returned that evening having met with John Thorn.²¹⁴

The correspondence indicates that Mark Ashton was aware of the disclosure by August 1982 and that he met with Smyth and his advisers to discuss it, but that John Thorn was not told about the abuse until September 1982.

The reviewers have seen a letter dated 6 October 1982, which was addressed to David Fletcher from John Eddison.²¹⁵ The letter discussed whether the parents of victims ought to be told about the disclosures in relation to Smyth and stated:

"I don't think I agree with [surname of Victim 001] that the young men should be expected to tell their parents. Perhaps he only meant that it was they and no-one else who should do so if it was felt that parents should know.

It looks though as if each case will have to be examined on its own and that your help will be needed when it comes to this, as they don't know the people concerned.

...

Anthony is very worried about the extent to which the whole matter is known. It seems that the Winchester Chaplain heard it from another person who in his turn had heard it from someone else. I gather Mark Ashton had tried to stop these leaks, but I told Anthony that the thing was really leaked before we started, because someone must have told 'Hiller'...."²¹⁶

It is not clear from this letter whether the reference to the surname of Victim 001 relates to his father or to Victim 001 himself.

The first evidence that John Thorn was aware of the disclosure is dated 15 September 1982. It is a handwritten note taken from the records of Mark Ruston which appears to

²¹⁴ Account of Fiona Ashton.

²¹⁵ The document was shown to the authors of this report by the independent reviewers commissioned by the Church of England under the terms of the draft information sharing agreement. Its provenance has not been independently verified.

²¹⁶ The word "Hiller" appears to be a reference to the pseudonym used by the author of the anonymous note, though the reviewers have been unable to confirm this.

be a record of a meeting held with Mark Ashton.²¹⁷ Parts of the note have been redacted, but the legible sections state:

"Thorn

Parents who knew John.

[Abbreviated surname of Victim 001]

Parents should be told by boys.

Thorn knows.

[REDACTED]

Thorn [illegible] naked. extent. blood.

didn't cross-question or want to see John."

It is difficult to decipher this document as it is written in shorthand and sections of the writing have been redacted.²¹⁸ As a result, it is not possible to be certain what exactly the note records about John Thorn's state of knowledge at the time.

The inclusion of the word "extent" does not give a clear indication of what John Thorn was told. It does not state whether he was told the full extent of what Mark Ashton knew, and furthermore, it is not clear how much was known by Mark Ashton at the relevant time.

However, the combination of the words "Thorn knows" in underlined text, as well as the reference to the specific words "naked" and "blood", before a note indicating that John Thorn did not ask to question or speak with Smyth suggests that i) John Thorn was aware of the disclosure by 15 September 1982; and ii) he may have been told about nudity and that there had been blood.

The writing which is marked above as "illegible" is difficult to read due to the nature of the handwriting, however it appears to be a repetition of the word "knows". It does not appear to be the words "doesn't know about" or "unaware of", or any words indicating that Thorn was not aware of "Naked. Extent. Blood." as a result of the discussion.

It has been submitted to the reviewers by the independent legal representative for John Thorn that although he recognised that Smyth's conduct was abusive and he was horrified by what he knew, in 1982 references to nudity and blood in that context would not have "carried the connotations of serious physical abuse that they now do" because of the prevalence of corporal punishment. This is not accepted by the reviewers. As set

²¹⁷ The document was shown to the authors of this report by the independent reviewers commissioned by the Church of England under the terms of the draft information sharing agreement. Its provenance has not been independently verified.

²¹⁸ As noted above, the reviewers understand that redactions were applied to this material prior to its disclosure to the independent reviewers commissioned by the Church of England. The content of the redactions is not known.

out above, the use of whips for "scourging" pupils in the Christian Forum was openly referred to in *The Dosser's Organ* as early as 1979. John Thorn was an experienced educator and a person in a position of trust who was aware that an adult had exerted such "malign influence"²¹⁹ over children in their care that they had (whether as children or as young adults) engaged in inappropriate acts, and possibly that they had involved nudity and blood. Even in the context of 1982, that information would have carried connotations of serious abuse.

The first reference to the disclosure made by John Thorn himself is dated 12 October 1982. The reviewers have been provided with correspondence between John Thorn and the father of a pupil who was abused by Smyth, which shows that the Headmaster became aware of the abuse in September/October 1982. The first letter is from John Thorn, dated 12 October 1982. It refers to Smyth and states:

"I think I know what you have discovered. About a month ago I discovered it too & was horrified. I was in touch with [?] it's literally unbelievable. Because it was unbelievable, it was something none of us guessed at. We viewed with some concern Smyth's influence over Christian Forum and we viewed with relief more recently (perhaps from 9 months ago) his sharply declining influence. Christian Forum is a small body and gives me little or no cause for concern. Smyth's damage is done.

As it happens, three people went yesterday to Smyth's home and got him to agree to sign a paper promising to have medical attention and to have nothing more to do with young males. (And bear in mind that he is a well-known QC and a good family man with a nice wife and 3 children – hence one's disbelief!) The three people were [the father of Victim 001], [the father of Victim 002] and I. We have I feel rendered him pretty well harmless and he has been more or less expelled from the evangelical community. He is a sick man and a pathetic figure, but he has done much harm. I don't think any of us could have discovered that he was doing that sort of harm and you put your finger on one important point when you write that you are the last person to wish to worry about anyone leading a better Christian life. The world is too short of caring people. That was always the trouble in our dealings with Smyth and his friends. MacAlpine was and is a man of no religious beliefs. [?]'s beliefs are fairly formal. Your [son] found in evangelical Christianity something alive and personal.

It is not easy in such circumstances for the more elderly to pour cold water without seeming also to be hypocrites in professing their own belief – 'yes, I believe, but not very enthusiastically and I advise you too to be unenthusiastic' is how it will seem.

You may feel on reading this that a conversation between us is not necessary, since I now know more or less the whole horrid story of Smyth and have I think with the help of good and wise friends ensured its closure as far as Smyth is concerned.

²¹⁹ This is the term used by the legal representative for John Thorn.

As for the boys he influenced, it is important that they preserve their faith and do not lose it totally, as they may have gained in wisdom by encountering one manifestation of religion's proximity to mental instability. In this case, the whole evangelical enterprise has been forced to examine itself and is now the wiser and the safer. And I am extra-vigilant too.

If on reading this you'd still like a chat let me know. It's a long way for you to come but you will be very welcome. After our half term break might be better if you would still like a chat."

The second letter is a response from the same father of a pupil abused by Smyth to John Thorn, dated 23 October 1982. It states:

"Your revelations are astonishing, and I must say came as a great surprise to me. We had our deep suspicions long ago when we talked to MacAlpine.

So Smyth has been nailed, but I fear Christian Forum has not. You say that Christian Forum is now a small body which gives you little or no cause for concern, but this frankly was the answer that we were given about Smyth some five years ago. We would still like to come for a chat because we feel that you may not be fully aware of Christian Forum's influence. And Sabben-Clare's chapter on worship and belief gives me no great comfort. [My son] knows nothing of our correspondence."

The letter from the father of a pupil who was abused by Smyth suggests that concerns were raised with the College about John Smyth as early as 1977, though this may be a reference to the letter which Witness 022 sent to Euan MacAlpine on 24 January 1979 raising concerns about the influence of John Smyth.²²⁰

The third letter in the series is from John Thorn to the father of a pupil who was abused by Smyth, dated 12 November 1982. It relates to the two men arranging a date for a meeting in mid-November. It is not known whether the meeting took place and, if so, what was discussed.

These three letters show that John Thorn was aware of the physical abuse by 12 October 1982. The first letter states that he had discovered the information "about a month ago".

On 15 October 1982, David Fletcher wrote a handwritten letter to John Thorn. It stated:

"I gather you have now been told about John Smyth's activities at Morestead in recent years.

Needless to say, I knew nothing about these at the time and as soon as I did I told J.J.S. he would not be able to return to Iwerne Minster and with others sought to get him to break from the individuals involved.

²²⁰ Account of Witness 022.

I am sorry for the embarrassment this has caused you and the extra work it has involved you in recently in meetings with J.J.S. I was relieved to hear that he had given you certain written undertakings. I am coming down to Winchester in December and would gladly call on you, should you wish me to do so – or come down sooner if that would help. I hope this will be the end of this business now, at least as far as Winchester is concerned."

This letter demonstrates that there was direct contact between David Fletcher and John Thorn in relation to the abuse perpetrated by Smyth and, like other correspondence from that period, confirms that by October 1982 John Thorn was aware of the disclosure.

Although the conduct of David Fletcher falls outside the scope of this review, his descriptions of the abuse in correspondence with John Thorn are indicative of the approach which was taken when sharing information with Winchester College. The use of minimising language, for example by speaking about the "embarrassment this has caused" and the "extra work" involved, indicate a focus on the impact of the disclosure upon John Thorn, rather than the victims of abuse.

The reviewers have been provided with a typed letter from John Smyth, addressed to David Fletcher.²²¹ The letter is undated. In it, Smyth apologises for his attitude towards David Fletcher, John Eddison and Mark Ruston and refers to his need for privacy to make decisions about his future. The letter includes a handwritten note signed by David Fletcher which states:

"This is a copy of a letter I received from J.J.S. on 19th October. He has signed an agreement with J.L.T. and others to break off all relations with the men, to get specialist medical help and to see that his mission is no longer to boys and young men."

This note indicates that David Fletcher was aware of the conditions of the undertaking and believed that it had been signed.

The contemporaneous correspondence set out above indicates that David Fletcher informed others at the Iwerne Trust that the undertaking had been signed. The reviewers have been shown a letter from Dick Knight to David Fletcher dated 22 October 1982 which states:

"I was glad to get your note this morning confirming that John had signed and delivered the undertaking required by the trio. I had been waiting for this news before writing to you to outline what happened ten days ago.

John rang me from Swindon to ask if he could talk in confidence. We had a couple of hours in Bath that evening (Oct. 12th). He was more or less prepared in any event to sign the document – which he showed me. His main anxiety (apparently) being whether such an admission might later be produced (perhaps

²²¹ The document was shown to the authors of this report by the independent reviewers commissioned by the Church of England under the terms of the draft information sharing agreement. Its provenance has not been independently verified.

– here spoke the lawyer – under a subpoena) in court against him. I hoped I had convinced him that he really had no alternative – that any qualification or wriggling at this stage would only make them tougher. I gave it as my own estimate that such a document would be filed away and forgotten – probably seen only eventually by Thorn's successor. Of course it is a risk – but I think their own sense of honour and incidentally their own self-interest dictates that course. Anyhow, he seemed convinced and I am glad to know he has signed..."

This letter indicates that both David Fletcher and Dick Knight believed that the undertaking had been signed by Smyth and considered that it was likely that Thorn would retain the document in confidence, although he acknowledged that there was a risk of disclosure. It is not clear from this correspondence who is meant by the "trio" who required Smyth to sign the undertaking, although in his letter of 12 October 1982 John Thorn stated that three men attended Smyth's house to ask him to sign the undertaking – himself, the father of Victim 001 and the father of Victim 002.

Peter Krakenberger wrote a letter on 17 October 1982 in which he explained the disclosure of the abuse. The victim who provided this letter to the reviewers described it as a monthly prayer letter sent to Old Wykehamists who were Iwerne Officers.²²² The letter provided information about attendance numbers at the Christian Forum and then stated:

"... Round about the beginning of term, the time seemed propitious in the eyes of the Iwerne Committee for news of the JJS b*****s to be broken to John Thorn, Geoff Hewitson and [the father of Victim 001]. (Ever since Feb DCMF, CMR etc all knew that at some stage those 3 would have to be told). At that stage [Victim 002] had left JJS and only [Victim 001] was left in close ties with JJS. [Victim 002] asked MHA to tell his dad, [the father of Victim 002]. [The parents of Victim 001] were informed by [Victim 001] (reluctantly) and Dick Knight. Thorn was put in the picture by MHA and myself, and I informed Hewitson. Basically everyone's reaction was magnificent & just what we could have hoped for. After the initial shock & horror, all parties are agreed that discretion is by far the best policy and that there is no merit in the information being spread any further.

Various groups of people have been calling on JJS – some Iwerne leaders, some non-Iwerne evangelical leaders, some non-evangelical men like Thorn & [the father of Victim 001]. The upshot is that last Thursday (14th), JJS at last (after 8 months of persuasion by various senior men in the know) has bound himself to the following conditions: (1) that he will never again see or contact any of the 22 men he implicated in what he now realises was a misguided and wrong practice. (2) That he will submit to undergoing expert psychiatric treatment. (3) That he will never again act as a spiritual counsellor to young men whether undergraduates or schoolboys.

²²² This letter was provided to the reviewers by Victim 004. The reviewers have not been able to determine the scale of distribution of this letter.

The above 3 conditions are what every concerned adult in the know deems essential – including DCMF, CMR, RJBE, RDK, MHA, JLT, [the father of Victim 001], [the father of Victim 002], GH and yours truly.

One practical implication of the first condition from your point of view is that you must never again contact JJS – for his sake. I hope you feel this is reasonable. I saw him recently & felt he was a very sick man – "overheated psyche" – and others who have been seeing & counselling him feel the same. If all goes well from now on, especially JJS's psychiatric consultations, then his life and career could be saved and he could be restored to God's service, probably in the context of a local church somewhere. And of course everyone hopes all will go well – though for a year or two it will be difficult to be sure. JJS needs to reach the state where he can meaningfully repent of his deviousness. At the moment the general consensus is that he is not of a sound enough mind to be able to do so.

The rehabilitation of 18 of the 22 men would seem to be pretty well complete; 3 others (incl [Victim 002] and another victim) left JJS only 2 months ago but so far seem to be weaning themselves pretty well; that leaves [Victim 001] who's had a harrowing last month and may be in some distress for a while yet. But he must break from JJS forever for both their sakes. There are certain situations where only the drastic advice of Mt 5:29-30 will suffice, and the general consensus is that this is one of them.²²³

Well, I don't know that I needed to pass on all the above news, but I felt you would value being in the picture. As it is all v sensitive information you might like to keep it to yourself. If you need to chat to anyone then CMR is your man on the spot, but much of this had better not go any further if you don't mind.

It's been a very busy month with numerous chats to Thorn & Hewitson (who've been absolute bricks in my opinion) and endless phone chats with MHA & DCMF so that we were all abreast as to who knew what. Let us hope that this concludes the dramatic part of this sad and distressing business; no doubt you at Cambridge & I at Win Coll will delight to get down to the constructive tasks of deepening our friendship with Christ and seeking to spread His kingdom.

Have you ever read or been given a copy of Bash's booklet on guidance? A delightful little paper. It may come in useful as you begin to ponder what you might do with your one little life that God has given you. I enclose a copy."²²⁴

²²³ "If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell." Matthew 5:29-30.

²²⁴ [sic]. From contextual evidence, including other contemporaneous correspondence, the reviewers understand that the acronyms contained in this letter refer to the following individuals: JJS – John Smyth; MHA – Mark Ashton; DCMF – David Fletcher; RJBE – John Eddison; CMR – Mark Ruston; RDK – Dick Knight; JLT – John Thorn; GH – Geoff Hewitson. However, this has not been able to be confirmed by the author of the letter.

The letter refers to four persons related to Winchester College as "concerned adults in the know": John Thorn, Geoff Hewitson, Mark Ashton and Peter Krakenberger. There is no mention of other staff members such as Euan MacAlpine, David Steele or David Conner, which accords with their accounts that they were not aware of the abuse at the time.

The account given by Peter Krakenberger in this letter seems to confirm John Thorn's statement that he had learned about the abuse about a month before 12 October 1982, early in the autumn term and it is in keeping with the correspondence from John Eddison, David Fletcher and Alan Martin in August 1982 regarding the decision to withhold information from John Thorn.

The above timeline strongly suggests that John Thorn was told of the abuse by Mark Ashton and Peter Krakenberger on 13 September 1982. However, the reviewers have received two pieces of information which suggest that he may have been told about the abuse at an earlier date.

First, the mother of Victim 001 told the reviewers that her son had disclosed the abuse to her and her husband around Easter in 1982. She said that she could not imagine that her husband had not told John Thorn of this at the time.²²⁵

Second, Victim 003 told the reviewers that in July of 1982, after he attempted to commit suicide, his father contacted John Thorn. Victim 003 was told by his father that John Thorn had said he already knew about it and that it would be discussed by the Fellows at their next meeting. At the next meeting, John Thorn took the father of Victim 003 aside and told him that it would not be discussed. He said that this was because none of the parents wanted any publicity and it could damage the boys in the future.²²⁶ He said he had come up with a solution which they could discuss later. There is no record of the matter being discussed in the meetings of the Warden and Fellows in 1982. The reviewers have been unable to speak with the father of Victim 003 regarding exactly what John Thorn said that he knew and to confirm the dates of this disclosure, as he is now deceased.

Victim 004 has stated that he believes that John Thorn was told about the abuse by Mark Ashton, the former chaplain at Winchester College, and Peter Krakenberger in October 1982. The contemporaneous documentation suggests that John Thorn was informed on 13 September 1982, in keeping with the letter of Peter Krakenberger, the correspondence of John Eddison, David Fletcher and Alan Martin and the account given by John Thorn in his letter of October 1982.

The 2014 Titus Trust Report refers to *The Road to Winchester* and states that John Thorn "had been told about the beatings by Mark Ashton, the chaplain at Winchester, as soon as it came to light". The source of the information is a discussion between the author and David Fletcher on 2 July 2014.

The memo written by David Fletcher, dated July 1982, states that he had not yet informed John Thorn of the abuse. Given that David Fletcher had been told about the

²²⁵ Account of Witness 026 (Mother of Victim 001).

²²⁶ Account of Victim 003.

abuse in either 1981 (if the 2014 Titus Trust Report is accurate, for which see further discussion below) or in January 1982, when he received the anonymous letter and the telephone call from Mark Ruston, the statement that John Thorn was told of the abuse "as soon as it came to light" appears not to be accurate.

Victim 004 told the reviewers that he did not believe that John Thorn or the staff at Winchester College suspected that boys were being abused by Smyth. He suggested that staff had instead been concerned about the threat and distraction of evangelism, which did not fit with the school's view of Christianity.

Fiona Ashton said that the culture at the time normalised corporal punishment and the concern was about boys engaging in homosexual activity. She said that neither she nor the staff members were aware of the abuse, stating that when it was disclosed, "all of us believed this was the actions of consenting adults".²²⁷

Witness 037, who was a staff member at Winchester College, said that he was not aware of the abuse at the time. He said that he was shocked to discover that Mark Ruston had been aware that children were abused by Smyth as when the disclosure was made, "we all believed it was consenting adults".²²⁸

Witness 042, a former staff member, also said that after the abuse came to light it was seen as being between consenting adults.²²⁹

David Steele, who was the Housemaster of Morsheads between 1974 and 1989, confirmed that neither he nor, to his knowledge, others at Winchester College suspected that anything sinister was occurring with Smyth. He said that had he thought that for one minute, he would have acted. He said that staff had to take care as Christian Forum members were very sensitive to any criticism of their faith and he wanted to allow the boys to follow their religious interests.²³⁰

The account of Peter Krakenberger

As stated above, Peter Krakenberger declined to participate in this review or to make comments on the record, but the reviewers were provided with the written notes of a meeting on 26 January 2017 at which he gave an account of the abuse to the College.

Peter Krakenberger stated that "nobody knew" about the abuse at the time when it was taking place. He said that he was told about it by the Scripture Union camps in the spring of 1982. This prompted him to visit Mark Ruston, who gave him a copy of the Ruston Report.

He said that he then spoke to Geoff Hewitson about the report, who advised him to inform John Thorn. He said that he was the one who informed John Thorn about the abuse and that he was "almost certain" he showed John Thorn a copy of the Ruston

²²⁷ Account of Fiona Ashton.

²²⁸ Account of Witness 037.

²²⁹ Account of Witness 042.

²³⁰ Account of David Steele.

Report. He said that Mark Ashton had nothing to do with the events or with informing John Thorn of the abuse.

The 2017 account of Peter Krakenberger is contradicted by the contemporaneous documentation in a number of respects.

First, the letter which Peter Krakenberger himself wrote to a group of Old Wykehamist Iwerne Officers in October 1982 stated that Geoff Hewitson and John Thorn were informed of the abuse in the autumn, not the spring. He expressly stated that it was he and Mark Ashton who informed John Thorn of the abuse. He also stated that the disclosure came about because "the time seemed propitious in the eyes of the Iwerne Committee", who had known since February that at some stage John Thorn, Geoff Hewitson and the father of Victim 001 would have to be told.

Second, the letter written by John Eddison on 13 September 1982 stated that John Thorn was informed at that time and not in the spring. It stated that in September Peter Krakenberger was already aware of the abuse but had not informed John Thorn. It also confirms that it was Mark Ashton who informed John Thorn.

Third, the memo written by David Fletcher in July 1982 stated that John Thorn was not yet aware of the abuse and that if he was to be told, Mark Ashton would be asked to make the disclosure.

Other correspondence also confirms Mark Ashton's involvement, including the letter of John Eddison dated 13 August 1982, the letter of David Fletcher dated 17 August 1982, the letter of David Fletcher dated 24 August 1982 and the letter of John Eddison dated 25 August 1982.

Victim 015 told the police that he understood that Peter Krakenberger had offered John Thorn his resignation after the abuse came to light in 1982. There is no mention of this in the account given to the College by Peter Krakenberger.²³¹

Additional disclosures

This section sets out other disclosures which have been described to the reviewers by victims and witnesses in this review, in order to illustrate the extent of knowledge about the abuse and to consider whether action which could have affected Winchester College was taken by any other person.

Victim 002 stated that he made a disclosure of abuse to David MacInnes in the summer of 1982. The reviewers have seen no evidence that any disclosure was received from David MacInnes by Winchester College.

When asked by the reviewers, David MacInnes stated that he had no recollection of receiving a disclosure of abuse from Victim 002. He stated that he had attended an event at North Foreland Lodge in the summer of 1982, where he was approached by John and Anne Smyth. He did not know Smyth personally, but he was aware that he

²³¹ Account of Victim 015.

had been forced to resign from the Chairmanship of the Iwerne Trust. He was not aware of the reasons for the resignation.

David MacInnes said that in conversation with Smyth at that event and in the week following he became concerned about his evasiveness and asked David Fletcher about the circumstances of his resignation from the Iwerne Trust. David Fletcher sent him a copy of the Ruston Report on the condition of strict confidentiality, which was the first time he learned about the abuse. He said that he understood at the time that decisions about the action to be taken were being reached between the Iwerne Trust, Winchester College and representatives of the parents, including an undertaking not to hold any role with young people in the future.

David MacInnes told the reviewers that he could not accept that a victim of Smyth had confided in him at the event at North Foreland Lodge, because he had no recollection of this and because it would have taken place at the same time when he first met Smyth, it would have been deeply shocking to him. He said that it would have been difficult for him to advise that anyone should avoid Smyth as there was a small group of families at the event. He also said that if he had been told about the abuse at the event, he would have had no need to request information about the circumstances of Smyth's resignation from David Fletcher at a later date as the reasons would have been obvious to him.

David MacInnes shared the following statement with the reviewers, "Having seen the account in the Ruston report of John Smyth's abuse, I have to say it is horrifying and it is difficult to comprehend the long term trauma it must have caused to each of the victims. I would again like to add my expression of deepest sympathy for them."²³²

This section sets out the information which has been provided to the reviewers, but no findings are made in relation to the events. Any conclusions regarding the actions of David MacInnes, who was not an employee or member of Winchester College, fall outside the scope of this review and will be a matter for the separate review commissioned by the Church of England.

A disclosure of abuse was made to John Woolmer in "either late 81 or early 82". He stated that an Old Wykehamist had come to his church to tell him of a physical punishment administered by Smyth. According to his statement, no further details were given and John Woolmer assumed that the punishment was consensual. He said that he thought it was "... the sort of punishment that housemasters were still administering occasionally. It was totally out of order; but hardly illegal. My former pupil, in his last year at [university], was absolutely clear that nothing should be said to anyone."²³³ In a separate account, John Woolmer stated that the victim had told him that Smyth had "disciplined him (for the good of his soul)".²³⁴

²³² Account of David MacInnes.

²³³ Account of John Woolmer.

²³⁴ Account of John Woolmer. This does not appear to be a reference to Victim B, who was not physically abused by Smyth and who informed the reviewers that his disclosure was shared with John Woolmer in late 1979 or early 1980.

He was separately informed of the abuse by a fellow minister, who had also been bound to silence by the person who made the disclosure. This minister was not named.

Witness 027 said that he was aware of the abuse because one of his friends was propositioned by Smyth in October 1979. Smyth offered to be his spiritual mentor and told him that he would be beaten for his misdemeanours, but he rejected the advance. Witness 027 said that he reported the behaviour to John Woolmer, but it is not known when this disclosure took place.²³⁵ The reviewers have confirmed that this is a reference to Victim B.

Neither John Woolmer nor the fellow minister who shared with him a disclosure of abuse perpetrated by Smyth reported the matter to the appropriate authorities. When asked, John Woolmer stated that the person who made the disclosure did so under the seal of the confessional and said that he had been sworn to secrecy. He stated that the person did not go into detail about what had occurred and the behaviour described did not seem to John Woolmer at the time to constitute abuse or to be criminal conduct. He stated that he had understood that the person had consented to Smyth's actions.

At the time when these disclosures took place, John Woolmer was not employed by Winchester College. The reviewers have seen no evidence that the disclosure he received was shared with John Thorn or any other Winchester staff or that any warning was given to Winchester College.

John Woolmer stated that he became aware that the abuse had come to light in late 1982 when he received a telephone call from Peter Krakenberger.²³⁶ He said, "It was an enormous relief when PJK rang me up in 1982 and said JS had been 'outed' and that he could have no further influence in Winchester College."²³⁷

An inconsistent account: 1981 or 1982?

The 2014 Titus Trust Report states that allegations of abuse were first made to the Iwerne Trust in 1981, when an anonymous note was sent to David Fletcher by Victim 003 (although Victim 003's identity was not known to the Iwerne Trust). The report states that on the same day the abuse was disclosed to Mark Ruston, Vicar of the Round Church in Cambridge, by an undergraduate student. Mark Ruston then telephoned David Fletcher to report the abuse.

A number of victims have informed the reviewers that they believe this date is incorrect and that the first disclosures were made in 1982.²³⁸ As set out above, Victim 003 stated that he sent an anonymous note to David Fletcher in January 1982.²³⁹ Victim 015 said that he disclosed the abuse to Mark Ruston in early 1982 and Victim 004 said that he spoke with Mark Ruston in early 1982 about the beatings which he had suffered in November and December 1981 (although it was a non-Winchester victim who made the

²³⁵ Account of Witness 027.

²³⁶ Account of John Woolmer.

²³⁷ Account of John Woolmer.

²³⁸ Accounts of Victims 002 and 004.

²³⁹ P. 40 supra.

first disclosure to Mark Ruston which triggered a telephone call to David Fletcher in early 1982).

The 2014 Titus Trust Report states that in 1981, after receiving the anonymous note and the disclosure from Mark Ruston, David Fletcher met with the victim who had first spoken to Mark Ruston in a lay by. It states that "MR [Mark Ruston] met the victims one by one".

The report states, "DCMF [David Fletcher] confronted JS about the practice and MR followed this up in several meetings with JS. JS was due to attend a meeting with several Iwerne Trustees but pulled out at the last minute. DCMF was about to tell JS that he couldn't continue to serve at Iwerne when the latter resigned from camp and as Chairman of the Iwerne Trust."

There are clear inconsistencies in this account, as Smyth resigned as Chairman and as a trustee of the Iwerne Trust in 1982 and the report which Mark Ruston wrote following his meetings with victims is also dated 1982. (The date of 1982 is handwritten on the document.)

The reviewers have not had sight of the material underlying the 2014 report. It appears to have been drafted based on the account of David Fletcher, as the relevant reference is to "notes from a meeting between DCMF and JDWS", referring to James Stileman, the CEO of the Titus Trust.²⁴⁰ The reviewers have not seen any evidence that a disclosure of abuse was made in 1981, other than the statements made in that report.

12. Winchester College's response to the disclosure

According to the contemporaneous documentation available to the reviewers, as well as the recollection of some victims, in October 1982 John Thorn drafted an undertaking which contained three conditions: that Smyth must never again have contact with the men whom he abused, that he must seek medical treatment, and that he must never undertake spiritual/counselling work with young males again. He, [the father of Victim 001], and [the father of Victim 002] met with Smyth and required him to sign the undertaking.

According to the letter which Peter Krakenberger wrote to members of Smyth's inner circle on 17 October 1982, the conditions were "deemed essential" by "every concerned adult in the know". He listed ten individuals by their initials. The list appears to include David Fletcher, Mark Ruston, John Eddison, Dick Knight, Mark Ashton, John Thorn, [the father of Victim 001], [the father of Victim 002], Geoff Hewitson and Peter Krakenberger. The letter states that Smyth "bound himself" to the undertaking after much persuasion on 14 October 1982.

²⁴⁰ The reference is undated, but based on other information contained in the report this may be a reference to the meeting between David Fletcher and the author of the report on 2 July 2014. This has not been verified by the reviewers.

In January 2017, a handwritten copy of the undertaking was provided by a victim of Smyth.²⁴¹ The document is not signed or dated and the final section is redacted. It stated:

"The following undertaking is given by Mr John Smyth QC to Mr John Thorn, Headmaster of Winchester College and Vice-Chairman of the Headmasters' Conference on this ____ day of October, 1982.

1. I undertake unequivocally to break completely with those I have implicated in a practice I now accept as misguided and wrong. I accept that "completely" implies no steps to approach them and no steps to allow them to approach me.
2. I undertake to receive specialist medical advice at once and to receive treatment if so advised.
3. I now accept that my mission can no longer lie with boys and young men, and I undertake not to take on again the role of spiritual counsellor to them.

I accept that a copy of this undertaking will remain with the Headmaster of Winchester College and his successor(s); and also that access to it may be given to..."

By comparison to other documents from the College archives, the handwriting on the undertaking appears to be that of John Thorn. John Thorn confirmed to the College that the handwriting was his.²⁴²

Despite stating that the document would be retained by the Headmaster, no copy of this document has been found in the College Archives. In 1985, the father of Victim 003 asked the Headmaster of Winchester College for a copy of the signed undertaking. By that time, John Thorn had retired and his successor was James Sabben-Clare. The father of Victim 003 was told that the signed document could not be found.²⁴³

In 1993, David Coltart attempted to obtain a copy of the undertaking for the purposes of his report into Smyth's actions in Zimbabwe. According to the report, John Thorn told him that the undertaking had been signed, but he could not locate a copy.²⁴⁴

In relation to the undertaking, the Coltart Report states as follows: "Mr T Tanser, Mr Smyth's lawyer, advises that Mr Thorn subsequently waived the undertaking given by Mr Smyth so far as his ministry in Zimbabwe is concerned. We have been unable to verify this."²⁴⁵ The reviewers have also found no corroborating evidence to verify this statement.

The reviewers have been informed that when the College conducted its internal investigation in 2017, enquiries were made of James Sabben-Clare. He was terminally

²⁴¹ The document was provided to the reviewers by Victim 004. A copy of the handwritten undertaking is at Appendix 4 of this report.

²⁴² Note of meeting with John Thorn, *supra*.

²⁴³ Account of Victim 003.

²⁴⁴ Coltart Report, page 3.

²⁴⁵ Coltart Report, page 3.

ill at the time and died in March 2017. His wife, Mary, responded to the enquiry and stated that the handover her husband had received from John Thorn was limited. She said that it was likely that it was not considered necessary to handover information about Smyth, as "everyone knew JS was gone, and why".²⁴⁶

David Conner, who was the Senior Chaplain at Winchester College at the time, said that he recalled John Thorn speaking with him in 1982. He said that allegations of corporal punishment against Smyth had been investigated and found to be true, but the parents of the boys involved had asked that no further action be taken as they did not want any fuss. He remembered that John Thorn had told the common room the following day that Smyth was banned from Winchester College and that if anyone saw him, they should report him. He said that he understood that it was boys of university age who had been beaten. He also told the reviewers that no pupils had approached him about the matter while he was at Winchester College.²⁴⁷

Witness 037, a former staff member, also recalled John Thorn speaking with the common room about Smyth. He said he thought John Thorn spoke "generally, not in graphic detail" and he believed that the common room did not know anything of the details of what Smyth had done. He was aware that Geoff Hewitson knew about the abuse after it was disclosed because he spoke to Witness 037 about the matter with detailed knowledge. He said that Geoff Hewitson felt a sense of outrage at the general modus operandi of the Iwerne house parties in the context of which Smyth had been allowed to operate unchecked.²⁴⁸

Witness 037 said that he, Geoff Hewitson and Peter Krakenberger were the staff members at the school who became aware of the abuse in 1982. He said that they "were acutely aware of our need to be utterly discreet, and maintained that discretion with the best of our integrity".

Witness 052, a former staff member at the College, recalled that John Thorn came into his office one day in the early 1980s and told him that Smyth had "done something serious". He said there was no mention of abuse, including physical abuse. He said that he was told that John Thorn had told Smyth never to enter Winchester College again.

Witness 052 was on the Board of Governors for a separate preparatory school with Smyth, so he made a decision to telephone Smyth immediately.²⁴⁹ He asked him to resign from the Board of Governors of the other school and Smyth agreed without argument. The two men did not speak again. Witness 052 said that he was shocked when the abuse became public, as he was not aware of the details at the time.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Record of telephone conversation between Winchester College and Mary Sabben-Clare dated 30 January 2017.

²⁴⁷ Account of David Conner.

²⁴⁸ Account of Witness 037.

²⁴⁹ For the purposes of clarity, this was a step which was taken by Witness 052, not by John Thorn.

²⁵⁰ Account of Witness 052.

Witness 024, who was a pupil of Winchester College and a member of the Christian Forum at the time, said that he had no idea in 1982 that Smyth had been asked to leave but that he heard nothing about Smyth at Winchester College in the year after he left.²⁵¹

Witness 025, who was also a pupil at the time, said that when Smyth left the boys were told by Peter Krakenberger and their housemaster that he would not be visiting again and that they should refuse all contact with him if he ever tried to get in touch. The following year, Peter Krakenberger told them the details of his abuse of the older boys. He said that Peter Krakenberger "clearly found it deeply shocking and embarrassing" and the boys were utterly surprised.

Witness 046, a pupil at the time, said that he recalled that Smyth suddenly disappeared from the Christian Forum. A year or two later, his parents received a letter from Peter Krakenberger stating that there had been allegations of abuse. He said the tone of the letter suggested that the allegations were true. It stated that he had since gone to Africa.²⁵²

Witness 045, who was also a Winchester College pupil, said that he regularly attended bible study at Peter Krakenberger's flat. One week, the boys were told that Smyth would not be coming again because he had been beating boys. Witness 045 bumped into Smyth in Winchester the following week and said hello to him as usual.²⁵³

Andrew Graystone, in his book *Bleeding for Jesus*, stated that in the summer of 1983 24 Wykehamists attended Iwerne.²⁵⁴ It is not clear whether this is a reference to current or former pupils of Winchester College and the reviewers have not been able to independently verify this information.

Peter Krakenberger informed the College in 2017 that there were 16 victims of abuse by John Smyth in the UK, of whom eight had been pupils of Winchester College. He said that he believed that John Thorn had shown the undertaking to the parents of those eight pupils.²⁵⁵

As set out above, Victim 003 informed the reviewers that his father contacted John Thorn regarding the abuse in July 1982.²⁵⁶ It was suggested that the matter should be taken before the Warden and Fellows, though prior to the meeting John Thorn told him that it would not be discussed because none of the parents wanted any publicity and they were concerned it could damage the boys in future. He said that he had come up with a solution which they could discuss later. There is no evidence in the minutes of the meetings of the Warden and Fellows that this matter was ever discussed or brought to their attention. Victim 003 stated that his father subsequently learned that John Thorn had proposed a joint undertaking to be signed by Smyth and the College.

²⁵¹ Account of Witness 024.

²⁵² Account of Witness 046.

²⁵³ Account of Witness 045.

²⁵⁴ Graystone, A. (2021) *Bleeding for Jesus: John Smyth and the cult of Iwerne camps*. p.77.

²⁵⁵ Notes of a meeting with Peter Krakenberger dated 28 January 2017.

²⁵⁶ P. 69 supra.

Victim 003 believes that his father deeply regretted not informing the police and that his mother felt excluded from the process. Later, when she learned the extent of the abuse, she was adamant that the police should have been informed.

The parents of Victim 003 were not asked to comment on the undertaking, though his father saw an unsigned copy. Victim 003 understood from his father that at the time eight Wykehamists were known to have been beaten, but the parents of only three boys were informed.²⁵⁷ As stated above, the reviewers have been unable to speak the father of Victim 003, who is deceased.

In Charles Moore's interview of Victim 003, as reported in the Daily Telegraph, he stated that his father wanted "what was best for his son", who was still afraid to cross Smyth and so did not wish to pursue a criminal prosecution.²⁵⁸

Victim 004 said that he was at university when he received the letter from Peter Krakenberger (extracted above and dated 17 October 1982) which instructed him to stop having contact with Smyth. He said that he had no contact with Smyth after February 1982.

The Coltart Report also contains information about the College's response to the disclosure of the abuse:

"Fathers of two of the boys involved (and possibly John Thorn, the Headmaster of Winchester College), intended to instigate criminal proceedings. The offences were technically all criminal offences under Offences Against the Person Act of 1861, Section 47. The fathers were persuaded not to do so by the good efforts of "senior Christians" who made personal visits.²⁵⁹ They were persuaded not to do so on the understanding that Mr Smyth would give and sign an undertaking not to be involved in young people's work ever again.

A signed undertaking was given by Mr Smyth not to be involved in young people's work again. Only two copies of the undertaking were made. One was held by Mr Smyth and one was held by Mr Thorn. Mr Thorn says that the signed undertaking exists but that he cannot locate it. The signed undertaking was attested by David Fletcher at present Rector of St Ebbe's Church, Oxford.

At the same time Mr Smyth was disciplined by the Christian Church in the United Kingdom. He was forbidden to return to the Christian work he was involved in and was asked not to engage in work with young people and to receive medical treatment. It was on condition that he met these requests that his activity was not publicised at the time. In England, Scripture Union, David Mackinnes [sic] and

²⁵⁷ Based on the letter of John Thorn dated 12 October 1982, it appears this is a reference to the parents of Victim 001, the father of Victim 002 and the parents of another victim whose identity is known to the reviewers. P. 64 supra.

²⁵⁸ 'As in the case of John Smyth QC, an abusive theology can lead to terrible actions', Charles Moore, *The Telegraph*, 17 August 2018. Accessed online 01 June 2020: <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/13/case-john-smyth-qcan-abusive-theology-can-lead-terrible-actions/>>.

²⁵⁹ This reference to the efforts of "senior Christians" is notable in light of John Eddison's comment in his letter of 13 September 1982, as set out on Page 54 above: "... We both think that Mark Ashton may be able to get Thorn, as a price of his silence, to endorse the conditions we have laid upon JJS..."

David Jackson (both respected Christian leaders) were informed and also tried to counsel him. At the time, Mr Smyth ever only ascribed his activity to a misreading of scripture."

No reference was given for the above information and its provenance is unclear.

As stated above, when he gave his account to the College, John Thorn was unable to recall whether he had drafted the undertaking and whether Smyth had signed it. He said that he did recall meeting with Smyth and that he had "told him to fuck off".²⁶⁰ Peter Krakenberger told the College in 2017 that Smyth had signed the undertaking.

Although Andrew Graystone in his book "Bleeding for Jesus" stated that the undertaking was drafted by John Thorn and two victims' fathers,²⁶¹, the reviewers have been unable to determine which persons had input into the drafting of the undertaking and the extent of their influence, including the fathers of victims, members of the Iwerne Trust, John Smyth and/or John Thorn. This is due to the passage of time, the death of key witnesses and the inability of John Thorn to participate in the review.

The unsigned version of the undertaking stated that it would be kept by the Headmaster and passed to his successors. Access was stated to be permitted for a small group of people, but their names have been redacted.

In his autobiographical book, *The Road to Winchester*, which was published in 1989, John Thorn described the disclosure of abuse as follows:

"Then the storm broke. I was told the extraordinary news that the neighbouring barrister had gained such personal control over a few of the senior boys in the group, and had kept it after they left the school, that he was claiming to direct their burgeoning relationships with girls, and was, with their consent, punishing them physically when they confessed to him they had sinned. The world of conservative evangelicalism was reft in twain.

Absurd and baseless rumours were circulated that he was an unhinged tyrant, the embodiment of Satan. He must be banished. And – quietly but efficiently – he was. He left the Winchester district and then the United Kingdom. He departed for Africa with his family and, by me, has not been heard of since. Christian Forum was shattered. It kept going for a few more years, its numbers steadily declining, hampered by the fact that two of its surviving leaders found it difficult, for reasons which escaped me, to speak to one another or pray together. About a year ago, the remnant decided it was time to disband. Christian Forum is no more."

Following publication, John Smyth responded to John Thorn's account in a letter which he wrote to the Chairman of the Zambesi Trust and of the Zambesi Ministries. The letter is dated March 1989 and was sent from Harare. The letter states:

²⁶⁰ Notes of meeting with John Thorn, *supra*.

²⁶¹ Graystone, A. (2021) *Bleeding for Jesus: John Smyth and the cult of Iwerne camps*. p.81.

"1. Within a few days of the matter first coming to the attention of older Christians in February 1982, John accepted that what he had been doing was entirely wrong and he has never sought to justify it since. By reason of pressures of professional and Christian work he had for some years previously become completely dependent on sleeping pills, and there is no doubt that this extraordinary aberration of judgement was in some way linked with that.

2. The writer is incorrect in implying that the whole evangelical Christian world knew of this. The matter was kept within a relatively small group.

3. The writer is also entirely wrong in saying that John and his family moved to Africa in response to pressures from others...

4. The writer is further in error in suggesting that the family left the Winchester district before moving to Africa...

N.B. Please regard this as a confidential document, NOT for general circulation. It is intended only for the eyes of those who raise queries about the matter in the book."

It is clear from the account given in Peter Krakenberger's letter and in *The Road to Winchester* that neither John Thorn nor Peter Krakenberger reported the incident to the police or social services at the time. When he was asked by the College in 2017, John Thorn confirmed that he did not contact the police, but he could not recall whether that course of action was thought about or discussed. He could not recall whether the matter was discussed with the parents of the victims.²⁶²

Speaking to *The Times* in 2017, John Thorn said:

"[The disclosure] was informally discussed with one or two governors... Somehow it didn't occur to one at that point to bother the police. I think now in retrospect, in respect to this ghastly man, it probably would have been more sensible to do that, but people at the time... the boys on the whole didn't want that to happen. This was historically the case. They did not want any publicity at all and probably still don't. If they had made a fuss, the police might have entered in... but we got this bugger out of the country – excuse my language – into Africa and said: thank God that's gone."²⁶³

Despite the above comments by John Thorn, there is some evidence from third parties that consideration was given by the College to making a report to the police at the time. Peter Krakenberger informed the College in 2017 that at the time matters relating to the pupils were left to their parents to decide. He said that the Headmaster had informed the parents of the pupils and had been guided by their opinions. He said that it was the

²⁶² Note of meeting with John Thorn, *supra*.

²⁶³ 'Headmaster: I wish I'd told police of Smyth abuse fears', Nicholas Hellen, *The Times*, 12 February 2017. Accessed online 23 September 2021: <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/headmaster-i-wish-id-told-police-of-smyth-abuse-fears-cc55lmhhq>>. Just as for other comments attributed to John Thorn in 2017, the reviewers have taken into account the recent findings in relation to his capacity to participate in the review, and acknowledge that these factors may have been extant in 2017 and may have affected his recall or his approach to questioning regarding Smyth.

decision of the victims' parents not to refer the matter to the police and stated, "In those days matters relating to boys were left to the parents to decide. [The Headmaster] would inform parents and be guided by their opinions".²⁶⁴

In addition, the mother of Victim 001 told the reviewers that her husband had accepted at the time that it was the right decision not to refer the matter to the police. She said that the victims were adults at the time of the disclosure and he had thought that reporting the abuse to the police could have ruined the victims' futures.²⁶⁵

From the evidence available to the reviewers, it appears that no report was made to the police by members of the other bodies which had knowledge of the allegations through the Ruston Report or through disclosures made by victims, including The Iwerne Trust, The Scripture Union or the Church of England.

As the allegations were not known to the police, they were not investigated at or near the time, despite Mark Ruston stating in his report to the Iwerne Trust: "they were all technically criminal offences under The Offences against the Person Act 1861, sec 47".²⁶⁶

As set out above, the allegations were first reported to the police in 2013 by the Titus Trust. Winchester College reported the allegations to the police and the Local Authority Designated Officer (**LADO**) in January 2017.

Witness 037, a former staff member who was close to Geoff Hewitson, said that in 1984 or 1985, he asked Witness 037 to arrange a meeting with David Fletcher over a meal in his apartment in Winchester. He said that Geoff Hewitson had concerns about how the abuse had happened and the extent to which Smyth had exploited the Christian faith. He said:

"It was amicable and polite, but frosty, and again Geoff Hewitson offloaded his grave concern over Smyth having been allowed undue influence over vulnerable teenagers. David Fletcher tried to assure him of his own devastation at learning of the abuse, and assured Geoff that neither he nor any other adult involved at Iwerne had any intimation of anything being amiss."

Witness 037 said that Geoff Hewitson wanted to learn lessons from the matter and questioned why there was no review by the Fellows or the Headmaster.

When considering the actions taken in response to the disclosure, the reviewers have taken into account that full or detailed knowledge of the abuse perpetrated by Smyth was not widespread within the College and appears to have been limited to a small group of staff members.

²⁶⁴ Notes of a meeting with Peter Krakenberger, dated 26 January 2017.

²⁶⁵ Account of Witness 026 (the mother of Victim 001).

²⁶⁶ The Ruston Report, paragraph 3.

Victim 004 has stated that after disclosure of the abuse in 1982, he received no contact from anyone at Winchester College, either to confirm the disclosure or to offer help or support.²⁶⁷

Victim A also said that after the disclosure in 1982 no effort was made by anyone at Winchester College to investigate the well-being of the victims.²⁶⁸

Victim 002 also stated that no-one at Winchester College contacted him in October 1982 after the abuse was disclosed to John Thorn.²⁶⁹

Although no report was made to the police, some limited support was provided to victims by Mark Ruston. Victim 004 stated that Mark Ruston was obviously shaken by the volume and severity of the abuse and by hearing first-hand the harm and the long-term impact experienced as a result. He said that he offered those he spoke with assistance.²⁷⁰

The reviewers have been provided with an audio recording of a sermon given by Mark Ruston on 11 June 1989, entitled "Suffering and Glory", in which he referred to the abuse perpetrated by Smyth.²⁷¹ In the sermon he spoke about the suffering of Christ and argued that Christians must share in that suffering. He stated:

"The strangest thing I think in all my ministry is when I discovered that a group of students who might be like you years ago were voluntarily accepting severe physical chastisement – beating – in order for the purifying of the flesh. They were seeking something, you see, because they thought the pain and the suffering was what would help them. So it is not of course to be sought, but to be accepted if it comes. And soberly of course as well, because you think of the lightness of the suffering that begins with the house of God and the terror of the suffering which will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God, disobedient."

This characterisation is fundamentally at odds with the description of the abuse contained in the Ruston Report.

Victim 003 did not speak with Mark Ruston. As described above, he attempted to commit suicide in February 1982 as a result of the abuse. He was visited in hospital twice by Hugh Palmer, a Iwerne Officer and an Anglican Churchman, but he was not offered any support.²⁷² He said he did not know how Hugh Palmer and the Iwerne Trust had found out about his suicide attempt when his own parents were not aware.

²⁶⁷ Account of Victim 004.

²⁶⁸ Account of Victim A.

²⁶⁹ Account of Victim 002.

²⁷⁰ Account of Victim 004.

²⁷¹ Recording of sermon by Mark Ruston at St Andrew the Great, Cambridge, 11 June 1989.

²⁷² Account of Victim 003.

Victim 002 said that his father, who became aware of the abuse in 1982, suggested in early 1983 that he should "see someone", but that this was arranged and paid for by the family and not the College.²⁷³

Victim 005 said:

"It would've helped me enormously if I'd been able to have psychotherapy before leaving university, to get my head sorted out around these traumas... I've had 35 years being messed up because of it when actually if it'd been reported to the police which it should have been, Smyth would have been brought to justice and those of us who were and are victims would have been helped."

In relation to Winchester College, the abuse was not made public until the publication of *The Road to Winchester* in February 1989. Both Victim 004 and Victim 002 had stated that they were not contacted by Winchester College in 1989, nor were any other victims known to them. Victim 002 said, "they were not interested in how I was coping".

13. 1982 – present day

The 2014 Titus Trust Report states that Smyth received counselling from an Anglican priest between 1982 and 1984. He studied theology at the Anglican College in Bristol under George Carey as principal, who subsequently became the Bishop of Bath and Wells and later the Archbishop of Canterbury.

In 1984, Smyth and his family moved from the UK to Zimbabwe. The horrific abuse perpetrated by Smyth against children at evangelical camps in Zimbabwe is described in the Coltart Report, which was published on 19 October 1993. Smyth subsequently moved from Zimbabwe to South Africa.

The reviewers have seen no evidence of any further attendance by Smyth at Winchester College or of any involvement by the College in his subsequent activities.

The actions taken in relation to Smyth after 1982 by other organisations such as the Iwerne Trust, the Church of England or the Zambesi Ministries fall outside the scope of this review.

Winchester College was made aware of the allegations resurfacing in January 2017 following enquiries from Channel 4 News. The College reported the abuse to the police and to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the Local Authority on 13 January 2017.

In August of 2018, John Smyth died in Cape Town, South Africa. At the time of his death, he was wanted for questioning by police in the UK and the CPS was considering making an extradition request to the authorities in South Africa.

²⁷³ Account of Victim 002.

14. Factual findings regarding the abuse perpetrated by John Smyth

These findings have been assessed using the civil standard of proof and on the basis of the evidence available to the reviewers at the time of publication. The reviewers are aware that the review commissioned by the Church of England is ongoing at the time of publication. The reviewers have not had access to all of the evidence gathered in relation to that review. Accordingly, these findings are subject to any further evidence which may come to light in the course of that review.

The reviewers have undertaken a representations process, in which key witnesses were invited to read and respond to adverse or critical findings. However, the scope of this process and the evidence available to the reviewers was necessarily limited by the passage of time and the fact that key witnesses, including some who may have sought to challenge the findings, were unable to participate in the review due to death or illness, including John Smyth, John Thorn, Mark Ashton, Mark Rushton and Geoff Hewitson. In addition, Peter Krakenberger declined to participate in the review.

As a result, the findings which are set out below have been drafted in the absence of their evidence and they are therefore limited. Without being able to interview John Thorn, for example, the reviewers have incomplete information and cannot reach definite findings about what he knew in 1982 or why he responded in a particular way.

The reviewers are not able to speculate as to whether the evidence of these witnesses might have altered the findings of this review, or, if so, the ways in which the findings might have been affected. This section should be read as being subject to that important caveat.

In addition, the findings are limited to those which are required by the Terms of Reference.

How many pupils of Winchester College were abused by Smyth?

It is not possible for the reviewers to definitively state how many pupils at Winchester College were abused by Smyth.

However, the following information can be definitively stated which assists in understanding the likely scope of abuse perpetrated by Smyth in relation to Winchester College:

- i. the reviewers have spoken to eight former pupils of Winchester College who were abused by Smyth;
- ii. the reviewers are aware of two former pupils who were abused by Smyth who are now deceased;
- iii. the reviewers are aware of one former pupil who was abused by Smyth from the accounts given by other victims;
- iv. the reviewers are aware of one former pupil who was abused by Smyth from the information contained in the Ruston Report;

- v. the reviewers were provided with the witness statement of one former pupil who was abused by Smyth.²⁷⁴

In total, the reviewers are aware of 13 former pupils of Winchester College who were abused by Smyth. Not all of the abuse involved assault or physical beatings. Some of the victims were subjected to severe emotional and spiritual abuse and inappropriate sexualised behaviour.

It is likely that there were other victims of Smyth who were pupils of Winchester College. In accordance with the Methodology at Section 4 above, the reviewers have not approached victims directly, but have relied on the circulation of information and the provision of an open invitation to participate in the review. This approach was in accordance with the primary objective of protecting the welfare of victims and witnesses. The reviewers have tried to take steps to ensure that, as far as possible, no harm has been caused to victims or witnesses who respond to the review and to avoid re-traumatising those who have come forward.

Some victims are now deceased. Others may be unwilling to speak with the reviewers about what they have experienced. Some may have spoken with those undertaking one independent review (such as the Church of England or the Scripture Union), but may not have been willing to share their accounts with reviewers commissioned by other organisations, such as Winchester College.

Victim 003 said that he remembered his father, who had been informed of the abuse in 1982, telling him that eight boys were known to have been beaten by Smyth, but only three fathers were told.²⁷⁵ Peter Krakenberger said that he was aware of 16 victims, of whom eight had been pupils of Winchester College.²⁷⁶ Information shared with the reviewers by an independent reviewer commissioned by the Church of England review team at the time of writing suggests that there may have been as many as 22 victims who were linked to Winchester College.

According to the evidence gathered by the reviewers, between 1972 – 1975, the Christian Forum had a membership of approximately 20 pupils. By 1977, over 100 students were attending each meeting. John Smyth attended 30-40% of the Christian Forum events and spoke at the College each term from 1975-1982. He also attended meetings with a smaller group of boys at Peter Krakenberger's flat. As set out above, some boys also went to Smyth's house for Sunday lunch.

It is therefore likely that between 100-200 Winchester pupils encountered Smyth in the period from 1975-1982, although it appears that the majority of Christian Forum members were never in a situation where they were alone with Smyth.

The reviewers are not aware of any abuse of Winchester College pupils by Smyth which took place prior to the mid-1970s. However, there is evidence that Smyth was

²⁷⁴ The account of Victim 015 was shared with their prior consent.

²⁷⁵ From the contemporaneous documentation, it appears this is a reference to the parents of Victim 001, the father of Victim 002 and the parents of another victim whose identity is known to the reviewers.

²⁷⁶ Notes of a meeting with Peter Krakenberger dated 26 January 2017.

involved with the Christian Forum and other evangelical groups at the College as early as 1970/1971.²⁷⁷

The Terms of Reference do not encompass abuse which took place outside of the context of Winchester College. It is therefore not possible for the reviewers to determine the total number of young people who were victims of abuse perpetrated by Smyth. Estimates which are available in open-source materials vary, but numerous documents suggest that more than 100 boys were subjected to abuse by Smyth over the course of 30 years.

Where and when did the abuse take place?

The earliest abuse described to the reviewers took place in approximately 1974/1975.²⁷⁸

Although the majority of the abuse occurred when the victims were studying at University, multiple victims were abused by Smyth while they were pupils of Winchester College and while they were under the age of 18. For example, Victim 008 was first beaten by Smyth when he was 15 years old.

Many of those who were abused while at University were vulnerable to Smyth's control because they were groomed by him while they were pupils at school.

There is no evidence that any of the victims were beaten by Smyth on the campus of Winchester College. However, there is evidence that Victim 025 was assaulted by the squeezing of his genitals and that grooming behaviour took place on College property, including in the flat of Peter Krakenberger.

Grooming is a term which is used to describe predatory behaviour towards children which is preparatory to abuse. The reviewers note that it is not a term which was used or understood at the time when the events described in this report occurred.

There is no universally accepted definition of the term 'grooming',²⁷⁹ but Gillespie defines it as:

"The process by which a child is befriended by a would-be abuser in an attempt to gain the child's confidence and trust, enabling them to get the child to acquiesce in abusive activity. It is frequently a pre-requisite for an abuser to gain access to a child."²⁸⁰

Similarly, Craven et al. define grooming as:

"A process by which a person prepares a child, significant adults and the environment for the abuse of this child. Specific goals include gaining access to the child, gaining the child's compliance and maintaining the child's secrecy to

²⁷⁷ Supra, p. 16.

²⁷⁸ Account of Victim 008.

²⁷⁹ Gillespie, A. (2004) "Grooming": definitions and the law. *New Law Journal*.

²⁸⁰ Gillespie, A. (2002) *Child protection on the internet: challenges for criminal law*. *Child and Family Law Quarterly*. 14, pp. 411-425.

avoid disclosure. This process serves to strengthen the offender's abusive pattern, as it may be used as a means of justifying or denying their actions."²⁸¹

There is a broad range of grooming behaviour and each victim's experience of grooming is different, because offenders adapt their strategies to each child and may change their approach depending on the child's response.²⁸²

Tactics used to groom children include engaging in a form of sex education, in which the offender purports to teach the child principles or practical information about sex, and the gradual sexualisation of the relationship between the offender and the victim,²⁸³ where an abuser builds trust with a child and makes them feel positive before beginning to violate boundaries.²⁸⁴ Examples of violating boundaries may include getting dressed in the same room as a child to normalise nudity.²⁸⁵ Other tactics include maintaining a child's compliance by issuing threats and bribes²⁸⁶ and isolating a child to maintain secrecy,²⁸⁷ which creates a barrier to prevent disclosure.²⁸⁸

The reviewers consider that the behaviour of Smyth towards the victims, as described by the victims themselves and by other witnesses, constituted grooming behaviour, or acts preparatory to the commission of child abuse. Some examples include Smyth's use of threats in the form of blackmail and bribes in the form of food, drink and privileges not available within the College to persuade and coerce his victims, Smyth's deliberate isolation of victims from friends, family and staff members at the College and his urging of secrecy, and Smyth's violation of boundaries by engaging in sexualised conversation with young boys and encouraging nudity.

The majority of the abuse took place at Smyth's house near Winchester. Some abuse took place at properties used for the camps run by the Iwerne Trust.

Pupils were permitted to travel freely between the College, Peter Krakenberger's house and Smyth's house, including during term time. Smyth's house was located approximately five miles from Winchester College. Some pupils travelled to his house by bicycle while others were collected from the College by Smyth in his car. Multiple victims stated that the College was unaware of their whereabouts when they were visiting Smyth.

²⁸¹ Craven, S., Brown, S. & Gilchrist, E. (2006) *Sexual grooming of children: Review of literature and theoretical considerations*. Journal of Sexual Aggression. 12:3, p. 297.

²⁸² *ibid.* p. 296.

²⁸³ Berliner, L. & Conte, J. R. (1990) *The process of victimization: The victims' perspective*. Child Abuse and Neglect. 14, pp. 29-40.

²⁸⁴ Grooming has been considered as part of Finkelhor's Pre-condition Model of abuse as a method of 'overcoming resistance'. Finkelhor, D. (1984). *Child sexual abuse: New theory and research*. New York: Free Press; Craven et al. *supra*.

²⁸⁵ Craven, S. et al. *supra*.

²⁸⁶ Berliner, L. & Conte, J. R. *supra*.

²⁸⁷ van Dam, C. (2001). *Identifying Child Molesters: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse by Recognizing the Patterns of the Offenders*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Maltreatment and Trauma Press/The Haworth Press, Inc.

²⁸⁸ Warner, S. (2000). *Understanding Child Sexual Abuse: Making the Tactics Possible*. Gloucester: Handsell.

Was the physical abuse consensual?

A number of witnesses have stated that when they first became aware of the actions of Smyth in 1982, they understood that the beatings which took place were consensual and occurred only between adults. The question of consent was raised in the Ruston Report, in the sermon given by Mark Ruston in 1989 and by the police when interviewing victims of abuse perpetrated by Smyth.

The abuse did not take place between adults only. As set out above, Smyth was responsible for physically abusing children as young as 15 years old. The reviewers have heard evidence that children as young as 13 years old were groomed by Smyth.

The reviewers have concluded on the balance of probabilities that none of the victims consented to the abuse perpetrated by Smyth. In each case, the victims were unable to consent as a result of their age, the nature of the abuse and/or the circumstances in which they were abused, coerced and groomed by Smyth.

Some victims, such as Victim 003 and Victim 007, were coerced by Smyth. In both of those cases, the abuser knew information about the children which caused them shame (for example, he knew that Victim 007 had been caught shoplifting). He used that information to blackmail the victims until they agreed to visit his shed. Similarly, Victim 025 was pressured by Smyth to harm himself after he disclosed to him that he was homosexual. None of the victims who were treated this way consented to the abuse which they suffered.

Other victims did agree to be punished by Smyth, but were not informed of the nature, severity or extent of the abuse. For example, when Victim 005 agreed to visit Smyth's garden shed, he believed he was agreeing to the kind of mild corporal punishment which was lawful at the time. He did not, and legally could not, consent to the brutal beating and long-term harm which Smyth inflicted, because a person must ordinarily understand the nature of the activity or conduct to which they are consenting²⁸⁹ and because, as a matter of law, it is not possible to consent to the infliction of actual bodily harm.²⁹⁰

In addition, any 'consent' which was given by the victims must be seen through the lens of the imbalance of power within the relationship between Smyth and the members of the Christian Forum.²⁹¹ The uneven power dynamic which ordinarily persists between children and adults or students and their teachers was tilted more strongly in Smyth's favour in this case, because he had groomed the boys over the course of several years, building religious influence, knowledge of their intimate secrets and the power to exert guilt or moral pressure.

²⁸⁹ *Burrell v Harmer* [1967] Crim LR 169; See also *R v Lock* (1872) LR 2 CCR 10.

²⁹⁰ *R v Brown* [1994] 1 AC 212 at [234] and [236].

²⁹¹ This statement reflects the definition of consent as a matter of law at the time of writing. The definition of consent prior to the introduction of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 was different in material respects. This assessment is not indicative of the approach which would have been taken had the actions of Smyth been subject to contemporaneous scrutiny by a prosecutor or a court, but instead to consideration of whether any of the victims would now be said to have consented to the physical and other abuse which was perpetrated by Smyth.

Smyth was an adult in a position of authority and was a powerful celebrity barrister. He had influence at major universities and offered pupils work experience and career opportunities in his chambers. His age, his wealth, his status and connections all contributed to an extreme power imbalance whereby the children and young adults who were left alone with him felt unable to refuse his instructions. For example, Victim 005 said of his first experience of abuse by Smyth, "He invited my consent but I felt so strongly that I was going to lose my friendship with my friends, lose my place in the group, lose his affection such as it was. He was controlling but he was also fatherly so I felt I had no real choice in the matter."²⁹²

When did Winchester College learn of the abuse?

This section will set out findings based on the evidence provided by victims and witnesses about when persons linked to Winchester College, namely current and former staff members, became aware of the disclosure of abuse. The report will address the timing of the disclosure to Mark Ashton, John Thorn, Geoff Hewitson, Witness 037 and Peter Krakenberger in turn.

From the contemporaneous documentary evidence available, it appears that Headmaster John Thorn became aware of the abuse on or about 13 September 1982. The correspondence from David Fletcher, John Eddison and Alan Martin indicates that they believed that John Thorn was unaware of the disclosure in August 1982.

The letter from John Eddison to David Fletcher dated 13 August 1982 suggests that Mark Ashton was already aware of the disclosure by that date, as it discussed whether Mark Ashton should inform John Thorn. In response, David Fletcher wrote that he agreed with John Eddison about Mark Ashton seeing John Thorn.

On 24 August 1982, David Fletcher sent a letter to Alan Martin stating that Mark Ashton had spoken to John Smyth "about the suspicions voiced concerning him" and Mark Ashton asked him whether he had done anything which could be construed as homosexual.

On 25 August 1982, John Eddison wrote a letter to Mark Ruston in which he indicated that Mark Ashton wanted to share the information about Smyth with John Thorn.

On 13 September 1982, John Eddison wrote again to Mark Ruston and stated that Mark Ashton had persuaded Smyth to agree to meet with David Fletcher, Anthony Cordle and David MacInnes and that he had met with the latter two persons himself. The letter stated that Mark Ashton was going to see John Thorn that day.

The reviewers have taken into account that this documentation is contemporaneous and that the reviewers are not aware of any reason why David Fletcher and John Eddison would misrepresent events in letters which they believed were confidential communications between individuals sharing the same or similar interests.

²⁹² Account of Victim 005.

The reviewers have concluded on the balance of probabilities that Mark Ashton was aware of the abuse by 13 August 1982. At that time, Mark Ashton was no longer employed by Winchester College, having left the College in July 1981.

It is not clear from the above correspondence exactly what information was known by Mark Ashton about the abuse. The documents do not state whether Mark Ashton had read the Ruston Report, but he must have had sufficient knowledge to participate in meetings about the response to the disclosure. The reviewers consider that the note dated 15 September 1982 is an indication that Mark Ashton was aware that the allegations involved nudity and blood. Even if John Thorn was not told about blood and nudity, the logical inference to be drawn from the note is that those matters were discussed between Mark Ruston and Mark Ashton.

Based on the letter of John Eddison dated 13 September 1982 and the account of Fiona Ashton, the reviewers have concluded on the balance of probabilities that on 13 September, Mark Ruston telephoned Mark Ashton and asked him to inform John Thorn about the disclosure which had been made about Smyth.²⁹³ Both Mark Ruston and Mark Ashton are now deceased and so it is not known exactly what information was shared about the abuse at that time.

As set out in the preceding section, there are two pieces of information which suggest that John Thorn may have been informed of the abuse prior to September 1982:

First, the mother of Victim 001 said that she thought that her son had told her and her husband about the abuse around Easter of 1982. She said that she could not imagine that her husband had not informed John Thorn at the time. However, the father of Victim 001 is now deceased and it has not been possible to confirm this date or whether he did inform John Thorn of the abuse. The date of disclosure given by the mother of Victim 001 is at odds with the letter of Peter Krakenberger dated 17 October 1982, which stated that members of the Iwerne Trust had known since February that the father of Victim 001 would have to be told about the abuse, but that Victim 001 had informed him for the first time early in the September term.

Second, Victim 003 told the reviewers that in July of 1982, after he attempted to commit suicide, his father contacted John Thorn. Victim 003 was told by his father that John Thorn had said he already knew about it and that it would be discussed by the Fellows at their next meeting. There is no record of the matter being discussed in the meetings of the Warden and Fellows in 1982. The reviewers have been unable to speak with the father of Victim 003 to confirm the account and the dates of this disclosure, as he is now deceased.

As the above information cannot be corroborated, and given the information set out in the contemporaneous documentation, **the reviewers have concluded on the balance of probabilities that John Thorn was informed of the abuse by Mark Ashton on 13 September 1982.**

²⁹³ The reviewers note that Peter Krakenberger's account that he informed John Thorn of the abuse himself and that Mark Ashton had no involvement is not consistent with the contemporaneous documentation, including the letter of Peter Krakenberger dated 17 October 1982.

According to the letter of Peter Krakenberger dated 17 October 1982, Geoff Hewitson was informed of the abuse by him in September 1982. Witness 037 has also confirmed that Geoff Hewitson was aware of the abuse in 1982.²⁹⁴

The reviewers have concluded on the balance of probabilities that Geoff Hewitson became aware of the abuse in September 1982.

Witness 037 was a staff member at Winchester College who was close friends with Geoff Hewitson. He said that Geoff spoke to him about the abuse and showed "detailed knowledge". Witness 037 was present at a meeting at his apartment in Winchester in 1984 or 1985 when Geoff Hewitson confronted David Fletcher about the abuse.

The reviewers have concluded on the balance of probabilities that Witness 037 became aware of the abuse in late 1982.

It is apparent from the documentary evidence that Peter Krakenberger, who was a member of staff at the College, became aware of the abuse at an earlier date than John Thorn or Geoff Hewitson.

In his letter of 17 October 1982, there are clear indications that he was aware of the deliberations of the Iwerne Trust in relation to the disclosure of abuse. He referred to senior members of the Iwerne Trust being aware of the abuse as early as February 1982 and said that they spent eight months trying to persuade Smyth to agree to abide by the conditions set out in the undertaking.

In the account which he gave to Winchester College in 2017, Peter Krakenberger said that he was told about the abuse by the Scripture Union camps in the spring of 1982. This prompted him to visit Mark Ruston, who gave him a copy of the Ruston Report.²⁹⁵

As discussed in Section 11 of this report, the account given by Peter Krakenberger in 2017 is inconsistent in a number of respects with the contemporaneous documentation provided to the reviewers, including his own correspondence. For example, the notes of the meeting with Peter Krakenberger in January 2017 record that he stated that "Mark Ashton had nothing to do with the events or telling John Thorn",²⁹⁶ but, as set out above, there is contemporaneous documentation showing his involvement, including notably a letter written by Peter Krakenberger himself.²⁹⁷

However, his statement that he learned of the abuse in spring 1982 is not inconsistent with other evidence. The reviewers have not seen anything which suggests that Peter Krakenberger was aware of the abuse prior to spring 1982. Peter Krakenberger has chosen not to participate in this review or to make any comments on the record.

In the absence of contradictory information and on the basis of the evidence provided at the time of writing, **the reviewers have concluded on the balance of probabilities that Peter Krakenberger learned about the abuse in the spring of 1982. The reviewers have not seen any evidence that he informed the College or the police**

²⁹⁴ Account of Witness 037.

²⁹⁵ Notes of a meeting with Peter Krakenberger on 26 January 2017.

²⁹⁶ *ibid.*

²⁹⁷ Letter written by Peter Krakenberger dated 17 October 1982, *supra* p. 67.

of the abuse between that date and September 1982, when John Thorn learned of the abuse.

The reviewers have not seen any evidence that Winchester College or members of its staff were provided with a copy of the Ruston Report, which set out the details of the abuse (other than Peter Krakenberger, who acknowledged that he had read the report). It is therefore unclear whether those staff members who subsequently became aware of 'misconduct' on the part of Smyth in 1982 actually knew that he had been involved in the abuse of pupils.

All of the witnesses who spoke to the reviewers about the abuse maintained that those who "knew" in 1982 were unaware of the nature or the gravity of the abuse, but believed that what had occurred was relatively minor, "consensual" and occurred only between adults.

David Conner, a former Winchester College Chaplain, said that he believed he was in the common room in 1982 when John Thorn spoke with the staff about Smyth. He thought that John Thorn had used the words "beating" or "corporal punishment", but said that at the time corporal punishment had recently been part of the educational scene. He said that the staff did not understand the "viciousness" of the abuse from what John Thorn said and observed that the reference to corporal punishment "would not have had the brutal, abusive and sexually suggestive tones that we should hear today".²⁹⁸

This is supported by the evidence of Witness 037, who said that the staff members at the College who knew about the abuse were himself, Peter Krakenberger and Geoff Hewitson. He told the reviewers that when John Thorn spoke to the common room about the actions of Smyth he did so generally and not in detail. He said, "I am virtually certain that the Common Room did not know details, only that Smyth was *persona non grata* in the College."²⁹⁹

How did Winchester College respond to the abuse and was the response appropriate?

Although Smyth first had contact with Winchester College in the early 1970s, the reviewers have not seen evidence that the College was aware of any concerns regarding inappropriate or abusive behaviour on his part prior to 1978. The anxieties recorded prior to that date primarily related to religious tensions between members of the Christian Forum and the mainstream chaplaincy.

Winchester College, through its staff members, was notified of a number of concerns related to Smyth in 1978. Concerns about religious divisions remained, but there was also some evidence of inappropriate conduct by Smyth which should have resulted in action by the school.

²⁹⁸ Account of David Conner.

²⁹⁹ Account of Witness 037.

For example, staff were aware that Smyth had a very close relationship with a number of pupils. Geoff Hewitson wrote in the 1978 Annals of House K:

"... I am uncertain as to how Mr Smyth fits into all of this: of his work as a counsellor I approve, but I feel that a too frequent intrusion on his part into the life of a House that has no logical connection with him threatens to be detrimental to the Unity of that house."³⁰⁰

This indicates that Smyth was providing "counselling" or "counsel" to pupils without any vetting or approval process and with the knowledge of the staff. It is unclear exactly what was meant by describing him as a "counsellor", but as set out above such a role would normally involve time spent alone with children in a position of trust and authority and it is clear from the text that this caused Geoff Hewitson concern.

In addition, the reviewers have been informed about two boys who were asked to become godparents to Smyth's children in 1978.³⁰¹ The College were aware of this because Smyth asked Euan MacAlpine, the Housemaster for Hawkins, to contact the parents of a pupil to seek their permission. This should have indicated to the College that Smyth had developed a very close relationship with some pupils. The use of College staff as a channel (which may have been a deliberate strategy on the part of Smyth to lend legitimacy to the request and reassure the parents) is an example of how the College inadvertently played a role in facilitating Smyth's grooming.

A number of concerns were raised directly with staff members at the College by pupils and parents. These included:

- i. The parents of Victim 004 wrote to the College to express concerns about the influence of Smyth on their son in 1978;³⁰²
- ii. The mother of Victim 002 spoke with Geoff Hewitson about their concerns regarding the influence of Smyth and Evangelicalism on their son, but were reassured by him that it was just a passing phase;³⁰³
- iii. The parents of Witness 006 refused to allow him to go to Smyth's house for Sunday lunch and this was brought to the attention of Housemaster Jock Macdonald;³⁰⁴
- iv. Witness 013 said that he shared his concerns about Smyth having too much influence with Stephan Hopkinson, a retired curate who had been brought to Winchester College to support the Chaplaincy;³⁰⁵
- v. Witness 050 told Geoff Hewitson that he believed that boys were being "brainwashed" by Smyth and that he was taking over their House;³⁰⁶
- vi. John Thorn wrote in *The Road to Winchester* that "many parents of the boys in [the Christian Forum] became worried". He said, "I shared these worries, but I

³⁰⁰ Handwritten Annals of House K, dated 1978.

³⁰¹ Accounts of Victim 003 and another victim who asked not to be identified in connection with this information.

³⁰² Account of Witness 022.

³⁰³ Account of Victim 002.

³⁰⁴ Account of Witness 006.

³⁰⁵ Account of Witness 013; Stephan Hopkinson is now deceased.

³⁰⁶ Account of Witness 050.

was reminded that this kind of thing was just what Jesus Christ Himself had prophesied for His devoted followers."³⁰⁷

The College was also aware of rumours that beatings were taking place between members of the Christian Forum. The reviewers have seen no evidence that the College knew that Smyth was abusing pupils, but the use of whips to inflict beatings was sufficiently well known to be referenced in passing in the student newspaper.³⁰⁸

Three Housemasters (Euan MacAlpine, Jock Macdonald and David Steele) prevented some boys in their houses from attending Sunday lunch at Smyth's house.

It is clear from the evidence provided to the reviewers that Smyth was careful to keep his abuse of pupils at Winchester College secret. He groomed his victims to believe that they were special and 'other', part of an elite group in which outsiders were excluded and seen as lesser. He taught his chosen boys to share information only with him and not with teachers, chaplains or other pupils at Winchester College and was described as using his skills as a barrister to encourage the victims' disclosures. As a result, the victims kept their suffering secret for many years, not only from their teachers and parents, but from one another.

Nonetheless, the College, through its staff, was aware that Smyth was spending a great deal of time alone with pupils. It was aware that Smyth had developed such close relationships with some pupils that he had invited them to become godparents to his children. It was aware of concerns on the part of parents and other students and multiple Housemasters separately decided that the concerns were sufficiently serious that their pupils should not be permitted to attend Smyth's house.

Some of these concerns may be relatively low-level when considered individually, but if appropriate information sharing processes had been in place among staff members, the College would have been able to recognise a pattern of inappropriate behaviour by Smyth and could have taken action to try to limit his contact with pupils. As Euan MacAlpine said in retrospect, "we all suspected but never got together to discuss it."³⁰⁹

It is not clear whether the concerns of staff members at this stage related only to religious divisions within the school, to the suspicion of abuse by Smyth or to concerns about homosexual activity, as has been suggested by some witnesses.³¹⁰ Even if the concern related to Smyth's potential homosexual interest in the pupils, this should have been a safeguarding concern (to use the current term) and should have led to steps being taken to monitor Smyth's interactions with boys.

The College did take some steps in response to concerns about religious divisions. For example, John Thorn recruited staff members such as Stephan Hopkinson and later

³⁰⁷ *The Road to Winchester*, supra fn. 62.

³⁰⁸ *The Dosser's Organ*, Issue No. 1, dated 22 June 1979, supra p. 34.

³⁰⁹ Email from Euan MacAlpine dated 28 January 2017.

³¹⁰ For example, Witness 022, who was the parent of a pupil who was abused by Smyth, said that the two concerns which they had at the time were the religious influence of the Christian Forum and the risk to their son of homosexuality. They said that when John Thorn informed them about Smyth's misconduct in 1982, they assumed that it was related to homosexual activities and they were not aware of any beatings.

Mark Ashton in an effort to "be a bridge" between the Christian Forum and the rest of the school and chaplaincy, and to "link the Christian Forum back into the school".³¹¹

However, there is no evidence that action was taken in response to the concerns about Smyth's relationship with boys. John Thorn openly acknowledged in *The Road to Winchester* that he did not accompany the boys or visit Smyth's home, even when invited, and he continued to allow pupils to spend considerable time with Smyth without supervision or checks in relation to their welfare after concerns were raised.³¹²

Staff at the College could have taken steps to monitor Smyth's presence and influence, for example by ensuring he was not left alone with pupils, by preventing pupils from attending his house without supervision or by restricting his attendance at Christian Forum meetings to occasions when he had been invited to speak. Such steps would have been in keeping with accepted safeguarding standards of the time.

Aside from general concerns about the influence of Smyth, at least two staff members specifically suspected that Smyth was pursuing inappropriate relationships with pupils.

Euan MacAlpine, who was responsible for the welfare of the boys in Hawkins House, was so concerned about the influence of Smyth and about his relationship with certain pupils that in 1978 he confronted him about inviting "only good-looking boys" to his house.³¹³ Smyth did not deny the allegation and his response of curling into a ball and admitting that he had gone too far should have been cause for serious concern.

Euan MacAlpine should have reported this incident to John Thorn and shared his concerns with the other Housemasters so that a coordinated response could be agreed.

When, in 1979, the parents of Victim 004 expressed concerns about Smyth, Euan MacAlpine promised them that he would keep an eye on Victim 004 to ensure that he kept a distance from Smyth.³¹⁴

According to the account given by Geoff Hewitson, Euan MacAlpine did warn Smyth not to come near boys from his House.³¹⁵ However, there is no evidence that any steps were taken to enforce that prohibition, or that anything was done to protect pupils in other Houses from his influence. Smyth continued to have contact with pupils in Euan MacAlpine's House after the warning was given, including with Victim 004.

Multiple Winchester pupils were subjected to abuse by Smyth between 1978, when Euan MacAlpine first began to suspect Smyth, and 1982, when the abuse was disclosed to John Thorn.

³¹¹ Account of Witness 042; Account of John Woolmer. However, John Thorn in *The Road to Winchester* linked only the appointment of Mark Ashton to concerns about the Christian Forum: "I appointed an evangelical clergyman to join the chaplaincy team and to help look after this thriving community, perhaps to ensure it did not get out of control".

³¹² *The Road to Winchester*, supra fn. 62.

³¹³ Email from Euan MacAlpine dated 28 January 2017.

³¹⁴ Email from Euan MacAlpine dated 28 January 2017.

³¹⁵ Notes of a conversation with Geoff Hewitson dated 21 January 2017.

The second staff member who suspected Smyth of inappropriate behaviour with pupils was Peter Krakenberger. As a teacher at the College and a leading figure in the Christian Forum, he was responsible for the welfare of the pupils under his care.

He acknowledged in correspondence with the College in 2017 that he had begun to suspect Smyth when he interrupted him alone with a boy one day. He said that he did not say anything about this as he believed it was not for him to question a senior member of the Church.³¹⁶

It is not clear when this incident occurred, but if Peter Krakenberger suspected Smyth of behaving inappropriately with boys then as a member of staff he should have raised his concerns with the Headmaster and/or the parents of the boys involved immediately and taken steps to ensure that the boys were not harmed by Smyth, including by monitoring him and preventing pupils from being left alone with him.

Smyth's position in the Church should not have been a barrier to safeguarding the children for whom he was responsible. There is no evidence that this was done, or that Peter Krakenberger took any steps to protect his students after he began to suspect that Smyth was acting inappropriately.

Aside from his suspicions about Smyth's relationship with boys, it is clear from the contemporaneous correspondence³¹⁷ that Peter Krakenberger had specific knowledge of the abuse from at least spring 1982. He had read the Ruston Report, which he was given by Mark Ruston,³¹⁸ and therefore knew that multiple former Winchester pupils had made complaints of abuse by Smyth and that Mark Ruston considered the conduct amounted to a criminal offence. He was aware of the identity of at least eight victims.³¹⁹

It is clear from his correspondence that Peter Krakenberger was aware that John Thorn should have been informed of the abuse and knew that this had not been done. In his letter of 17 October 1982, he referred to the fact that senior members of the Iwerne Trust had been aware of the abuse as early as February 1982 and that they had spent eight months trying to persuade Smyth to agree to abide by the conditions set out in the undertaking.

In that period, there is no evidence that Peter Krakenberger took any steps to prevent Smyth from having contact with pupils at Winchester College or to inform the College of the abuse. It was not until October 1982 that he urged the recipients of his letter not to have further contact with Smyth.

Due to the passage of time since the events and his decision not to speak about these matters with the reviewers, it is not possible to determine why Peter Krakenberger took no steps in response to learning of the abuse, such as preventing Smyth from having contact with the College, offering support to his current and former students, reporting

³¹⁶ Notes of a meeting with Peter Krakenberger dated 26 January 2017.

³¹⁷ Including John Eddison's letter of 13 September 1982 and Peter Krakenberger's letter of 17 October 1982.

³¹⁸ Notes of a meeting with Peter Krakenberger dated 26 January 2017.

³¹⁹ *ibid.*

the abuse to the Headmaster or making a referral to the police himself. However, some information can be drawn from the contemporaneous documentation.

The letter makes clear that Peter Krakenberger was aware of the contents of the draft undertaking and approved of it. Despite his awareness of the abuse, he expressed the view that Smyth could be returned to ministry, possibly by being moved to a local church:

"If all goes well from now on, especially JJS's psychiatric consultations, then his life and career could be saved and he could be restored to God's service, probably in the context of a local church somewhere. And of course everyone hopes all will go well – though for a year or two it will be difficult to be sure. JJS needs to reach the state where he can meaningfully repent of his deviousness."³²⁰ [sic]

It is evident from the letter of 17 October 1982 that Peter Krakenberger's priority at the time was the protection of the Christian Forum and the Iwerne Trust and the restoration of Smyth's ministry, rather than the welfare of the pupils who had been under his care. There is no evidence that he provided support to the victims of the abuse after the disclosure, despite the fact that they had been not only his students at the College, but subject to his spiritual leadership in the Christian Forum.

In correspondence, he emphasised the importance of keeping the abuse secret and showed a lack of understanding of the impact upon Smyth's victims, writing in October 1982 that, "The rehabilitation of 18 of the 22 men would seem to be pretty well complete".

When John Thorn learned of the abuse in September 1982, his response was to speak with the fathers of Victim 001 and Victim 002 and to agree an undertaking which contained three conditions: that Smyth must never again have contact with the men whom he abused, that he must seek medical treatment, and that he must never undertake spiritual/counselling work with young males again. The three men met with Smyth to require him to sign the undertaking.

Such a document would have been wholly unenforceable as a matter of law and had little or no value from a safeguarding perspective. Nonetheless, it appears that there was consensus by "every concerned adult in the know" at the time that the undertaking was the right course of action.³²¹ The list of "every concerned adult in the know" included David Fletcher, Mark Ruston, John Eddison, Dick Knight, Mark Ashton, John Thorn, [the father of Victim 001], [the father of Victim 002], Geoff Hewitson and Peter Krakenberger. Notably, the list did not include any of the victims of abuse, many of whom were adults at the time.

It is not clear what John Eddison meant when he wrote that he and David Fletcher "both think that Mark Ashton may be able to get Thorn, as a price of his silence, to endorse the conditions we have laid upon JJS..." This suggests that the conditions in the undertaking were not conceived by John Thorn but were provided to him by members

³²⁰ Letter written by Peter Krakenberger dated 17 October 1982.

³²¹ Letter written by Peter Krakenberger dated 17 October 1982.

of the Iwerne Trust, who had already met with Smyth to discuss the allegations of abuse.

The wording suggests that John Eddison believed that David Fletcher intended to attempt to influence the response of John Thorn to the disclosure of abuse. Due to the passage of time and the death or unavailability of key witnesses, the reviewers have not been able to determine the extent to which the Iwerne Trust did in fact influence John Thorn's determination of the appropriate outcome for Smyth, beyond the information contained in the contemporaneous documents referred to in this report.

When the abuse was disclosed to John Thorn in 1982, in accordance with the child protection standards of the time, he should have informed the parents of known victims who were minors and he should have contacted the known victims who were adults. Multiple sources indicate that the decision to utilise an undertaking and not to contact the police was made by the parents of the victims in consultation with John Thorn.³²² However, on the evidence available to the reviewers, this is not wholly accurate.

The reviewers have only seen evidence that John Thorn spoke to the fathers of four victims about Smyth in 1982: Victim 001, Victim 002, Victim 003 and another victim known to the reviewers, who has asked not to be identified in connection with this information. The father of Victim 003 was informed of the abuse by his son and contacted John Thorn himself, rather than being approached by John Thorn.³²³ There is no evidence that he played a role in the decision to seek an undertaking. Instead it appears that he was informed after the decision had been made.

The father of Victim 001 was also informed of the abuse by his son, rather than by John Thorn,³²⁴ while another victim³²⁵ told the reviewers that he believes his parents were not told about the abuse by John Thorn. It is not clear how the parents of Victim 002 were informed.³²⁶ The Coltart Report stated that the parents of only two victims were involved in the drafting of the undertaking.³²⁷

Two sources have suggested to the reviewers that John Thorn was aware of at least eight victims of abuse.³²⁸ However, one of those sources is Peter Krakenberger, whose 2017 account has been called into question by the reviewers above, and the other is a second-hand account provided after the death of the primary source. The reviewers have found no direct corroborating evidence which demonstrates that John Thorn was aware of more than four victims of abuse.

The note written by Mark Ruston of his meeting with Mark Ashton on 15 September 1982 includes the name of Victim 001 (in abbreviated form) and then states, "Parents should be told by boys". This phrase could be an indication that the decision was made

³²² E.g. Coltart Report, p. 3, para. 11; Notes of a meeting with Peter Krakenberger dated 26 January 2017.

³²³ Account of Victim 003.

³²⁴ Letter written by Peter Krakenberger dated 17 October 1982.

³²⁵ This individual is known to the reviewers but has asked not to be referred to by their cypher in connection with this information.

³²⁶ The letter on page 67 of this report refers to Victim 002 asking MHA to inform his father. Victim 002 is unable to recall this, but does not refute it.

³²⁷ Coltart Report, p. 3, para. 11.

³²⁸ Notes of a meeting with Peter Krakenberger dated 26 January 2017; the account of Victim 003.

by John Thorn and/or Mark Ashton to leave disclosure of the abuse to their parents as a matter for the judgment of individual victims. However, the reviewers have not been able to make a finding on this point as the note is partial and the reference to the surname of Victim 001 could be an indication that the phrase referred to his or his father's view rather than the concluded position. This is supported by the letter from John Eddison dated 6 October 1982, which refers to this as the view of someone with the surname of Victim 001 (with which the author disagreed).

The reviewers have seen no evidence that the College contacted any of the victims when the abuse was disclosed in 1982.³²⁹ There is evidence that John Thorn held discussions with the fathers of a limited number of victims about how to respond to the disclosure of abuse. However, all of the victims and some of their parents,³³⁰ were not consulted and were excluded from the decision-making process. This was a significant failing.

Aside from speaking with the victims, John Thorn should also have discussed whether to report the matter to the police in consultation with the victims and, where relevant, their parents. No report was made. As stated above, when he was asked in 2017 by the College, John Thorn said that he could not remember whether he had thought about contacting the police, or whether that issue was discussed with the parents of the victims.³³¹ He gave a similar statement to *The Times* in 2017. Given the subsequent findings about his capacity and the duration of the relevant condition, the reviewers have not taken his lack of recall of discussions as evidence that such discussions did not occur.

It appears that the matter was discussed with at least some of the parents of the victims, as the letter from John Thorn dated 12 October 1982 states that he went to Smyth's home with the fathers of Victim 001 and Victim 002 to persuade him to sign the undertaking.³³²

In addition, as set out above, the mother of Victim 001 told the reviewers that her husband had accepted at the time that it was the right decision not to refer the matter to the Police. She said that the victims were adults at the time of the disclosure and he had thought that reporting the abuse to the police could have ruined the victims' futures.³³³ Despite the fact that the victims were adults, there is no evidence that they

³²⁹ The decision not to consult any of the victims is in direct contrast to John Thorn's 2017 comment in *The Times* in relation to making a referral to the police: "... it probably would have been more sensible to do that, but people at the time... the boys on the whole didn't want that to happen. This was historically the case. They did not want any publicity at all and probably still don't." 'Headmaster: I wish I'd told police of Smyth abuse fears', Nicholas Hellen, *The Times*, 12 February 2017. Accessed online 23 September 2021: <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/headmaster-i-wish-id-told-police-of-smyth-abuse-fears-cc55lmhhq>>. Just as for other comments attributed to John Thorn in 2017, the reviewers have taken into account the recent findings in relation to his capacity to participate in the review, and acknowledge that these factors may have been extant in 2017 and may have affected his recall or his approach to questioning regarding Smyth.

³³⁰ Including, but not limited to, the mother of Victim 003.

³³¹ Note of meeting with John Thorn, *supra*.

³³² *Supra*. p. 64.

³³³ Account of Witness 026 (mother of Victim 001), *supra*. fn. 265.

were consulted about whether a report should be made to the police or about the decision to seek an undertaking from Smyth.

However, it is also significant that the father of a pupil who was abused by Smyth who corresponded with John Thorn about the disclosure in October 1982 told the reviewers that he believed at that time that Smyth's conduct related to consensual homosexual activity and he was unaware of any beatings. In addition, Victim 002 told the reviewers that he was not aware of what specific information was shared with his father about the abuse perpetrated by Smyth. It is therefore possible that some of the other parents of victims had not been fully informed about the nature and extent of the abuse when they were asked to make a decision about whether it should be reported to the police.

The reviewers have been unable to determine whether this was due to failings on the part of those who were aware of the disclosure and making decisions regarding the response at Winchester College, or Peter Krakenberger and the Iwerne Trust. Both Peter Krakenberger and senior members of the Iwerne Trust were fully aware of the nature of the abuse because they had read the Ruston Report, but they chose not to share any information with John Thorn until at least September 1982.

As stated above, due to the passage of time, the death of key witnesses and the decision of Peter Krakenberger not to participate in the review on the record, it is not possible for the reviewers to determine exactly what information was shared with John Thorn by Mark Ashton and/or Peter Krakenberger in September 1982, or indeed how much information was shared with Mark Ashton by Mark Ruston and others.

Also as set out above, the reviewers consider that the note of 15 September 1982 is an indication that John Thorn may have been aware of "blood" and nudity, but the wording of *The Road to Winchester* is ambiguous on this point. It refers to physical punishment occurring as a result of the level of control which Smyth gained over boys while at school, but does not indicate whether John Thorn was aware of the severity of the punishment or the fact that the physical abuse began while the victims were still pupils at the College. The reference to the acts being consensual could imply that he did not know the extent of the abuse or the age of the pupils at the time, but it could also indicate a lack of understanding of the law in relation to consent or a reflection of his personal liberal philosophy, as expressed in *The Road to Winchester*, which "emphasised pupils' (and victims') right to individual agency and freedom of thought, including the right to profound evangelical Christian belief, whatever his own views about it; and his unease at having to interfere with or "manage" that freedom".³³⁴

The information which was shared with staff in the common room at the time was also non-specific and does not indicate what John Thorn's state of knowledge was. As stated above, the reviewers cannot be certain what precisely John Thorn knew at the relevant time. If John Thorn was unaware of the nature and severity of the abuse at the time, it is possible that he did not consider that it was necessary or appropriate to report the matter to the police.

However, it is clear from the wording of the undertaking that John Thorn was sufficiently aware of the severity of Smyth's actions to conclude that banishment from the College,

³³⁴ Representations from the independent legal representative for John Thorn.

mandatory psychiatric treatment and a prohibition on future mission work with young boys was the appropriate response. Even if those conditions were suggested by the Iwerne Trust, as John Eddison's letter and other contemporaneous correspondence implies, the gravity of the undertaking must have indicated to John Thorn that what Smyth had done was very serious, such that communication with the victims was essential and a police referral should have been considered.³³⁵ That he had some understanding of the seriousness of the conduct is supported by John Thorn's description in his letter to the father of a victim of being "horrified" at the disclosure and finding it to be "literally unbelievable".

It is possible that John Thorn decided not to make a report to the police in order to protect the reputation of the College or what he considered to be the interests of the victims. It is also notable in this regard that each of the parents who were involved in the drafting of the undertaking held positions of relative wealth, distinction or authority within society and/or within the College. It is also possible that his decision was influenced by representations from members of the Iwerne Trust. He may have believed that the undertaking would be an effective method of preventing further abuse of pupils at Winchester College. The reviewers have not been able to speak with John Thorn and are therefore unable to reach a determination as to whether these or other matters were factors which were taken into account in determining the response to the disclosure of abuse.

As a result of the limitations of this review, in terms of the passage of time and access to evidence from those who have passed away or who lack capacity to participate, there is no direct evidence available. As a result, the reviewers have been unable to reach a conclusion regarding the motivations of John Thorn.

Some insight into his own views on the matter may be reflected in his comments to *The Times* in 2017: "If I feel to blame... about it, it is really in a way that I acted too slowly, more slowly than nowadays I would have when people are much more sensitive to this kind of thing." He said that he may have dropped his guard because, as head of a Christian school he felt his job was not to "dim" the "evangelical" fire of the Christian Forum, "but rather to keep an eye on it".³³⁶

As set out above, the evidence indicates that the parents of the victims and the victims themselves were not fully informed about the disclosure of the abuse or consulted regarding the College's decision not to make a report to the police. However, if the victims and, where relevant, the parents of the victims had been fully aware of the abuse and had made an informed decision not to report the matter to the police, or to instruct John Thorn not to report the matter to the police, then the reviewers would

³³⁵ The reviewers consider that this is the case regardless of whether John Thorn was aware in 1982 of the ages of the victims at the time of the abuse.

³³⁶ 'Headmaster: I wish I'd told police of Smyth abuse fears', Nicholas Hellen, *The Times*, 12 February 2017. Accessed online 23 September 2021: <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/headmaster-i-wish-id-told-police-of-smyth-abuse-fears-cc55lmhhq>>. Just as for other comments attributed to John Thorn in 2017, the reviewers have taken into account the recent findings in relation to his capacity to participate in the review, and acknowledge that these factors may have been extant in 2017 and may have affected his recall or his approach to questioning regarding Smyth.

conclude that his decision would have been in keeping with the child protection standards of the time.

It was not common practice in the 1980s to make referrals to the police without a named complainant. If an anonymous report had been made, it is likely that the police would have taken no action in response, although the position is likely to have been different had any victim or parent, appropriately informed and provided with support by the College, made the decision to make a complaint to the police. Although there were social services departments, child protection committees and education liaisons within the local authorities, they had little involvement in private schools. There would have been no LADO available to discuss the case with John Thorn and advise him on the appropriate response.

Other options available to John Thorn at the time would have included contacting the police for advice on whether action was likely and/or appropriate, taking any steps to determine whether Smyth remained in contact with pupils in breach of the undertaking, providing an opportunity for any victims to come forward anonymously or with appropriate support and/or briefing the dons so that they could raise the issues with boys in the school on a 1-to-1 basis.

He could also have considered attempting to contact places where Smyth was subsequently in a position of trust or had access to young boys. The viability of this course of action would have depended on John Thorn's awareness of Smyth's activities. However, it was well-known that Smyth held the position of lay reader at the local church and that he acted as a governor at another school. Consideration could have been given to sharing concerns with these institutions.

The viability of these options may also have been affected by issues within the school at the time, including concerns about homosexuality, an aversion to discussing sex and a culture against "sneaking" (in relation to which, see below).³³⁷ Nonetheless, the reviewers have not seen evidence that these or other options were considered.

Whatever the reasons behind it, the consequences of the decision to rely solely on the undertaking (which may or may not have been signed) and not to take any of the steps set out above or inform the police were grave. The undertaking was not enforceable, it appears that no steps were taken to monitor or respond to breaches and it was not in the possession of the Headmaster three years after the disclosure.³³⁸

First, Peter Krakenberger stated that Smyth continued to have contact with boys after the undertaking was signed. The reviewers have not seen any evidence that he took any steps in response to this, or that he notified John Thorn or Winchester College of the breaches of the undertaking. The reviewers have seen no evidence of the College monitoring Smyth's compliance with the undertaking in this respect or taking steps to ensure that pupils did not have further contact with Smyth. The reviewers have seen no evidence of John Thorn or Peter Krakenberger making referrals or sharing information

³³⁷ The reviewers have been asked by the independent legal representative for John Thorn to state that these were issues which were a common, if not universal, feature of school culture at that time. No investigation has been undertaken into other similar institutions and the reviewers are unable to make a finding on whether these matters had broader application.

³³⁸ P. 75 supra.

with other schools or places where Smyth was known to have worked and/or ministered to children and young people.

Second, as early as 1985, the College was unable to locate any record of the conditions which had been imposed on Smyth or to prove that he had ever signed an undertaking. From that time onwards, no safeguards had been put in place to prevent Smyth from returning to Winchester College in a position of trust. No record of the prohibition had been retained, John Thorn had retired and the majority of the staff had not been told about the abuse, although some members of the common room had been told verbally at the time that he was "persona non grata" and should not be permitted to return. Although there is evidence that members of the College community at the time were aware of rumours related to Smyth's departure, almost all members of the College staff were unaware of the abuse. In any event, rumours are insufficient protection against future abuse, even by the standards of child protection in the 1980s. There was no record of the disclosure itself to inform future leadership of the College of the nature of the abuse, no record of the response to the disclosure and no safeguards had been implemented to prevent Smyth's return.

Third, the decision not to refer the matter to the police or social services meant that Smyth was free to leave the UK and move to Zimbabwe and South Africa without adverse associations, where he was permitted to return to ministry in a position of trust and went on to abuse as many as 90 young boys, possibly resulting in the death of one boy.³³⁹ While the events which occurred outside of Winchester College fall outwith the scope of this review, this is a conclusion which would also apply to others who knew of the abuse, and most strongly in respect of those who had read the Ruston Report.

It is not possible to know how matters might have been different if a police referral had been made in 1982, but greater public awareness of the risk could have resulted in stronger scrutiny and perhaps stricter safeguards, particularly in an area of work which was so heavily reliant on recommendations and personal connections. It is likely that a criminal conviction would have adversely affected Smyth's ability to engage in ministry, particularly with UK-based evangelical organisations operating overseas.

The reviewers have considered in some detail the role which John Thorn played in responding to the disclosure of abuse in 1982. The conclusions set out herein are limited by the fact that John Thorn himself was not able to participate in the review. The passage of time and the death of key witnesses has also meant that information about the response of the College is incomplete.

In the absence of direct evidence from John Thorn, some insights can be gleaned from analysis of the description of Smyth's abuse in *The Road to Winchester*. The description, insofar as it can be relied upon as a reflection of the events which occurred, does not indicate that his priority was to seek justice for the victims or provide support to them. The contemporaneous documents suggest that he worked to assuage the concerns of an influential group of parents by ensuring that the matter was dealt with internally and discreetly, but did not take steps to manage the risk which Smyth posed

³³⁹ Smyth was arrested in 1997 following the death of a 16-year-old boy named Guide Nyachuru at a Christian camp in Zimbabwe. He was charged with culpable homicide but the case did not proceed. The circumstances of the death and the criminal proceedings fall outside the terms of reference of this review.

to others, other than by way of the unenforceable handwritten undertaking and by informing some members of the common room that Smyth was "*persona non grata*".

The reviewers have considered a range of potential motivations for these actions, including that he considered that this approach was in the best interests of the victims, that he was concerned with protecting the reputation of those involved, and that his approach was influenced by the members of the Iwerne Trust and Scripture Union whose correspondence is referenced above. As stated above, in the absence of direct evidence the reviewers have not been able to reach conclusions regarding the motivations of John Thorn.

It is clear from the description in *The Road to Winchester* that John Thorn was aware that Smyth had left the UK after the disclosure, that he had not been referred to the authorities by the school, that his abuse was not generally known to the public and that he was operating without any restrictions on his future involvement with children, other than the undertaking which was stated to be restricted to a limited group of persons and was not shared outside that group.

In his book, John Thorn described how Smyth "must be banished. And - quietly but efficiently – he was... He departed for Africa with his family..." This banishment appears to have been condoned by John Thorn with little or no consideration of information sharing or the potential for Smyth to continue to abuse children in whatever location he moved to following his exclusion from Winchester College. As John Thorn stated in *The Times* in 2017, "... we got this bugger out of the country – excuse my language – into Africa and said: thank God that's gone."³⁴⁰

Another disquieting feature of the memoir is the absence of any recognition of the seriousness of the abuse and the impact on the victims and those within their circle. As mentioned above, he did not consult any of the victims before making a decision about how the matter should be resolved. He did not offer any support to the victims themselves.³⁴¹

In *The Road to Winchester*, he stated, "Absurd and baseless rumours were circulated that he [Smyth] was an unhinged tyrant, the embodiment of Satan." This description suggests that he viewed these complaints about Smyth's conduct as unfounded exaggerations.

³⁴⁰ 'Headmaster: I wish I'd told police of Smyth abuse fears', Nicholas Hellen, *The Times*, 12 February 2017. Accessed online 23 September 2021: <<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/headmaster-i-wish-i-d-told-police-of-smyth-abuse-fears-cc55lmhhq>>. Just as for other comments attributed to John Thorn in 2017, the reviewers have taken into account the recent findings in relation to his capacity to participate in the review, and acknowledge that these factors may have been extant in 2017 and may have affected his recall or his approach to questioning regarding Smyth.

³⁴¹ It is not known whether any support was offered through those parents who were involved in the drafting of the undertaking, as some of those involved are now deceased.

The description of Smyth's abuse in the book is wholly inadequate. Even taking his level of knowledge of the abuse at its lowest,³⁴² he was aware that an adult had accessed the victims while they were pupils at school and exerted extreme influence over them. As stated above, the reviewers consider that the note of 15 September 1982 is an indication that he may have been aware of acts involving blood and nudity. In *The Road to Winchester*, there is no regret or apology offered by John Thorn to the victims, nor any demonstration of empathy or recognition of the impact of the abuse upon them.

The legal representative for John Thorn has argued that the above criticisms are unwarranted, given that (*inter alia*) the book is about his liberal philosophy of education rather than being autobiographical, it is not focused on individual pupils and "deliberately either avoids strong personal feeling, or deflects that feeling into ironical modes of expression".

The reviewers maintain that the description of the abuse in the book was inadequate and failed to acknowledge the harm done by an adult in a position of trust who was allowed unsupervised access to pupils at Winchester College. The use of "ironical modes of expression", as the legal representative for John Thorn put it, was not an appropriate means of describing the grooming and abuse of children and young people. Furthermore, the inclusion of this description in the book was harmful to the victims, who were not consulted or made aware of the public revelation of their abuse prior to publication, despite the identity of at least four victims being known to John Thorn at the time.

Victim 005 told the reviewers that he had met with John Thorn in April 2017, accompanied by a third party. He took notes of what was said and spoke to the reviewers about the meeting, which he said had a profound impact upon him. He informed the reviewers that, when asked, John Thorn had stated that the events had occurred a long time ago and that he found it hard to remember what had occurred. Victim 005 stated:

"During that interview, it became clear that he neither took any responsibility for Smyth's infiltration into the school during the late 1970s, early 1980s, nor did he have or show any degree of empathy for me as a victim... He was not at all remorseful that he had allowed all this to occur, nor did he offer me any iota of compassion. It is clear to us that he considered the pages about Smyth (whom he does not name) in *The Road to Winchester* to be sufficient as far as explanations go."

The reviewers have included this account because of the importance of recognising the lifelong impact of the response upon the victims of abuse. However, given the subsequent findings about John Thorn's capacity to participate in the review, it is possible and indeed likely that this response was caused by those factors rather than a lack of empathy.

³⁴² i.e. for the purposes of this specific conclusion, making the assumption that John Thorn was unaware that the abuse was perpetrated against children rather than young adults, that he was unaware of the extent of the physical abuse and that he was unaware that the abuse was non-consensual.

Other persons with no link to the school also had the opportunity to report the disclosure to Winchester College prior to September 1982 and to the police but failed to do so. This includes Mark Ruston, John Woolmer, David MacInnes, and various persons within the leadership of the Iwerne Trust, such as David Fletcher, Dick Knight and John Eddison.

After the abuse was disclosed to John Thorn, Winchester College should have undertaken some form of internal inquiry to determine the extent of the abuse, how Smyth was able to gain unrestricted access to pupils and whether anyone in the College had played a role in the abuse. The use of internal inquiries in response to cases of abuse was not uncommon within institutions in the 1980s and this would have provided the College with an opportunity to identify vulnerabilities and improve its safeguarding practices. Witness 037 said that Geoff Hewitson questioned at the time why an inquiry had not taken place and believed that an opportunity had been missed for the College to learn lessons.³⁴³

Two witnesses recalled that there had been some form of inquiry, talk of resignation or disciplinary process within the College related to the role of Peter Krakenberger following the disclosure of the abuse perpetrated by Smyth.³⁴⁴ The reviewers have been unable to find any evidence of this within the College Archives.

As stated above, the College did not provide any support to the victims of John Smyth, either in 1982 when the abuse was first disclosed or in 1989 when John Thorn's book referring to the abuse was published. The reviewers have seen no evidence that Winchester College contacted any of the victims. Victim 002 said, "they were not interested in how I was coping".³⁴⁵

Although there can be sensitivities in relation to institutions proactively contacting victims of historical abuse, it would have been appropriate and in keeping with the standards of child protection in the 1980s for the school to have contacted the known victims of abuse to enquire about their welfare and offer support, or in some cases to have done so through their parents. The offer of support to former pupils would have been particularly important in a school like Winchester College, where the reviewers have been told that alumni often retain a strong and lifelong connection to their teachers, their peers and the College.

The failure of Winchester College to reach out to the victims of Smyth after the abuse was disclosed likely compounded their trauma by increasing their feelings of isolation, reinforcing their need to keep the abuse secret and making it more difficult for some to access professional support.

Was there a widespread culture of abuse at Winchester College?

The reviewers have been asked to consider whether there was a widespread culture of abuse at Winchester College, beyond the abuse perpetrated by Smyth. In this context, the term "widespread culture of abuse" refers to a situation where unlawful physical and

³⁴³ Account of Witness 037.

³⁴⁴ Accounts of Witness 038 and Victim 015.

³⁴⁵ Account of Victim 002.

sexual abuse was common, with instances of abuse covered up or tolerated by the institution. For there to be a widespread culture of abuse, the reviewers would expect to see, for example, multiple individuals perpetrating abuse and/or clear knowledge of abuse leading to inaction on the part of those on staff or in leadership positions.

In reaching this conclusion, the reviewers note that in accordance with the Terms of Reference, this report is limited to the actions of John Smyth. There was no active enquiry into the actions of other individuals or examination of records unrelated to Smyth.

The reviewers have been told of multiple examples of conduct on the part of staff members which would not be acceptable by the safeguarding standards of 2022 and which would be indicators of serious risk. For example, one on one lessons, adults providing alcohol to underage pupils, and staff changing clothing in front of pupils. This conduct, while concerning, does not meet the threshold of unlawful physical or sexual abuse.

As set out below, the reviewers were told about the use of corporal punishment by staff and pupils and heard descriptions of the relatively harsh environment which many boarders experienced at Winchester College. However, the treatment described was lawful at the time and, in the view of the reviewers, does not reach the threshold of physical or sexual abuse.

There were three incidents of concern which arose in the evidence gathered for the purposes of this report.

First, Victim 005 told the reviewers that he had been the victim of sexual assault at Winchester College when he was a boarder. The incident was not related to the abuse perpetrated by John Smyth.

Second, Witness 019 spoke about rumours regarding two staff members having had sexual relationships with pupils at the College. This was described to the reviewers as being "rumours" and the witness did not have first-hand knowledge of the events. The staff members and pupils in question were not named and the reviewers have been unable to reach a conclusion in relation to these allegations.

Third, several witnesses mentioned that staff and students in the 1970s had concerns about a man who worked in a local bookshop in Winchester. Witness 051 said that the boys had warned one another about him. Witness 053 said that he was a friend of Peter Krakenberger who sometimes attended Christian Forum meetings and occasionally invited boys to his flat.

The reviewers have not found any evidence that there was a widespread culture of abuse at Winchester College in the 1970s and 1980s.

Part 2: Analysis

Part 2 of this report contains analysis of the factual matters set out in Part 1.

It begins by taking into account the historical context of safeguarding in schools at the relevant time.

It then considers the context of the evangelical movement in the UK, and in particular the culture of the Iwerne camps, and considers how this may have influenced the actions of Smyth.

Section 17 uses direct quotes from victims and witnesses to identify themes arising from the evidence, such as the effect of Smyth's celebrity status, the use of religious texts to create opportunities for abuse and the lenient nature of supervision arrangements at the College.

Section 18 analyses the modus operandi of the abuse, including by identifying grooming techniques, elements of radicalisation and sexual abuse and by acknowledging the devastating impact of the spiritual abuse perpetrated by Smyth.

Part 2 concludes by recognising the lifelong consequences of Smyth's abuse upon his victims.

15. The context of safeguarding in schools in the 1970s and 1980s

Today, the acts perpetrated by Smyth would be described as the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children. The behaviour by which he created the environment and opportunity to offend would be identified as a deliberate strategy of grooming.

However, as stated in Section 5 above, when drafting the report, the reviewers have taken into account the passage of time as it relates to the development of cultural expectations and standards and of safeguarding best practice and have actively considered the impact of 'hindsight bias'.

This section will set out the legislative framework and child protection standards which were in place during the 1970s and 1980s. Some of the material has been sourced from the documentary records referenced herein, while other information is drawn from the author's experience of working as a child protection professional at the relevant time.

The events outlined above took place before the development of the safeguarding structure of the 21st century. The paramountcy principle and the responsibility of the State and relevant organisations for the welfare of children in their care were not formally recognised until the introduction of the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004. The current vocabulary of safeguarding and the background of academic studies and literature was not at that time available to organisations that worked with children, including schools. Child protection was in its infancy.

There was recognition of the potential for cruelty and the neglect of children, with numerous charities such as the NSPCC and Barnardo's working to support children. However, the focus was very much on the physical abuse of children, rather than sexual abuse. Paedophilia was little known or understood prior to the 1980s, and offenders such as Jimmy Saville, Rolf Harris and Stuart Hall were active through the 1960s and 1970s and were able to access children without suspicion due to their celebrity status. It was not until the 1987 inquiry into child sexual abuse in Cleveland, led by Baroness Butler-Sloss, that child sexual abuse was brought into the national consciousness.³⁴⁶

In 1973 there was a sharp increase in the national awareness of child abuse following the death of 7-year-old Maria Colwell at the hands of her stepfather. The public inquiry and resulting media coverage identified that she was known by the local authorities to be at risk and that there had been a lack of communication between the various agencies responsible for her care.³⁴⁷ This inquiry led to increased responsibility on the part of the local authority for the care of children vulnerable to abuse and to the development of the "At Risk Register", which later became the child protection register.

Later inquiries helped to shape the landscape of child protection. The Inquiry into the death of Jasmine Beckford in 1985 emphasised the importance of social services and other agencies acknowledging and prioritising the voice of the child, but also led to

³⁴⁶ Butler-Sloss, E. *Report of the Inquiry into Child Abuse in Cleveland* (1988).

³⁴⁷ *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Care Provided in Relation to Maria Colwell* (1974).

criticisms about the expectations placed on social workers.³⁴⁸ Academic Robert Dingwall, defending the limitations of local authority officers in a virulent critique of the Inquiry's findings, wrote:

"It is simply incorrect to assume that there is a comprehensive and well-established literature on child abuse. There is a large, heterogenous body of material which is dispersed through a wide range of professional journals and of extremely variable quality. The position is not much better for childcare law. In one sense, the relevant sources are well defined in the statutes and cases but it is equally true that the legislation is a labyrinth of cross-references and partial implementation and contains many ambiguities and uncertainties which have never been judicially resolved."³⁴⁹

This comment, though it was written in the particular context of responses to the Beckford Inquiry, highlights the lack of knowledge regarding child abuse in the 1980s, even among trained professionals, as well as the general uncertainty regarding the powers of the police and the local authorities to respond to concerns.

There had been a framework of child protection legislation in the UK since 1889, when the Prevention of Cruelty to and Protection of Children Act 1889, known as the "**Children's Charter**", was introduced. The Children's Charter made the physical abuse of children a criminal offence and supplemented the provisions of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, which had codified common assault and other forms of physical abuse as criminal offences. The Children's Charter was the first legislation to allow the police to enter a home if they believed a child was in danger, and to permit the arrest of those found to be abusing children.

In 1904, the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act was passed to permit the removal of children from situations of abuse or neglect.

The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 consolidated existing child protection laws and introduced new protections, such as introducing the minimum age of criminal responsibility and a minimum working age. Some sections of the statute remain in active use today.

The Children Act 1948 was introduced following the death of a 13-year-old boy named Dennis O'Neill, who had been the victim of physical abuse by his foster father. The Act established the responsibility of the local authority for the protection of vulnerable children and created children's committees to oversee the work of officers in this area.

The children's committee regime was overhauled in 1970 with the introduction of the Local Authority Social Services Act, which established social services departments and set out care provisions for children and vulnerable adults.

Other legislation related to child protection at the time, such as the Children Act 1975 and the Child Care Act 1980, dealt primarily with the custody and guardianship of

³⁴⁸ Blom-Cooper, L. *A Child in Trust: The Report of the Panel of Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Jasmine Beckford*. (1985).

³⁴⁹ Dingwall, R. "The Jasmine Beckford Affair". *The Modern Law Review* 49:4. (1986) p. 496.

children. While they helped to shape the structure and responses of local authorities in the early 1980s, they are not *prima facie* relevant to this review.

The existence of these statutes meant that there was a framework in place for prosecuting those responsible for the abuse of children and for intervening to protect children at risk. However, as Robert Dingwall observed, the legislation could be difficult to navigate and it was not supported by a clear body of academic research of the kind available to safeguarding professionals today, for example, regarding grooming and the recognition of patterns of child abuse. There was no statutory guidance of the kind available today to assist in the interpretation of the law on child abuse.

While there was a clear legal basis for local authorities in the form of social services to become involved in the care of children and young people who were the victims of abuse, there was no LADO and liaison between local authorities and schools was limited.

In terms of safer recruitment practices, there was no centralised system of background checks. The List 99 process was introduced in 2002, followed by online CRB checks in 2010 and the current regime of DBS checks in 2012.

Nonetheless, there were some protections and expectations in place. For example, it was standard practice in the 1980s for recruitment of persons working with children to involve the use of formal interviews and the taking up of references as a method of confirming an individual's suitability and qualifications.

The issue of corporal punishment has arisen in relation to this review because multiple victims have suggested to the reviewers that the use of physical punishment in private schools at or around the time normalised beatings and contributed to the context in which the abuse perpetrated by Smyth was not disclosed. This issue is addressed further in Section 17 of this report.

In the early 1980s, some physical punishment of children was permitted under UK common law. Corporal punishment became unlawful in state run or government-funded schools in 1986, following a 1982 ruling of the European Court of Human Rights which found that beating was contrary to the Article 2 rights of children.³⁵⁰

Nonetheless, some private schools continued to use corporal punishment and public attitudes, including in the judicial system, remained divided. In 1987, a headmaster was prosecuted for assault occasioning actual bodily harm after punishing a child by striking him five times with a bamboo cane. He was acquitted of the offence and the judge commented, "if you get a beating you must expect it to be with force".³⁵¹

In 1993, the European Court of Human Rights considered a complaint by the mother of a child who had been punished with three strikes with a gym shoe at a private school in England. By a slim majority, the Court ruled that the use of corporal punishment had been lawful, as the punishment had been mild and did not meet the "minimum level of

³⁵⁰ *Campbell and Cosans v The United Kingdom* 4 Eur H.R. Rep 293 (1982).

³⁵¹ Deves, K. *Caning storm head is cleared*. The Sun. 21.07.1987. Available online at: <<https://www.corpun.com/uksc8707.htm>>.

severity" to constitute a breach of the European Convention on Human Rights.³⁵² Corporal punishment was not formally banned in private schools in England, such as Winchester College, until 1998.

Following concerns raised by victims regarding the influence of the historical context of corporal punishment in schools on their views of Smyth's use of beatings, the reviewers have sought information regarding the use of physical punishment at Winchester College in the 1970s and 1980s. John Woolmer stated that when he left Winchester, corporal punishment was limited to a few stokes of the cane and that blood was never drawn.³⁵³ In *The Road to Winchester*, John Thorn stated that corporal punishment had ceased at Winchester by the time he became Headmaster in 1968:³⁵⁴

"It was the senior boys themselves who put a stop to it. They found it unnecessary, inhumane and absurd. In most schools it did not die through the fiat of headmasters but just faded away. When I went to Winchester in 1968 it had ceased altogether. But a few years before that it was very common. Headmasters would hand over offenders to the prefects as the Inquisition might hand over heretics to the secular power. And the College Prefect of Chapel, a scholar, could exercise tyrannical power over anyone in the school who was late for or misbehaved in the building. This power was accepted by the commoners as part of the order of things. The headmaster did not interfere. But it stopped. Inhumanity did not disappear with it, though. It took, as it will, more subtle forms."

There are also several references to physical punishment in Winchester College records. In the Senior College Prefect's memoranda book, it was noted in 1972 that it was "a surprising and indeed alarming discovery that the prefects still beat in Kenny's. The headmaster has agreed that, even if he couldn't stop the housemaster, he would certainly have to stop the prefects from indulging in this brutal and totally barbaric form of punishment".

In the notes of the Housemasters' meetings for 8 October 1985, it was noted:

"... the HM [Headmaster] declared himself to be against corporal punishment. Apart from any other reason it was likely soon to become illegal. Alternative sanctions were discussed: perhaps house detentions should be used more, and the punishment should be made to fit the crime. While respecting the independence of housemasters, almost all of whom opposed or were prepared to give up beating, the HM preferred us to abandon the cane and would want to know if it were ever to be used."

Victim 004 informed the reviewers that corporal punishment was used against him by a housemaster in 1976. He stated that he was given about five strokes of a cane through his trousers as a punishment for swearing.

Outside of the limited context of 'reasonable', lawful chastisement, the beating or caning of children would have been a criminal offence under the Offences Against the Person

³⁵² *Costello-Roberts v The United Kingdom* (1995) 19 E.H.R.R. 112.

³⁵³ Account of John Woolmer.

³⁵⁴ *The Road to Winchester*, supra. fn. 62.

Act 1861. Consent is no defence to the infliction of harm which constitutes Actual Bodily Harm, or more serious injuries, even in relation to adults.³⁵⁵

The abuse described by the victims of Smyth is fundamentally different to the examples given above, in a number of key respects:

First, it was not inflicted by a school official as a punishment for an infraction of school rules.

Second, the nature and severity of the beatings was far greater than in any of the examples given above. According to the 1982 Ruston Report, five of the thirteen victims spoken to had received collectively 650 stokes of the cane over twelve separate times. The other eight victims had received 14,000 strokes of the cane between them over a three-year period. Two victims received 8,000 strokes. An unidentified victim cited in this report stated; "I could feel the blood splattering on my legs, I was bleeding for thirty-one and a half weeks."³⁵⁶

The reviewers have concluded, as acknowledged by Mark Ruston in 1982, that the injuries inflicted on the victims of Smyth would constitute 'actual bodily harm' within the meaning of section 47 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 and would exceed the minimum level of severity required to constitute a breach of the European Convention of Human Rights. Prosecution for punishment exceeding a small number of strikes was common: as early as 1894, a headmaster who inflicted excessive beatings on students aged between 13-15 years old was prosecuted and convicted of assault.³⁵⁷

The reviewers have also concluded that some of the victims suffered injuries which could constitute the offence of 'wounding' or inflicting 'grievous bodily harm' under section 20 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861.

An offence under section 20 of the Act may be charged as the infliction of grievous bodily harm or as wounding. As a matter of law, wounding requires an injury involving a break in the continuity of the skin,³⁵⁸ so in cases where the victims suffered severe or extreme bruising, the offence of wounding could not be charged.

Grievous bodily harm relates to harm which is "really serious".³⁵⁹ The legal distinction of whether an assault constitutes actual bodily harm or grievous bodily harm is a matter for a jury to determine based on the severity of the injuries. At time of writing, in order to meet the higher threshold of grievous bodily harm, the harm does not need to be either

³⁵⁵ *R v Brown* [1994] 1 AC 212 at [234] and [236]. The reviewers note that although this case was decided in 1993, the judgment relied upon the analysis of three cases, all of which pre-dated 1982.

³⁵⁶ 'As in the case of John Smyth QC, an abusive theology can lead to terrible actions', Charles Moore, *The Telegraph*, 17 August 2018. Accessed online 01 June 2020: <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/13/case-john-smyth-qcan-abusive-theology-can-lead-terrible-actions/>>.

³⁵⁷ 'Police'. *The Times*. 22 March 1894. Available online at: <<https://www.corpun.com/uks89403.htm>>.

³⁵⁸ *JJC v Eisenhower* [1983] 3 All E.R. 230.

³⁵⁹ *DPP v Smith* [1961] AC 290.

permanent or dangerous³⁶⁰ and the assessment should take account of subjective factors such as the age or vulnerability of the victim.³⁶¹

The reviewers consider that some of the injuries inflicted by Smyth could meet the higher threshold of grievous bodily harm, taking into account the age and vulnerability of the victims as well as the gravity of the physical and psychological impact of the abuse.

Third, the abuse perpetrated by Smyth involved not only physical beatings, but severe emotional and spiritual abuse, with elements of sexual abuse.

Fourth, the accounts of the victims disclosed a clear pattern of abuse which was broad in scope and persisted over a period of at least seven years.

The reviewers have concluded that if Smyth had been prosecuted for the offence of assault or assault occasioning actual bodily harm in the 1980s or later on the basis of the evidence shared with the reviewers, there would have been a reasonable prospect of conviction. Despite the limitations of academic literature and training for local authorities at the time, the legislative framework of child protection in the early 1980s was sufficiently clear to have had the potential to protect children from such abuse, if it had been invoked.

If a report had been made to the police at the time, the physical abuse could, in the opinion of the reviewers, have led to an investigation and potentially a prosecution under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. This was identified by Mark Ruston in his report to the Iwerne Trust in 1982.

Similarly, if a report had been made to the local authority social work framework which was in place at the time, it is likely that an investigation would have been commenced and a report made to the police. Although the dedicated child protection infrastructure which is now in place did not exist in the early 1980s and although awareness of child abuse was limited at the time, the extent and severity of the physical abuse inflicted by Smyth would, in the opinion of the reviewers, have been sufficient to trigger an investigation.

A criminal justice response of this kind could have led to formal legal consequences for Smyth, up to and including conviction and imprisonment, but would in any event have raised awareness about the risk which he posed when working with children. If those who were aware of the abuse had made a report to the police, it might have protected other children, including those who subsequently became the victims of abuse by Smyth in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

³⁶⁰ *R v Golding* [2014] Crim. L.R. 686. (Although the reviewers note that this case significantly post-dates the offending behaviour.)

³⁶¹ *R v Bollom* [2004] 2 Cr. App. R. 6. (Although the reviewers note that this case significantly post-dates the offending behaviour.)

16. Evangelicalism in context

Evangelicalism is a movement within the Christian Protestant tradition. It is characterised by the centrality of scripture and the importance of preaching the gospel in order to obtain personal commitments to Christ. Estimates of the number of evangelical Christians vary between 250-600 million.³⁶² At the highest estimates, followers of evangelicalism make up one quarter of the world's Christians.

There have been numerous 'evangelical' movements in the Christian church, dating back to the teachings of Martin Luther in the 16th century. In the context of this report, the term refers to a theological revival within the Church of England which shared its roots with Methodism and dates back to the creation of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846.

Evangelicalism is a major Christian denomination which has a presence in many countries around the world. Its members are diverse and have formed numerous subsets of the movement, including 'liberal evangelicalism', 'conservative evangelicalism' and 'new evangelicalism'. The Lausanne Covenant, an international evangelical manifesto drafted by a committee led by John Stott and American evangelist Billy Graham, was adopted in 1974 by 2,700 evangelical leaders from 150 countries.³⁶³

This section does not seek to provide a detailed history of evangelicalism in the twentieth and twenty-first century, nor is it intended to give an overview of the work and attributes of modern evangelical Christians. It is not suggested that what follows is a comprehensive or generally applicable description of evangelical Christians.

This section seeks only to identify by reference to books and articles by evangelical historians some facets of the culture of conservative evangelicalism in the UK in the twentieth century which are relevant to Smyth and to the events described in this report.

Evangelicalism in the UK can be seen as a response to the sacraments and traditions of High Anglicanism. There are a number of key tenets of modern evangelical Christianity in the UK.³⁶⁴

First, followers believe that scripture is central to their faith. Evangelical Christians believe that, as it is the Word of God written, the Bible is infallible. Oliver Barclay described Evangelicals as "Bible Christians" who seek to "follow the Bible in all matters of faith and conduct".³⁶⁵

³⁶² *Global Christianity*. 2011. Pew Research Centre. Available online at: <<https://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/>>; *660m evangelicals in the world*. 18 February 2020. Evangelical Focus Europe. Available online at: <<https://evangelicalfocus.com/print/5119/660-million-evangelicals-in-the-world>>.

³⁶³ Stott, J. 2009. *The Lausanne Covenant*, Hendrickson Publishers.

³⁶⁴ Bebbington, D. 1989. *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, Unwin Hyman.

³⁶⁵ Barclay, O. 1997. *Evangelicalism in Britain 1935-1995*, Inter-Varsity Press.

Second, evangelical Christians believe in the importance of outreach and the preaching of the gospel, including by mission and social action. Bebbington refers to this as evangelical "activism".³⁶⁶

Third, evangelical Christians believe in the importance of a "conversion moment", or an experience of being born again to Christ, which can lead to absolution from sin and assurance in faith.

Fourth, the movement emphasises that the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus was an act of atonement for the sins of his followers. This is sometimes called "crucicentrism" or "substitutionary atonement". The core belief of substitutionary atonement is that salvation must come by Christ alone through faith because he took the sins of the world upon him by his physical suffering and death upon the cross.

In the early 20th century, Evangelical Christianity had relatively few followers in the UK. Stephen Neill wrote that "evangelicalism was reduced to a level of less repute and less influence in the Anglican world than at any time in the preceding hundred and fifty years".³⁶⁷

Although the number of active participants and conservative evangelical churches remained relatively low, evangelicalism was active in certain spheres. For example, some university outreach was conducted by the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions (the "IVF", now called the University and Colleges Christian Fellowship or "UCCF") and the Scripture Union operated children's camps (under the name "Children's Special Service Mission" or "CSSM").

In the late 1930s, the CSSM or Iwerne camps were taken over by Eric Nash, who had been the chaplain at Wrekin College, a boarding school in Shropshire. Radle Manwaring described the camps as follows:

"The keynotes of Iwerne were always simple Bible teaching and pastoral care through strongly developed friendships at all levels. Attendance was by invitation only and limited to boys at major public schools, at least boarding schools. The unofficial, sotto voce, slogan of the 'Bash Camps' (Bash being the very affectionate name given to E. J. H. Nash) was 'key boys from key schools' and, whilst this strategy of creating a patrician, elitist Christian society was criticised by many, the results were most remarkable..."³⁶⁸

In his biography of evangelical minister John Stott, Alister Chapman described the strategy which lay behind Nash's targeting of "key boys from key schools" and linked it to the principal tenet of activism and the desire to rebuild the evangelical movement:

"Why did Nash make the effort to visit these schools, given their antipathy to his message? Why, given that there were plenty of other children in England who needed to hear the gospel, did he focus his attention almost exclusively on the tiny minority at the public schools? The answer is that Nash shared the belief

³⁶⁶ Bebbington supra.

³⁶⁷ Neill, S. 1958. *Anglicanism*, Pelican.

³⁶⁸ Manwaring, R. *From Controversy to Co-existence: Evangelicals in the Church of England 1914 – 1980* pp. 57-58.

that these schools were the source of the country's leadership... Nash wanted to see public schoolboys converted because of the disproportionate impact he believed they could have on English society. He focused his life's work on the English public schools, and the top thirty at that, because he believed that converts from these places would be "multiplication tables", whose influence could spur a more widespread revival of Christianity in England..."³⁶⁹

Partly as a result of the work of the IVF and the CSSM, the conservative evangelical movement experienced rapid growth in the UK following World War II, leading to its participation in the formation of the World Evangelical Fellowship in 1951.

Numerous future leaders of the evangelical movement attended the Iwerne camps. As Kenneth Hylson-Smith stated, "The 'Bash Camps' had a profound impact upon such 'campers' and future Evangelical leaders as Michael Green (subsequently principal of St John's College, Nottingham and rector of St Aldate's, Oxford), Dick Lucas (subsequently rector of St Helen's, Bishopgate, London) and John Stott."³⁷⁰

John Stott was Nash's second in command and held the roles of Secretary and Treasurer for the Iwerne Camps. Stott is recognised as a leading figure in the expansion of evangelical Christianity in the UK and later became the rector of All Souls, Langham Place in London.

As described above, some attendees at Iwerne Camps were subject to "shepherding", or intensive follow-up communication after the camps had ended.³⁷¹ Selected attendees became part of a network of elite conservative evangelicals, many of whom were shaped by the commitments which they had made at camp and the shared language and culture imparted there. For example, Radle Manwaring described the camps as follows:

"All the major public schools were reached by the careful, thoughtful and dedicated work of the Iwerne Minster Camps represented by 'Bash' and his assistants. Their follow-up work was outwardly very low key but meticulous and yielded dividends in the number of committed Christians going into the Anglican ministry and into the professions, notably teaching. Of course, they had their in-groups and their jargon, 'campers' being the title earned by those attending Iwerne."³⁷²

According to some descriptions, the movement was also characterised by an aversion to conduct that was seen as being "worldly". Alcohol, drugs, make up, dancing and popular culture (including the theatre and the cinema) were in some circles seen as taboo. Similarly, relationships between men and women could be restrained and opportunities to meet other young people outside of church limited, as dating was frowned upon by some evangelical leaders. Oliver Barclay described the culture of conservative evangelism in the UK at the time as follows:

³⁶⁹ Chapman, A. (2011) *Godly Ambition: John Stott and the Evangelical Movement*. p. 17.

³⁷⁰ Hylson-Smith, K. (1989) *The Evangelicals in the Church of England 1734 – 1984*. p. 312.

³⁷¹ According to Victim 004, this was more commonly referred to as "personal work" or "discipling". References to "shepherding" should be read as references to this activity.

³⁷² Manwaring, supra. pp. 58-59.

"The trouble was that these things were held to constitute "worldliness", and became a test of orthodoxy, or at least of what constituted a "keen Christian"... it tended to isolate evangelicals from much social and cultural life... There was generally among CEs something of an intellectual inferiority complex and a negative attitude to contemporary "high" culture... When, as a first-year science student, I mentioned my interest in current poetry (T.S. Eliot and W.H. Auden), I was told that it would be best not to broadcast it or I would be thought by some to be "unsound"". ³⁷³

Similarly, evangelical author Christopher Wright observed that Bash campers "were, however, inclined to be suspicious of wider interests and especially anything that could be deemed as 'intellectual'... As a result, Bash and many campers could be very critical of anything other than basic Bible study and evangelism. ... The emphasis on direct evangelism was necessary, but unfortunately it was accompanied by a negative attitude to culture and even to apologetics." ³⁷⁴

This attitude towards relationships and the outside world was also described as part of the culture of the Iwerne camps. Manwaring characterised them as being "dominated by the bachelor outlook of their charming mentor and relationships with the opposite sex were viewed with some suspicion, being categorized as danger along with motorbikes and the business world." ³⁷⁵

Witness 041 described her experience of attending Iwerne camps as a woman. She accompanied her husband, who was a staff member at Winchester College, and said that she found it to be a very different experience from her own background as a professional, because female attendees at Iwerne camps were called "Lady Helpers" and spent most of their time in the kitchen. ³⁷⁶ Victim 003 said that women were "only seen in the kitchen".

Similarly, Mary Mullins, who was a "Helper" at the Iwerne Camps and who helped to initiate similar camps for girls, gave the following description: "... theirs was the hidden humble job in the background...". "For most women, the chance to find out the answers [to spiritual questions] for themselves was rare if not impossible, as the role of women at Iwerne was confined to a dozen or so who helped domestically at each camp". ³⁷⁷

Mary Mullins linked this to the awkwardness which the founder of the camps had felt around women. She described how Eric Nash had experienced "little or no friendly contact with girls of his own age" while he was growing up and preferred the company of men. She said:

"He expected his younger men to limit their conversation with the girls to a polite greeting if they passed them. He personally never spoke to us unless he had to. He was clearly embarrassed by our presence and preferred to avoid us if he could. It would be true to say, that if not in word, certainly by his example, his influence upon some people in this area has been unfortunate. So careful have

³⁷³ Barclay, O. (1997) *Evangelicalism in Britain 1935-1995*, Inter-Varsity Press. p. 25-26.

³⁷⁴ Wright, C. (2011) *John Stott: A portrait by his friends*.

³⁷⁵ Manwaring, supra. p. 60.

³⁷⁶ Account of Witness 041.

³⁷⁷ Eddison, J. (1982) *A Study in Spiritual Power: An appreciation of E J H Nash*. p. 132.

they been not to become over involved with girls too soon, that many have failed to become involved enough, and have found themselves both awkward and embarrassed in the company of girls in their mid-twenties or even older... He failed to see the need to provide opportunities for his team to meet and work with girls in the natural way necessary to young people."³⁷⁸

According to some descriptions, Nash enforced the strict rules of Iwerne camps upon some of his followers, even resorting to monitoring and harsh admonishments by correspondence when they were away from camp. For example, John Stott stated that, "His letters to me often contained a rebuke, for I was a wayward young Christian and needed to be disciplined. In fact, so frequent were his admonitions at one period, that whenever I saw his familiar writing on an envelope, I needed to pray and prepare myself for half an hour before I felt ready to open it".³⁷⁹

Nash was also responsible for the development of the "heavy shepherding" which for some attendees became characteristic of Iwerne camps and their officers. John Stott described how when he was a young man Nash wrote long and "heavily theological" letters to him at least once a week for five years. The letters often enforced principles of moral conduct, identified practices which were "worldly" and which must therefore be avoided, and contained instructions for the recruitment of boys to the camps. Stott described how Nash would write to his recruits constantly and would often travel long distances to meet with small groups or just one boy.³⁸⁰

Although his theology and practices influenced the culture of the Iwerne Camps and the approach taken by Smyth, there is no suggestion that Nash envisaged the creation of groups similar to the Christian Forum in terms of its intensity, exclusivity and potential for abuse. On the contrary, Witness 041 said, "Nash, who I met once, was alive to the formation of cults and wanted Christianity mixed with humour and fun, so children were under no emotional pressure to commit to evangelicalism."³⁸¹

Manwaring condemned the insular nature of the evangelical movement in the first half of the 20th century (and in particular within universities), saying: "In their earlier days, members of the IVF had little use for the established church, they eschewed involvement in society, they tended to be life-denying rather than life-affirming and they had little culture". While Barclay rejected this assessment as not being "totally accurate", he observed that members of the movement in that period were "often too censorious of others and too quick to dismiss as hopeless any they thought not quite "sound", seeing no good at all in what they wrote or thought. The battle lines were too tightly drawn".³⁸²

Smyth was an evangelical leader whose faith was shaped by his time at the Iwerne camps under Nash. Some of the elements of conservative evangelical doctrine and parts of its subculture in the first half of the 20th century which are described above are

³⁷⁸ *ibid.* p. 134.

³⁷⁹ Eddison, J. (1982) *A Study in Spiritual Power: An appreciation of E J H Nash*. pp. 85-86.

³⁸⁰ *ibid.* p. 84.

³⁸¹ Account of Witness 041.

³⁸² Barclay, *supra.* p. 28.

reflected in the actions of Smyth and the impact which he had upon members of the Christian Forum.

For example, multiple witnesses described how Smyth isolated his chosen boys from mainstream school and culture. Numerous victims spoke of Smyth forbidding them from watching television or movies other than his approved content and from engaging in romantic relationships. The rigorous monitoring and "shepherding" which Smyth employed after the victims had left Winchester College appears to have been modelled on that used by Nash and his followers towards some attendees at the Iwerne camps. The strict controls imposed by Nash and some leaders of the evangelical church upon selected members were abused by Smyth as a tool for grooming.

Similarly, Barclay's description of some early evangelicals dismissing those who were not "sound" and seeing no value in what they thought is reminiscent of the attitude which Smyth encouraged members of the Christian Forum to adopt towards dons, housemasters and chaplains at Winchester College. He took advantage of this to evade scrutiny by those in authority and minimise the risk of disclosures by the boys whom he abused.

The use of special jargon such as, "campers", "keen" and "sound" was also a facet of life at Iwerne camps and of the shepherding of some attendees, but under Smyth's influence it became a way for those in the Christian Forum to identify one another and exclude non-members.

Smyth twisted the evangelical doctrine of crucicentrism and substitutionary atonement and transformed it into a rationale for abuse for his own purposes. As described above, he taught his victims that in order to atone for their sins, they had to allow him to inflict abuse upon them. In contrast, the doctrine of crucicentrism advocates that the only way of achieving salvation is through Christ's sacrifice, not by humans emulating that physical suffering. Smyth took advantage of the boys' faith and of one of the core tenets of evangelicalism to create opportunities to abuse.

In part, this was possible because his rejection of intellectualism and the critical thinking which it entails, combined with the movement's emphasis on the infallibility of the Bible, led to the creation of an environment where boys felt unable to question Smyth's authority.

Some conservative evangelicals are taught that the Bible cannot be questioned. When Smyth used Scripture to reinforce and justify his abusive demands, some of his victims believed that what he was saying was right and could not be challenged. This was particularly the case in a context where Smyth had been held up by the Iwerne Camps, by Peter Krakenberger and by Winchester College as being a good and authoritative Christian leader.

17. Themes from the testimony of victims

This section will examine traits and patterns in the conduct of Smyth at Winchester College by setting out direct quotes from victims and witnesses. It will identify through these quotes some factors which may be said to have facilitated or permitted the abuse which he perpetrated.

Fifty-seven witnesses have provided information to the reviewers for the purposes of this report. From their accounts and those of the victims of Smyth, the reviewers have been able to identify a number of common themes, each of which is set out as a heading in this section.

Wherever possible, this section has used direct quotes in order to ensure that the views expressed by particular witnesses and victims are presented. The quotes reflect the views and experiences of each witness, as reported to the reviewers. Some quotes may be relevant to more than one thematic heading.

Some information, such as specific dates and ages, has been omitted with ellipsis or summarised in square brackets in order to prevent jigsaw identification of victims and witnesses.

Celebrity status and the use of special treatment

Many witnesses referred to Smyth's status as a high-profile QC and spoke of his glamorous appearance and the ways in which he seemed different to other adults at Winchester College. Some spoke about Smyth conferring special treatment on them by, for example, providing work experience and career opportunities.

Victim 002: *He was one of the country's most sought after barristers, often in the news, and as the Archbishop of Canterbury described in a recent interview, a charming and delightful man. What chance did we teenage boys have when he managed to con our parents, our housemasters, the headmaster and church leaders?*

Smyth was the 'kingpin'. He was a pivotal figure at Iwerne, but despite being a QC and a Judge, there was a undefinable feeling that Smyth felt he was an outsider.

He took me sailing and skiing. He lent me his car. He bought me presents including a shirt from Jermyn Street. He paid for me to decorate one of the children's bedrooms. He would offer to collect me and my belongings at the end of university term. He would write frequently to me. He invited me to be one of his children's godparents. He (and on occasion Anne Smyth) would visit me at university, staying in the guest accommodation of the halls of residence. He got me to ask my father to invite him and his family to stay during the summer holidays. In lots of ways – both large and small – and over a prolonged period he prised me away from my family, made me feel special and then exploited that relationship.

Victim 003: *It is easy to see how it happened. I was groomed as a child, he was a charismatic and clever barrister who showed an interest in me and listened to me... Smyth often spoke [at Christian Forum]. He was humorous, sporty and felt younger. Sometimes he had sexual references in his jokes, he was more in touch with us. Smyth often attended even when he was not the speaker, he was a presence. It made me feel special, part of an inner circle...*

He was always waiting in the car outside which was incredible as it was just for me. Now I look back, he was a top barrister, he must have prioritised our meetings. He would practice his opening and summing up of cases. I was very bowled over that I was

special and he was so famous, even on tv etc. He practiced his speeches for cases on me.

Victim 004: *[Smyth] was I think the youngest QC and a Recorder. He was funny and clever and interested in me... [Smyth] was a very glamorous and robust person who came into our grey lives. He offered humour and listened to me, he made me feel as if I had important thoughts and feelings and this was against a backcloth of Winchester College that did not do that for me, even though I was able.*

... Smyth was a working barrister. During the period that I knew him, I have a diary entry saying that he'd been appointed a QC. He was a high flying barrister.

... Smyth was sporting, athletic, successful, which made him more believable and more persuasive.

Victim 005: *... Smyth was not just an evangelical Christian but he was also a QC and working in very prominent and public trials in Britain, working with Mary Whitehouse and that sort of thing, during this timeframe.*

... [Smyth] was an impressive guy and he took me under his wing and over the following months I suppose I had an unofficial pupillage with him where he took me into court, not just in Winchester Crown Court but other places too, so I was in Chambers with him, mingling with these gowned and wigged barristers, feeling ever so important for a 16 year old. I was incredibly flattered, incredibly privileged, fascinated with the law, fascinated by the cases, fascinated by court experience and he was clearly very good at his job.

Victim 008: *John Smyth could be good fun; his family was lovely; he was a very attractive almost celebrity and he made you feel special. He was a prominent QC in the newspapers, known to be an active Christian with the blond wife and the blond children and house with a pool, all very glamorous. He was naturally good at persuading people as he was a successful barrister, he gained your confidence and listened to you. We were so impressionable.*

Victim 015: *[Smyth] was a very charismatic individual, very sporty, good-looking, wealthy, successful, brilliant speaker and very inspiring about Christian faith, he used to give inspiring talks... he became the youngest QC in the country.*

...He was a very charismatic and (in retrospect) manipulative man. It was common knowledge that he had become the youngest person to make QC and was therefore highly successful... John and Anne appeared to be happy, successful and wealthy, with a swimming pool in the garden and several small children running around.

Witness 003: *Smyth was famous over the Mary Whitehouse coverage.*

Witness 006: *In 1979... Smyth, through the Christian Forum, invited me to observe him at Winchester Crown Court. He was a defence Barrister in a trial involving rival Hells Angels gangs. I was very impressed.*

Witness 013: *Smyth was much talked about in Winchester (in plain sight) as he was from outside the school. I clearly remember he wore sharp, smart suits and bright coloured shirts and had a very red face. He was a high-profile QC.*

Witness 016: *Smyth was glamorous. He appeared modern and fun compared to Winchester College, which was academic and austere.*

Witness 025: *[Smyth] had a brand new Golf, which was so impressive. It was the power of celebrity.*

Witness 046: *I think the Christian community lauded [Smyth] a 'hero' as he had won the case against the theatrical portrayal of male rape in the romans in Britain...*

Witness 048: *Smyth was well-regarded in the local community as a leading QC.*

Witness 052: *Smyth was a high profile individual, an intelligent and charming man. He was smooth and I think he was wealthy.*

Witness 053: *Smyth was charismatic and eloquent as a speaker. He was not 'donnish' and was a great crusader against permissive society. He was high profile.*

Multiple victims and witnesses spoke about the incentive of treats and luxuries such as food, games and television, which were provided to boys in the Christian Forum and those who were invited to Sunday lunch at Smyth's house.

Victim 002: *I was pleased when he invited me and a couple of friends to join him and his young family for Sunday lunch. It was a welcome relief from the boredom and loneliness of weekends at boarding school.*

Victim 003: *Winchester College was a hard place, with no positive messages from staff - just get on with it - and a constant worry you were not good enough... I enjoyed the Christian Forum as there were comfy chairs, tea and biscuits, treats we were not used to before the talks on a Sunday...*

We would also go to Peter Krakenberger's house during the week and sometimes on Sundays we were given crisps and played games. It was a highlight in my week as Winchester College was a tough school. I remember thinking we were breaking the rules. I remember being invited to watch the "New Avengers" at Peter Krakenberger's home. It was the high point of my week as we never saw TV and this felt really special.

Smyth used the [Iwerne] camps to exert more influence over me and others. It was a special time, being surrounded by older boys giving me attention plus lots of brilliant activities and treats - ice cream and sweets and not much Bible reading.

Victim 004: *[The Iwerne camps] were built around games, fun, football and windsurfing with a hefty dose of Evangelical preaching and Bible study going on. They were fun - that's what made them attractive.*

We spent many happy hours at [Smyth's] house, invited for Sunday lunch, playing with the Smyths' children and swimming in their outdoor pool - occasionally naked. It felt like a family home but there was a darker side.

Witness 003: *I was invited to [Smyth's] House for Sunday lunch: a lovely family, a beef joint, a pool. I remember it as being happy times.*

Witness 009: *I knew of Smyth and people in my house went for Sunday lunch. It was seen as a high-status event. You were selected as you were smart and the elite, he created an elitist tribe.*

Witness 016: *Winchester College had austere conditions. Conditions were harsh for the boys: e.g. a meal of plain baked potatoes. So coffee and biscuits, crisps etc. at Bible Studies and Christian Forum were powerful treats and Sunday lunch out was very attractive, as was the family life offered at Smyth's home as we saw our parents rarely.*

Witness 023: *[I] attended bible studies at Peter Krakenberger's house as a senior boy as an antidote to the harsh conditions under which we lived.*

Witness 024: *The Christian Forum was a simple meeting. We came together over coffee and biscuits for a talk, prayer and questions.*

Witness 031: *Peter Krakenberger would throw tea parties which were really welcome and brought some comfort into our lives.*

Witness 032: *I attended the tea parties at Peter Krakenberger's at which we drank Coke and Fanta and played games which were suitable for a 13/14 year old, but felt odd for a 17 year old. I often met dons in their homes, all school houses, usually in groups of three and four plus their families were around, but Peter Krakenberger's tea parties were very different... It was about getting alongside you, supporting you, just befriending. ... I went for Sunday lunch at Smyth's family home. No-one else invited boys out for that.*

Witness 045: *I was invited with family to a Sunday afternoon... at Smyth's house... It was great fun, lots of boys from [his house] larking around, wrestling in the pool.*

Witness 053: *Peter Krakenberger had recorded all the talks at the Christian Forum and had them all filed away. He used to replay some to the boys to make a point. He had Jaffa Cakes, fizzy drinks and sweets on tap. ... The school was austere.*

John Thorn: *And then a neighbouring barrister, a Queen's Counsel, a happily married family man, began to take an interest in the group. Many of them went out to his home for Sunday lunch. It gave them relief from boarding-school life in the atmosphere of a loving home.³⁸³*

³⁸³ *The Road to Winchester*, supra. fn 62.

Exploiting vulnerability

Some victims and witness spoke of how Smyth exploited their vulnerability to build a relationship or exert control. For example, some spoke of feeling isolated from their families or of having a lack of understanding of sex and sexuality as being relevant to the context in which Smyth operated. Others gave examples of Smyth using secrets which he had learned to pressure or blackmail boys into being physically abused by him.

Victim 002: *I was 13 when Smyth met me and invited me for Sunday lunch, which I welcomed as I was so desperate to fit in and feel safe.*

Boarding school may be a place of privilege, but in the 1970s it was also a place of immense emotional deprivation and brutality... Desperate for affection and adult direction, I was easy prey for a predator like John Smyth.

Victim 004: *The lunches [at Smyth's house] became a focal point for the Christian Forum attendees as a way of getting out of the school, a nice Sunday lunch and messing around in the garden. He had young children and there'd be games of tag or rounders in his garden. When you were a boarding boy, away from your parents (and my parents ... were quite far away) it was a nice family time.*

Victim 005: *I think [Smyth] pressed some buttons in me. I mean, I'd been basically abandoned at Prep School [as a child] so for ... years I'd not really known what it was to have a family and I'd not known what it was to have a father's regular input and a father's presence. Smyth offered that with ... his house, his family and his own input.*

I felt like he was pressing all my emotional buttons – my need for attachment, my need for a father, my need for family – this probably superseded my common sense. I think that was probably my core vulnerability...

Victim B: *[Meals at Smyth's house] were family friendly lunches. There was no problem on the school's behalf with me attending as it was seen as family time.*

Mark Stibbe: *Smyth exploited boys who had a need in their hearts for a father figure and a family. All of us were boarding school pupils. All of us had experienced ruptured attachments with parents, family and home. All of us were open to Smyth's fatherly attentions and the hospitality he and his wife, Anne, offered at their house in Hampshire.*

Smyth selected good-looking boys with a desperate need for secure attachment and targeted them. He talked about being a 'spiritual father' to us, using spiritual language to appeal to a psychological need we had, to feel worthy of love and belonging.³⁸⁴

Witness 003: *[In comparison to others] I saw my parents twice a term and saw other people's family at weekend, so I was not vulnerable or isolated.*

³⁸⁴ Account of Mark Stibbe in the foreword to Oakley, L. and Humphreys, J. "Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures".

Witness 030: *I went sailing with JS met his family and ate Sunday lunch at their home. It was welcome to have some 'ordinary family life'.*

Victim 008: *I was vulnerable when I arrived at the school and I became caught up in the Christian Forum... [Smyth] exploited our preoccupation with Masturbation which the school failed to address as an issue.*

Witness 018: *I had no educational input on relationships. It was all about biology.*

Witness 023: *... the school allowed CF to promote extreme evangelical views and did not monitor its influence on boys, especially the ones everyone knew to be vulnerable.*

Victim 003: *[After Smyth learned a secret which Victim 003 had been ashamed of] Smyth put his arms around me to comfort me as I spilled the beans and cried, and he agreed he would not tell the school or others. He negotiated with me as to what would be a suitable punishment, I hated myself.*

Victim 025: *I disclosed to [Smyth] ... my thoughts on my sexuality in that I was gay, something I was struggling with... This meant he had total control over me as he held my greatest secret.*

The Ruston Report: *The practice began in 1978, with J. offering a 17-year old the choice of a beating from him or being reported to parents/school. He chose the beating given with a cane in the summer house.*

Use of religion and spiritual texts

Smyth's victims described how he used scripture and his position of religious authority to justify his abuse and control his victims.

Victim 002: *Smyth's favourite book, 'Quiet Talks on Power', was referred to frequently by him in his continual demand that we young boys be fully committed about seeking God and that led me to feel guilt about masturbation and sexual thoughts throughout my adolescent years. Smyth would say that these sexual thoughts or acts and other sins grieved Jesus who just wanted us to be the best for him and were a blockage preventing us from experiencing God's love, power and forgiveness. Smyth described how he had been sent by God to be his Spiritual Father on Earth. This created the framework which gave permission to Smyth, he had the right and duty to discipline 'his sons'.*

He told me that I and a few others in our "club" had been chosen by God to do great things and that he was the man God had sent to be our spiritual father. I was forgiven, but I could show my gratitude to Jesus by nailing my sins to the cross. And then he told me he had discovered a really effective way to do this, to become more holy.

He told me that I was especially loved by God, quoting the scriptural proverb, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him diligently".

For the first term at university I resisted but, after 5 years of his perverted theology and grooming, my refusal to be beaten felt as if I was defying God. I cannot describe the

sheer mental torture of that time. I felt that turning my back on the beating was my way of turning my back on God and in turn it seemed as if God was abandoning me. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that I felt sentenced to eternal damnation.

Victim 005: *I do remember a conversation that I had with Smyth where he said, 'in the Lord's prayer we say, 'Our father who art in heaven', so God is our father but he's in heaven. He can't be your father here on earth so I've been given the privilege of being a spiritual father, and some of these boys... are kind of 'my sons'".*

Iwerne was embedded in the culture at Winchester College... I think it was religious abuse.

... I met with Smyth at Culver Mews. He would question me about sexual matters and use Biblical references to justify it. He would check and test me on the daily Scripture passages set for us by him.

Mark Stibbe: *Smyth used and misused Scripture passages all the time, and he did so to exert spiritual control over his victims. A favourite verse of his contained, 'you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood' (Hebrews 12.4) which he exposed to a subtle and sinister reinterpretation, then employed as one of many justifications for beating us to the point where we would actually bleed. He also used scriptures about fathers not sparing the rod, and fathers disciplining their children, even if that discipline was not pleasant at the time (Hebrews 12.5-13).*

... His primary tactic was to weaponize Scripture and use it to induce a religion of fear and of performance... Instead of becoming spiritual sons of a perfect father, we became slaves to a man who assumed the father's place and role in our lives. Fear became a way of life.

... Yes, there was a physical component to his abuse in the beatings themselves. Yes, there was a psychological and emotional component. But what John Smyth did to us was first and foremost spiritual abuse. Without the spiritual dimension to his behaviour, there would have been no abuse at all. He would never have succeeded, over time, in eliciting our cooperation.³⁸⁵

Victim 008: *I remember one day in [Smyth's] study, we had an intense conversation on a one to one basis. He said some of the others used beating as a way of making amends for transgressions and he had all the Biblical references to justify it, so I went along with it. ... For me he pushed that I was part of a special group that God had great plans for us. It was a cult.*

Before [leaving Winchester College] my interpretation of the beatings was that it was Gods will, the rationale appeared to be rock solid, but I knew I had to step away.

³⁸⁵ Account of Mark Stibbe in the foreword to Oakley, L. and Humphreys, J. "Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures".

Victim 015: *I have almost over the years, in my mind, put it in the category of cult, it is almost like a cult in that we weren't obviously vulnerable adults in one sense but we had been groomed through quite a long phase.*

Victim 025: *...[Smyth] abused me using the Bible and scriptures to make me hurt myself. I had to "do anything to give myself pain" to stop the "sinful homosexual yearnings". He told me my homosexuality would prevent me from entering "the kingdom of heaven nor live among the righteous on earth". These were awful thoughts which played on my mind... This is spiritual abuse and it took me a long while to understand that, so I blamed myself and my sexuality.*

One of Smyth's big claims was that our bodies weren't ours but God's. He'd say that any gay activity was 'defiling' the temple and told me of the pleasure of sex from heterosexual sex with his wife and that was ordained by God. So it's not just a case of mastering one's body but using it for 'godly' ways - which were whatever he happened to declare them to be, supported by Bible verses.

Witness 011: *JS deliberately used and twisted Biblical verses, I think it was spiritual abuse.*

Witness 023: *I consider I am a victim of religious abuse, as the school allowed CF to promote extreme evangelical views and did not monitor its influence on boys, especially the ones everyone knew to be vulnerable.*

Witness 030: *I think as well as sexual and physical abuse it was spiritual and emotional abuse, but we were not neglected. It was as most public schools were in that time.*

[Use of the Christian Forum to act in plain sight](#)

The reviewers received evidence about Smyth using the context of the Christian Forum to gain access to the College and to boys.

Victim 002: *... [Smyth] had access to us in school at Culver Mews (Peter Krakenberger's) house and we went to his home..., sometimes with no one from Winchester College knowing where we were. But on Sundays we would have had to sign out for lunch.*

He came and spoke at the Christian Forum and was powerful and charismatic, but attended even when he was not a speaker. I think he came and went as he wished.

Victim 005: *Once I came to faith I started going to the Christian Forum in the Blackwell Room at Winchester College and Smyth was regularly there. He was nearly always standing at the front surrounded by what looked like people who had huge respect for him...*

Victim 015: *Smyth became a regular visitor to Winchester College and would sometimes speak at the Christian Forum or otherwise attend.*

Victim 025: *Smyth was always around the CF and so I assumed he was a decent person who the school approved of. Smyth was clever and able; he controlled the group of boys within the Christian Forum.*

Witness 033: *[Smyth] was a good speaker but he also attended when he was not the speaker.*

Witness 037: *Smyth was a trusted and senior leader and as he lived locally to Winchester College, he was invited repeatedly to be a speaker. I think he was present more than half of time. I should have asked why an outsider to the school allowed in so frequently. I saw him building rapport with senior boys and picked carefully who he spent time with. I think he was grooming boys, using today's language.*

Witness 041: *At the time I felt Smyth was the power behind the Christian Forum ... and Peter Krakenberger was the administrator.*

Witness 043: *I can remember thinking it was odd [Smyth] was just sitting in the Library listening at the Christian Forum, as he was not Winchester staff.*

Witness 045: *Smyth spoke at the Christian Forum and was often present when not speaking.*

Witness 046: *I recall on one occasion Smyth came to speak at the Christian Forum, bringing a young man from outside the school with him and on a few occasions joined the meeting when he was not speaking.*

Grooming of others

Some victims and witnesses told the reviewers about how Smyth tried to build relationships with authority figures such as Peter Krakenberger and the parents of some pupils in order to earn their trust.

Victim 002: *[Smyth] took me sailing and skiing and when I left [Winchester College] he visited my father [overseas] and I found them praying together...*

He got me to ask my father to invite him and his family to stay during the summer holidays.

Witness 006: *[After his parents refused permission] Smyth had rung my Dad too, saying 'I need to have your son for lunch'.*

Witness 011: *Smyth had warmth and personal power. I feel Peter Krakenberger was a gateway who was used by Smyth, as Peter Krakenberger knew that he met us in his bedrooms.*

Witness 013: *[Peter Krakenberger] was ... under Smyth's influence.*

Smyth's recruitment of [Victim 001] I believe was strategic, as senior boys had more influence than junior masters and it neutralised any risk of opposition from the Housemasters.

Witness 014: *[Peter Krakenberger] facilitated the contact and encouraged boys to meet Smyth.*

Witness 022: *[In response to a parent expressing concerns about their son's involvement in the Christian Forum] In January 1979, Smyth responded with a charming letter accepting the parent's decision but offering 'respite' to their son and offering to meet the father in town for lunch or suggesting he could stay over on a weekday night to meet them.*

Witness 027: *The Christian Forum was quite clever in keeping the Chaplains on board and giving them a speaking slot each term.*

Witness 031: *[Smyth] stayed with our family at our country house in Gloucestershire with his wife.*

Witness 041: *Winchester College liked the high-profile speakers that Smyth could attract... they were a bit dazzled by these speakers.*

John Thorn: *Bear in mind that he is a well known QC and a good family man with a nice wife and 3 children – hence one's disbelief!³⁸⁶*

"He asked me to join the family for lunch one day. I didn't."

Taking advantage of the supervision arrangements

Some victims and witnesses, including former staff members of Winchester College, suggested that the low level of supervision at the time enabled Smyth to gain access to the Christian Forum and to meet with boys outside the school.

Victim 002: *... [Smyth] had access to us in school at Culver Mews (Peter Krakenberger's) house and we went to his home..., sometimes with no one from Winchester College knowing where we were. But on Sundays we would have had to sign out for lunch.*

Victim 004: *We were not looked after. I know it was a different time... Even mid-week I would finish tea in the College and race off to [Smyth's] home and be back at the College in time for 7pm Prep. No-one would know where I had gone.*

A cult was allowed to develop in the school, with its own policies, language and ways of doing things. We felt special and elite. We looked down on those not involved and others wanted to be like us. We would come and go around the school rules and were never challenged by staff.

I played Rackets with Smyth and other people, including [Victim 001]. He seemed to be able to come and go as he liked, even using the College's sports facilities.

³⁸⁶ Letter written by John Thorn, dated 12 October 1982.

Witness 09: *The Governance was flimsy and the wall permeable so Smyth would be able to go in and out at his will.*

Witness 011: *I think Winchester College got caught out by its laissez faire attitude. It was a moral vacuum and needed more structure and oversight and boys needed guidance.*

[One teacher] took no care of us on art trips to London. As long as we got back to the train in London, he had no idea where we had been.

Witness 016: *It was a libertarian atmosphere where pushing boundaries was accepted.*

Witness 018: *In my house we worked in Toys, which were cubicles. We saw the Housemaster was at the top of a spiral stairs briefly for prayers and lunches were managed by prefects. Prefects struggled with the level responsibility... I remember a History of Art trip to London where the teacher was not interested in what we did, as long as we were on the train home. Boys signed up for the course to have termly trips to London to do what they wanted.*

Witness 023: *John Thorn was laissez faire in his approach and failed to check Smyth's influence.*

Witness 027: *I believe [my house] was a chaotic and mis-managed staff group. My Housemaster ... was old fashioned and aloof. He had no pastoral role. He left the house to run by the boys, so bullying was rife and not even frowned on.*

Witness 030: *My Housemaster ... was laissez faire and old school. He let the prefects run the house.*

Witness 045: *Winchester College was lax and John Thorn was permissive. Oversight of boys depended on the Housemaster. Mine was good but another was [not able to supervise adequately]... This left control and discipline down to the older boys in the house.*

Witness 047: *Senior boys were running the Houses and Housemasters had no line of sight on the boys. They had very limited contact with Houses unless they were a Tutor. Junior Masters kept out of the Houses and it took me years to get invited to even lunch at a House. The attitude was very insular: 'my House, my boys'. There was no obvious pastoral care system.*

Witness 048: *In terms of boundaries, Kingsgate street we knew was our boundary but there was no control of who was in school.*

Beloes was a caring house... Geoff Hewitson was a good man, but hands off... so Beloes was run by the older boys. We ran the House, but Geoff would wander through in the evening chatting to all the boys so he was accessible.

Witness 050: *Prefects and older boys ran the House. Winchester College was not a rule-heavy school. It prides itself on instilling self-management and care for other boys.*

Witness 051: *The Winchester College way was that Prefects ran the House and Housemasters oversaw this.*

Witness 053: *There was a lax signing in and out procedure with little oversight.*

Euan MacAlpine: *One of the weaknesses of the Winchester College system - all house dons running their own little empire - was the fact that we never all met together without John Thorn present to discuss The State of the Nation, so we never pulled everything together, warts and all, trivial and non-trivial... Our once-a-term meetings with John Thorn were on such weighty matters as whether we should abandon 'strats', or could they just hold them or should they be on their heads. And what about if there were no tops to the 'strats' and just the rim?*

Overcoming resistance and building trust

Victims and witnesses spoke to the reviewers about some of the ways in which Smyth groomed them, overcame their resistance and build relationships of trust. This included the use of intense discussions, often with sexual content, the use of his own family to build trust, including by asking boys to become Godparents to his children, and by normalising nudity.

Victim 002: *Smyth encouraged discussion and disclosure of masturbation and impure thoughts with this group of boys. It became a normal conversation within this special group.*

The rules at [Smyth's] house were different, with routinely naked swimming by boys in their family pool and you could go into the bathroom if someone else was in the bath. It all felt very 'modern' and free.

Smyth would question me about sexual thoughts, feelings and actions, these were 'intense and powerful' and 'secret conversations'. I knew they were a secret and that made them and me special.

Victim 003: *Smyth would see us one to one in Peter Krakenberger's home in a bedroom, I think with Peter Krakenberger working in another room or even going out. He wanted to know about my sexual thoughts, feelings and actions... He said I was like him as a young man I was so flattered.*

Smyth and I had 'intense' conversations at [Smyth's] house and at Culver Mews. I knew these were secret, which made them more special, and he did not like it if you mentioned anything about the 'talks' in front of the others. He would shut me down as if I had betrayed a secret.

We went to [Smyth's] house on Sundays, played with his younger kids... we skinny dipped in his pool. The family life continued at [Smyth's] house, although to an extent we could do what we wanted but that was mainly to please Smyth... He asked me to be a Godparent to one of the children. I think he asked others in our group. My parents were nonplussed but the Smyths came to stay for a weekend which I thought proved how special I was... I think he used his family as a cover for all of his abuse.

Victim 004: *We would have intense biblical discussions and Smyth would undoubtedly direct the talks to making amends for sexual thoughts or actions. I was encouraged to confess and to spy on others. I remember [one summer] that Smyth took me to the bedroom he shared with his wife Anne and showed me condoms in the bedside drawer and talked to me about his sex life with his wife. I was very uncomfortable.*

Victim 005: *[Smyth] was particularly interested in sexual purity and holiness. That was the thing that really concerned him, that I wouldn't have lustful thoughts and that I wouldn't get involved in masturbation or anything like that. He talked about that a lot.*

Victim 008: *I vividly remember Smyth sat on the bed next to me in the shed after I was beaten. Smyth was naked, I can remember his penis distinctly, his rationale was biblical. Smyth had normalised nakedness as there was plenty of 'skinny dipping' in the pool.*

Victim 025: *[We] would be asked in detail to describe sexual thoughts, feelings and what I had done about it, which you can understand was so difficult being gay, bad enough being a teenager... I felt compelled to tell Smyth everything as that was what he asked of me, he knew obviously how to cross examine and it must have been these techniques he used. As he knew if you were holding back.*

Witness 011: *Intrusive conversations were common with Smyth.*

Witness 014: *Smyth asked Victim 001 to be a Godparent. His parents were furious, but he did become [Smyth's child's] Godparent.*

Witness 025: *One day we went on a sailing outing with him, during [a Iwerne] camp. There was an incident in the communal shower after the sailing outing with boys spraying each other with water from a hose and running around naked, which he joined in. It seemed pretty innocent at the time, though in retrospect it was strange that he felt able to join in and is probably the reason that I remember the event at all. I remember him saying that we should 'all be proud to be men' or something like that, which I took as a way of excusing our embarrassment about seeing each other (i.e. seeing him and his seeing us) naked.*

He said at least once (not just on the sailing occasion, but in these bible studies back at school) that we should be proud of our bodies when in the communal showers at school. He may even have asked about our experience of this, whether we were shy to be seen naked, or similar.

Smyth visited ... us at Peter Krakenberger's house, for bible studies, maybe once a week or fortnight for about 45 minutes, which we welcomed and enjoyed. ... There were jokes and we talked freely. We felt valued and taken seriously. Only looking back do I wonder what an adult who had no other contact with the school was doing prying into our personal lives.

Witness 053: *At 13 I remember thinking, why is the Christian Forum and Peter Krakenberger so obsessed with adolescent sexuality and masturbation?*

Barriers to disclosure

Some victims and witnesses spoke about factors which prevented them from disclosing the abuse to others at the time. These included steps taken by Smyth to ensure they maintained secrecy, a lack of pastoral care at the College, including by women, a lack of sex education and a culture of 'no sneaking'.

Victim 002: *I was completely trapped [after leaving Winchester College] as by [that time] I had been groomed and abused by Smyth for over 7 years. I was part of a tight secret group. He had us keeping a check on each other, for instance I went with others to [a city hundreds of miles away] as Smyth feared someone was 'backsliding'.*

Every moment of every day was like a living hell. I was close to a nervous breakdown and of course I couldn't talk to anyone. There was a code of loyalty and secrecy which I felt unable to break.

Why didn't I just tell someone? Don't you think I ask myself that every day? But when I think back to those awful years, I recall there was no question of my telling anyone. I was trapped.

I believe Smyth's talks, actions and charisma were in contrast to the failure of Winchester College to provide any pastoral care or even a basic understanding of what was acceptable behaviour. Women were rarely seen at Winchester College and were not seen as academically equal... there was no attention to well-being or even any warmth and material care. For example, there was no privacy anywhere until your final year, apart from in the toilets. The bathrooms were shared bathing rooms where instead of proper baths in which you could relax and get clean, there were just small metal tin tubs that would hang when unused on the wall, the sort of thing you would see in Western films. They were never cleaned and hot water was always in short supply so you had to share the filthy water of the previous person after a muddy game of Winchester Football. The seams of the bath tub would be split and had to be constantly refilled with soap to retain the water.

Victim 004: *[Victim 002] had to ring JS once week. In those days parents were rung once a week from a payphone if they were lucky, so this was quite an onerous demand.*

Victim 005: *I had my suspicions but I couldn't tell him because the religious cult that [Victim 003] and I were a part of was in a sense shrouded by secrecy. You never took a vow of secrecy with your mouth but everyone was secretive; we were secretive in relation to the school and each other, so we didn't even know each other's stories as victims at all.*

... I wanted to tell him [about Smyth] but I couldn't because of this secrecy thing that always binds abusive social systems and religious cults, it just does and I bought into it. I didn't know it at the time but I remember being gagged, this feeling of I can't tell him, I want to tell him but I never did.

Victim B: *My parents lived 250 miles away, so I saw them termly. I remember queuing up at the phone box to speak to them once a week.*

Mark Stibbe: ... it became abundantly and disturbingly clear how we had all kept secrets not only from our parents and teachers, but also from each other during the years of our abuse... That this came from Smyth is unquestionable.³⁸⁷

Witness 009: The staff were a group of mavericks. My Housemaster... was smart. Other staff were not in the least child-friendly but were very able.

Witness 016: There was no pastoral care on Sundays.

Witness 018: At the time I think there were two strong cultural blocks that would have prevented the boys telling parents or dons. First, the general reluctance for teenage boys to discuss anything related to sex. Second, the strong culture in the school against "sneaking"... No sneaking was a hard and fast rule at Winchester College.

[In relation to rumours of inappropriate relationships] ... We would never have told, and their behaviours would have been normalised plus what happened at school was not talked about at home, I would never have told my parents about the rumours... boys need a language, as adolescent boys get embarrassed about sex.

There were very few female staff and usually on peripheral subjects like pottery.

In my last year, my form teacher was very influential - a Jean Brodie type... he said it was not possible for one woman to be raped by one man and all but the girls and I agreed. I think these people had a great influence on us.

Witness 019: 'No sneaking' was a hard and fast rule at Winchester College.

Witness 042: I also remember someone saying in [a Housedons'] meeting that what they (Peter Krakenberger, Smyth) did was to target new boys when they were very vulnerable... invite them to tea and make them feel special... get them 'signed up' etc. to the Christian Forum and if any then left they were 'damned'.... I think [a colleague of Witness 042] said that he had one boy, who had experienced this, in a terrible state.

Witness 047: Who could the boys talk to? There were some processes in place, but no transparency, and there was a lack of boundaries in that the town and school merged.

There was a culture of fear and [boys] only told on a need-to-know basis. I taught and trained two of the victims ... and I am still shocked that they did not confide in me, as I was closer in age and believed I had a good relationship with them.

The role of women was that they were invisible, bar a female Science teacher, the sisters in Sanatorium, the Matrons and domestic staff.

Witness 048: There was no female presence at Winchester College.

³⁸⁷ Account of Mark Stibbe in the foreword to Oakley, L. and Humphreys, J. "Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures".

Witness 050: *It was impossible to talk to my friends about it as you were met with a wall of defensiveness. I became separated from [Victims 001, 003 and 005] because of it. They never spoke of what was happening, not a whisper.*

I do not remember much of [the presence of women]. There was Matron if you were in the sanatorium or laundry, and Housemasters' wives featured in some houses. We had many tutorials in Masters' houses and often had supper with them and their wives. There was a lot of one-on-one time where you could say anything, but it was not done.

Witness 053: *The role of women featured more than other public schools in teaching staff, but really they cooked, cleaned and did your washing. There was a good Nurse in the sanatorium.*

There was no sex education at all my time at Winchester College, plus there was no internet, so there was a limited opposition to the message of sex outside of marriage to a woman being evil, which was promoted by the Christian Forum.

There was no telephone until 1982, so you had to go to the public box [to speak with family].

Some victims and witnesses spoke about bullying and the use of physical punishment at Winchester College. More than one suggested that this normalised physical punishment and contributed to the context in which victims did not disclose Smyth's abuse.

Victim 005: *[Smyth] said, 'Well, with your friends, I beat them.' It was just 3 words: 'I beat them'. I thought in my head when he said, 'I beat them' that what he meant was 6 of the best, like at boarding school. Corporal punishment was not against the law until 1999 so [when Smyth first physically abused him] I was still in that kind of cultural mind set where if you were naughty, you got beaten.*

... I've never had a beating at boarding school which required any kind of medical care or attention afterwards. They'd been severe but not that bad...

Witness 018: *I might just add that, from what I have read of John Smyth, he was accused of severely beating boys he was in charge of. While that might sound barbaric today, it would not be hugely out of keeping with things that went on at the school at the time.*

For example, for at least the first three years I was at [my House], Prefects who were responsible for lights out would send any boy who was late for bed up to the top floor bathroom for what was known as "cold tubs". The young 'miscreant' would be forced to strip and get into a steel tub full of freezing water, in front of at least one prefect, often more than one. The prefects would then take it in turns to pour or throw more freezing water over him, usually laughing in the process, and often with comments made about his sexual genitalia. I sometimes got the impression that some prefects would deliberately engineer it so that certain younger boys were indeed late for bed so that they would face a "cold tub".

There was never any adult present during any of this, and I often thought that our then housemaster... either turned a blind eye to it or possibly didn't even know. I was corrected of this impression when, shortly after new showers had been installed in the basement, he announced one evening at house prayers that the steel tubs in the top floor bathroom would be retained "for purposes of punity".

Witness 030: *I was badly bullied by the boy who had been tasked with supporting me settling in and once I complained, he was beaten by the staff. So it was the norm as Prefects that you could beat, not that we did, but you could issue punishments e.g. get up at 7am to run around the playing fields and have a cold shower. ... I think as well as sexual and physical abuse, it was spiritual and emotional abuse, but we were not neglected. It was as most public schools were in that time.*

Witness 041: *The context at the time normalised corporal punishment but was fearful of anything potentially 'homosexual'.*

The impact upon victims

This section includes quotes from a number of victims describing in their own words the impact of the abuse upon their lives.

Victim 002: *It took me another six months before I had the insight and courage to break my ties with Smyth and his family. It would however take me many more years and many hundreds of hours of therapy before I was able to rebuild a sense of who I was and to discover again my own identity.*

The first few years of recovery were particularly difficult. My teenage years – the years when most young people are finding out who they are – had been increasingly controlled and taken over by Smyth. I now had to make my own decisions about what was right and wrong. The anxiety I felt was almost unbearable. It wasn't just [my teenage years and early adulthood] that Smyth ruined for me, that horrific experience cast a dark painful shadow throughout my 20's and beyond. What started nearly forty years ago in that garden shed is a lifetime away now but is also ever present.

Victim 003: *I have been badly damaged by what Smyth did to me and my inability to deal with it... I was for much of my life wracked by the guilt as I believed I was too weak to resist it or to get away and protect myself from him.*

Victim 005: *[What I experienced was] hugely traumatic and I should not have gone into my [marriage] or into my job without having had those things sorted. I've had 35 years of being messed up because of it when actually if it had been reported to the police, which it should've been, Smyth would've been brought to justice and those of us who were and are victims would've been helped.*

Victim 008: *[Following the abuse] I had a very difficult time, almost a crisis of faith, night sweats... I could not tell anyone. All my friends at school in that Evangelical group cut myself off that summer, but also for life. It was very traumatic and a good few years before I realised what had happened was wrong. It was a cult. It has taught me not trust an institution. I am now decidedly non-religious.*

Victim 025: *I have been very damaged by what happened to me at Winchester College [in the 1970s]...*

I felt very alone, and it got worse as I managed to pull away from Smyth, but it meant I lost my friends at a time I really needed them, and this was very damaging for me.

It became intolerable and I attempted suicide through poisoning. I think it was it was a cry for help as I was very depressed but I had no idea of the dose and could easily have done some long term damage to myself. I was very ill after my suicide attempt. I felt unable to cope or see any way out of the mess.

18. Conclusions regarding the modus operandi of John Smyth

This section will identify the modus operandi of Smyth and analyse how he perpetrated abuse within the culture of Winchester College in the 1970s and 1980s.

Although it was not a term which was used at that time, today we would identify that John Smyth had groomed children by giving them individual time and attention, by listening to their thoughts and ideas and validating them as important to him.³⁸⁸ He utilised his religious influence and he promised forgiveness and a means to combat sin if the boys submitted to be beaten.

John Smyth was a charismatic figure who was able to charm both adults and children. The quotes at Sections 6 and 17 above show how he was perceived by pupils at the school, staff members and other adults connected to Winchester College.

He used his occupation as a barrister as a way of attracting boys to him. He did this by using his cross-examination and advocacy skills to learn boys' secrets and evangelise to them. He also used the offer of work experience in chambers and observation of criminal trials to exert influence.

It is clear from the accounts of victims and witnesses that Smyth devoted much of his time to recruiting and grooming boys at Winchester College. It seems that his occupation as a barrister and later as a QC gave him the flexibility to do this without attracting undue attention. For a leading barrister to be available so frequently and reliably, he must have prioritised his meetings with the boys at Winchester, which again demonstrated to his victims their importance to him. Witness 003 described how John Smyth would practice his opening and summing up of cases with him, which made him feel special and chosen.³⁸⁹

Smyth had many accessories of glamour, including a new Golf GTi, which the reviewers were told was "impressive" with a "celebrity" factor.³⁹⁰ He wore modern, bright and fashionable clothing.

In addition, John Smyth had a wife, children, a nice home and a swimming pool in the garden, so he had the appearance of being a well to do family man, which both adults

³⁸⁸ The definition of grooming addressed at page 86 of this report.

³⁸⁹ Account of Victim 003.

³⁹⁰ Account of Witness 025.

and children found reassuring. For example, John Thorn in his letter of 12 October 1982 said in relation to the revelation of abuse, "Bear in mind that he is a well known QC and a good family man with a nice wife and 3 children – hence one's disbelief!"³⁹¹

Victim 008 stated, "He was a prominent QC in the newspapers known to be an active Christian with the blond wife and the blond children and house with a pool, all very glamorous".³⁹² Witness 003 recalled "a lovely family, a beef joint, a pool..."³⁹³ These things were made particularly attractive to the children at Winchester because some victims and witnesses felt that the comforts which Smyth and his home offered were lacking in the College. For example, Victim 002 said that when he was invited to John Smyth's house he was "desperate to fit in and feel safe".³⁹⁴ It also offered the boys, who as boarders had been separated from their parents, an opportunity to feel like they were part of a family.

Lunch with John Smyth and his family was also prestigious for those invited, as Witness 009 said: "It was seen as a high-status event. You were selected as you were smart and the elite, he created an elitist tribe".³⁹⁵ This increased boys' desire to impress Smyth and be chosen to attend.

During these lunches, Smyth was already beginning to remove barriers and normalise intimacy with the children. Victim 002, Victim 003 and Victim 008 described children swimming naked in Smyth's pool. Victim 002 said that Smyth kept the bathroom door open and allowed children to use the toilet while he was in the bath and vice versa. Victim 002 said this seemed "modern and free" to him. Victim 015 said that he recalled a conversation taking place between Smyth and another victim in the bathroom.

It must be noted here that Smyth was taking these actions openly and in plain sight. In this he was aided by the "laissez faire" approach of the College to outsiders visiting the school and to pupils visiting adults outside of the school. Under the cover of the Christian Forum he was able to come and go in the College without needing permission, despite having no formal connection with the school.

Smyth's home was seen as being welcoming, generous, modern and stimulating by those who were invited there. It was seen as being familiar and safe. Smyth's wife, Anne, was important in creating this impression.

As discussed in Section 10 above, the reviewers have not been able to determine whether Anne was a willing or a coerced accomplice in her husband's grooming and abuse of the boys. She certainly enabled and participated in social events, provided meals and spoke with the boys. She encouraged the boys and the school to trust that the Smyth house was a safe place, while knowing that boys were being beaten by her husband. Although it is not suggested that she herself physically abused boys, there is considerable evidence of her assisting her husband as an active accomplice, as set out in Section 10 above.

³⁹¹ Letter written by John Thorn, dated 12 October 1982.

³⁹² Account of Victim 008.

³⁹³ Account of Witness 003.

³⁹⁴ Account of Victim 002.

³⁹⁵ Account of Witness 009.

The reviewers have not been able to ascertain exactly when Smyth became involved in Winchester College. The first expression of concern about the influence of Smyth within the College was in 1974, but John Woolmer noted that Smyth was running a bible study group for Wykehamists in his house as early as 1970/1971.

Like lunches at Smyth's house, meetings of the Christian Forum offered the boys comforts which were enticing. As Witness 016 said, "conditions were harsh for the boys, I had a meal of plain baked potatoes, so coffee and biscuits, crisps at Bible studies and Christian Forum were powerful treats..."³⁹⁶ Victim 003 stated that at the meetings there were "comfy chairs, tea and biscuits, treats we were not used to".³⁹⁷ The meetings offered the boys an escape from school life and a connection with a family life which some of them greatly missed. The effect of these 'comforts' was described by Witness 023, who said that his brother was involved in Christian Forum and attended Bible studies at Peter Krakenberger's house as a senior boy. He said it served as "an antidote to the harsh conditions under which [they] lived".³⁹⁸

In November 1974, at the invitation of John Woolmer, Keith de Berry, a Canon in the Church of England, came to the College to give a series of lectures on evangelical Christianity. More than 200 pupils attended and approximately 30 boys made a commitment to Christianity as a result of the talks. The impact on many boys at the school appears to have been transformative. It was described by Victim 002 with some concern: "[Keith De Berry] invited children to commit their life to Christ. It was a powerful event, one which should not be allowed in a school without any supervision and monitoring".³⁹⁹

The Christian Forum was then an influential body, ready-made for Smyth to use to gain access to boys on a regular basis. Witness 037, a former staff member, said that Smyth used the group to select his targets: "I saw him building rapport with senior boys and picked carefully who he spent time with. I think he was grooming boys, using today's language".⁴⁰⁰ Its members were vulnerable to grooming, as the Christian Forum offered them a sense of being special, part of the chosen few, and a sense of belonging. To have that taken away would have been devastating to a young boy, causing a loss of status and isolation from his peers.

Peter Krakenberger and Smyth used this as a threat to force members stay loyal to the Christian Forum and, in Smyth's case, to secure compliance with his instructions. It was part of a conscious policy of recruitment. Those who refused or dissented were "sidelined".⁴⁰¹ Witness 042, a former staff member, stated, "...if any then left they were damned... I think [a colleague of Witness 042] said that he had one boy, who had experienced this, in a terrible state."

Mark Stibbe said that Smyth used the threat of exclusion as a punishment. He said, "As a spiritual leader, he presented a warm and genial face to me while I was conforming to his teaching. I knew that rebelling in any way against his views would mean rejection.

³⁹⁶ Account of Witness 016.

³⁹⁷ Account of Victim 003.

³⁹⁸ Account of Witness 027.

³⁹⁹ Account of Victim 002.

⁴⁰⁰ Account of Witness 037.

⁴⁰¹ Account of Witness 042

He played on this fear we all had of his face turning suddenly 'cold and contemptuous'."⁴⁰²

Smyth used the Christian Forum to further his grooming of boys at Winchester College. Witness 041 described how he brought high-profile figures to speak as guests and said that the school was "dazzled" by the speakers.⁴⁰³ In this way, Smyth was grooming the College to accept him and to allow him access, so that he could operate in plain sight and without scrutiny. As a result of these efforts, Victim 002 said that Smyth "came and went as he wished" within the College.⁴⁰⁴ Similarly, Witness 009 said that "the Governance was flimsy and the wall permeable so Smyth was able to go in and out at his will".⁴⁰⁵

Multiple witnesses and victims described how Smyth invited them to speak with him one on one in order to challenge them about their faith and recruit them to the Christian Forum.⁴⁰⁶

Smyth accessed boys at the College directly, but also through Peter Krakenberger, who has been described to the reviewers as "Smyth's recruiting sergeant".⁴⁰⁷ Again, the meetings at Peter Krakenberger's house were seen as a privilege which provided boys with a sense of escape from the strict environment of the school, as they were allowed to eat junk food, play games and watch television. It was also a gateway for Smyth to access his targets. For example, Victim 025 described how Smyth would come to the flat and they would meet alone to talk about scripture and sexuality.

Due to his decision not to participate in this review or to provide any comments on the record, the reviewers have been unable to determine whether Peter Krakenberger's role in providing Smyth with access to Winchester boys at his home was done with full knowledge of Smyth's motives.

It is not known whether he was groomed by Smyth. Witness 013 said that he was "under John Smyth's influence",⁴⁰⁸ while Witness 014 said that he believed that Peter Krakenberger had "facilitated the contact and encouraged boys to meet John Smyth". Witness 011 described Peter Krakenberger being used as a "gateway" by Smyth.⁴⁰⁹

One person to whom the reviewers spoke specifically said that Peter Krakenberger was unaware of the abuse. Victim 015 said, "Peter Krakenberger had apparently offered his resignation to the Headmaster John Thorn as he had headed up the Christian Forum, but John Thorn refused, believing (quite rightly in my understanding) that it had had nothing to do with Peter..."⁴¹⁰ The reviewers have been unable to find any record of this in the Winchester College Archives.

⁴⁰² Account of Mark Stibbe in the foreword to Oakley, L. and Humphreys, J. *Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures*.

⁴⁰³ Account of Witness 041.

⁴⁰⁴ Account of Victim 002.

⁴⁰⁵ Account of Witness 009.

⁴⁰⁶ See for example the accounts of Victim 008, Victim 005 and Witness 050.

⁴⁰⁷ Account of Witness 050.

⁴⁰⁸ Account of Witness 013.

⁴⁰⁹ Account of Witness 011.

⁴¹⁰ Account of Victim 015.

When Smyth met resistance from a boy, he would sometimes contact their family to enable him to gain access. Victim 003 was asked by Smyth to be a godparent to his child. Although his parents were initially "nonplussed" about this, Smyth later managed to obtain an invite to his parents' home for the weekend.⁴¹¹ Similarly, Witness 006 said that Smyth had telephoned his father to say, "I need your son for lunch" after his Housemaster refused to let him attend.⁴¹² Smyth visited Witness 031 and his parents at their home. Victim 002's father was visited by Smyth overseas and Victim 002 later found the two men "praying together" at his home.⁴¹³ He said he felt like "John Smyth took over my life". These examples demonstrate the level of confidence and the sense of invulnerability and entitlement which Smyth had. He was capable of grooming boys' parents if needed in order to access their children.

Once trust and a rapport were established with the child, Smyth was able to move on to the next step, which was to overcome their resistance and make the relationship more intimate. He did this by removing or minimising barriers and increasing levels of sexualisation, for example, by bathing naked in the same room as the boys and encouraging them to use the toilet in front of him. Victim 003 stated that John Smyth made sexual references in his jokes with boys.⁴¹⁴ He also escalated their relationships by having intense conversations related to sex and religion.

Smyth groomed his victims and engaged in coercive and controlling behaviour over a long period during a formative time in their lives; in the case of Victim 002 it was over a period of seven years. This created a high level of trust between Smyth and his victims and led to him having a very strong influence over the young boys whom he targeted. There is evidence of him using his skills as a barrister in the grooming process, including cross-examination techniques. Victim 025 said that he "felt compelled to tell him everything... he knew obviously how to cross examine and it must have been these techniques he used. As if he knew if you were holding back. He had total control. He knew my deepest secrets".⁴¹⁵

Smyth broke down barriers between himself and his victims by having increasingly intimate and intense conversations with them.⁴¹⁶ He would probe their deepest thoughts, including about their feelings of guilt, their sexuality and their faith.

Victim 002 told the reviewers that Smyth had a fixation on what he perceived to be sexual sins, including masturbation, and that he would discuss this so often that it became normal conversation within that special group.⁴¹⁷ Victim 008 said that Smyth exploited the boys' preoccupation with masturbation.⁴¹⁸ Victim 005 said that Smyth would speak to him about sexual purity and holiness and that he was concerned about Victim 005 having lustful thoughts or becoming involved in masturbation.⁴¹⁹ Victim 025

⁴¹¹ Account of Victim 003.

⁴¹² Account of Witness 011.

⁴¹³ Account of Victim 002.

⁴¹⁴ Account of Victim 003.

⁴¹⁵ Account of Victim 025.

⁴¹⁶ Described by Victim 003, 002, 004, 008 and others.

⁴¹⁷ Account of Victim 002.

⁴¹⁸ Account of Victim 008.

⁴¹⁹ Account of Victim 005.

also stated that during meetings he was asked to describe his sexual thoughts, feelings and activities.⁴²⁰

Smyth would then use the information to steer the conversation to the need for atonement by beating using leading questions and the manipulation of passages from scripture. Victim 008 described how, following intense conversations, Smyth introduced the idea of beatings as a way of making amends for transgressions. The use of scripture and the details of Smyth's spiritual abuse are described in greater detail below.

From the evidence provided to the reviewers, it appears that the beatings increased in severity over time. The first beatings began with six slaps on the buttocks using a slipper, or similar types of low-level corporal punishment. The victims may have been familiar with this level of punishment from the school environment and it would likely have been seen as reasonable. Victim 005 said that he had initially expected the beating inflicted by Smyth to be limited to "six of the best, like at boarding school".⁴²¹

Smyth was described as moving from the use of a shoe to a cane by February 1978 and the number of strokes increased over time from six to twenty, to seventy-five, then four hundred and eight hundred strokes.

An example of the extremities to which the beatings escalated to was given by Victim A, who stated: "... my final beating was 400 strokes, second only to the highest victim's 800.... John Smyth did not have the energy to deliver all the strokes. Four distinct areas of my body were beaten, because the skin became too broken on a particular area after a certain number of strokes".⁴²²

The injuries were so severe that some of the victims required the use of 'melanin' type bandages or adult diapers to soak up the blood.

The beatings inflicted by Smyth have many of the characteristics of sadomasochism. The victims were either naked or stripped from the waist. There were cases where Smyth, who was sometimes also naked, would kiss and caress the victims' neck and torso after the beatings.

After the beatings were established, Smyth took steps to ensure that his victims never disclosed the beating to anyone else, even their closest friends. He did this by drilling in the boys the sense that they were responsible, along with feelings of guilt and shame. One victim described how Smyth instilled in his victims a strong sense that the abuse had to be kept secret. He said, "... it became abundantly and disturbingly clear how we had all kept secrets not only from our parents and teachers, but also from each other during the years of our abuse... That this came from Smyth is unquestionable."

Victims of Smyth did not tell even their closest friends about what had happened to them. Witness 050, who was part of a group of friends who were groomed by Smyth, said that he could not talk to his closest friend about the abuse he suffered, "as you

⁴²⁰ Account of Victim 025.

⁴²¹ Account of Victim 005.

⁴²² Account of Victim A.

were met with a wall of defensiveness. I became separated from them because of it. They never spoke of what was happening... not a whisper."⁴²³

According to some victims and witnesses, the secrecy was due not only to Smyth's skill in grooming, but also to some aspects of the College at the time. The culture of "no sneaking" and the lack of women or experienced pastoral care providers may have contributed to the boys' reluctance to disclose the abuse perpetrated by Smyth.

In addition, some of the victims were vulnerable because they were struggling with loneliness or questions about their sexuality and they felt that the College did not support them sufficiently with these issues. Their concerns about sexuality included feelings of guilt about masturbation and about homosexuality, which reflected not only the teachings of evangelical Christianity, but also the concern demonstrated by some of their parents and by adults in positions of authority at the College, such as John Thorn.⁴²⁴ The reviewers have not seen evidence that the school provided support to its students in relation to these issues.

Smyth used his control over the members of the Christian Forum to create opportunities to physically abuse pupils at Winchester College. The earliest instance of abuse identified by the reviewers took place in approximately 1975 and was perpetrated against a 15-year-old child. Smyth established an intense, controlling relationship with his victims through regular contact in the Christian Forum, at Iwerne Camps, at the flat of Peter Krakenberger and at his own house.

The victims were coerced into submitting to Smyth's beatings by a combination of abusive techniques, including spiritual manipulation and blackmail. Victims such as 003, 007 and 025 were pressured by Smyth to comply with his instructions under threat of him revealing secret and sensitive information about them to the College. The use of spiritual abuse by Smyth is described in greater detail below.

For some of Smyth's victims, the physical abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour continued or became more severe after they had left Winchester College. Some victims spent a gap year abroad before returning to the UK, where Smyth continued to abuse them. This continuation of abuse illustrates the power of Smyth's hold over his victims. Some were abused for up to five years after leaving Winchester College. Victim 002 said that he felt Smyth had a "vice-like grip over me".⁴²⁵

He maintained his hold by regular communication with his victims, including by visiting them at university and requiring members of the group to monitor one another. For example, he sent two other victims to accompany Victim 002 when he travelled outside the UK. He drove several hundred miles to visit Victim 010 at university. He required Victim 002 to telephone him once a week, which was quite frequent, given the limited

⁴²³ Account of Witness 050.

⁴²⁴ Two witnesses made reference to homosexuality being seen as a "problem", while Witness 051 recalled older boys telling younger ones of the "risks" of homosexuality. Witness 041 said that there was a culture which was "fearful of anything potentially homosexual". John Thorn was described by Witness 042 as being worried about the issue of homosexuality in the school. Such attitudes were not uncommon at the time, but there is some evidence that they had an impact upon the safeguarding of the victims of Smyth.

⁴²⁵ Account of Victim 002.

access to telephones at the time. This can be viewed as an onerous and controlling demand, particularly from a non-family member. For a number of months, he also required him to return to Smyth's house every week for a potential beating.

Records also show that Smyth brought former students back to Winchester College to speak at meetings of the Christian Forum.

These practices are similar to the "heavy shepherding" which Eric Nash advocated, and which was employed by the Iwerne Trust to ensure that boys retained links to evangelical Christianity outside of the camps. Witness 037 described seeing "heavy shepherding" used as a technique in American evangelical churches and said, "nowadays we would see it as coercive control".⁴²⁶

Smyth enforced strict rules, including by preventing his victims from watching films or from playing sport on a Sunday. He also isolated the victims from their families and other people who might come between them. For example, he was able to force both Victim 002 and Victim 005 to end their relationships with their girlfriends. Above all, he ensured that the victims felt responsible for and guilty about the abuse, so that they felt unable to disclose it, even to one another. Multiple victims told the reviewers about how they felt increasingly trapped and desperate during this period, as they were fearful of Smyth's beatings but felt unable to escape his power.

Smyth found pretexts to keep his victims in contact with him. For example, Victim 002 described taking skiing holidays and sailing trips with Smyth's family. He became the godfather to one of Smyth's children and was paid by Smyth to do work at his house. In this period, Victim 002 said that he spent more time with Smyth and his family than he had with his own family. He described how he had given over his sense of agency to John Smyth and relied on him for making both large and small decisions. The abuse caused him extreme distress. He stated:

"I remember one Christmas Day evening, sitting in the bath at home and crying. Here I was on a day when I should be enjoying being with my family and yet I was harbouring this terrible dark secret. You can't imagine the desperate loneliness of that situation. I could see no way out..."

Today, the actions of Smyth in maintaining his hold over boys after leaving Winchester may be viewed as the criminal offence of coercive and controlling behaviour.

Smyth's grip on the victims was only broken after the devastating suicide attempt of one of their group, which led to disclosure of the abuse by a number of victims. Victim 003 made a serious attempt on his life in the build-up to being beaten again by Smyth, as a result of the mental turmoil which he was suffering. Prior to this, Victim 003 had shared his suicidal thoughts with Smyth, but his plea for mercy elicited no sympathy or relief from him.

⁴²⁶ Account of Witness 037.

In the days before his suicide attempt in 1982, Victim 003 wrote two anonymous letters in an effort to stop Smyth's abuse. He sent one to Smyth and one to David Fletcher but saw no response.

The actions of Victim 003 and the impact which they had upon other victims led to Smyth's actions becoming known to members of the Iwerne Trust and later to John Thorn.

John Smyth and radicalisation

Evangelical Christianity was attractive to some of the boys at Winchester in part due to their separation from their families and their desire to feel a sense of belonging.

The Christian Forum had a self-conscious esprit de corps, with its own theology and language which was used to deliberately set members apart from the rest of the school. In keeping with the teachings of Nash, the group had an almost puritan sense of the righteousness and superiority of their faith over that of others, including the school chaplaincy. Members were permitted to attend separate church services to the rest of the school.⁴²⁷ As Victim 004 stated:

"A cult was allowed to develop in the school with its own policies, language... and ways of doing things. We felt special and elite. We looked down on those not involved. Others wanted to be like us... We would come and go around the school rules and were never challenged by staff. I think those that were difficult about it... were seen as being anti-Christian."

Mark Stibbe described the sense of superiority and elitism inherent in membership of the Christian Forum. He said, "Smyth and his cult members were those who had chosen the right road. The spiritual pride here is grotesque. Combined with the elitism already embedded in the boarding-school culture, this sense of spiritual authority created a lethal cocktail."⁴²⁸

Within the Christian Forum, a boy's beliefs became a test of their worthiness. To be seen as a "Iwerne man" or to be "sound" was to be accepted and respected as an active evangelical.

This has resonance with modern concerns about the ways in which gangs and radical religious groups recruit and retain members by the use of a strict ideology and by providing a sense of belonging and safety within the group.

The NSPCC defines radicalisation as: "being groomed online or in person, exploitation, including sexual exploitation, psychological manipulation... It happens gradually so children and young people who are affected may not realise what it is that they are being drawn into."⁴²⁹

⁴²⁷ Account of Witness 053.

⁴²⁸ Account of Mark Stibbe in the foreword to Oakley, L. and Humphreys, J. "Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures".

⁴²⁹ NSPCC, *Radicalisation* (19 February 2020). Accessed online at: <<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/radicalisation>>.

The NSPCC warns that children can be targeted for radicalisation by being told that they are part of something special, before they are gradually cut off from their friends and family. There are elements to both the Christian Forum and Smyth's activities that fall within this definition, though "radicalisation" would not have been the language used at the time, even by child protection professionals.

The NSPCC lists signs of radicalisation in children as including isolation from family and friends, talking as if from a scripted speech, being unable or unwilling to discuss their views, having a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others and increased secretiveness. Many of these factors were present among members of the Christian Forum.

For example, Witness 050 was concerned that Smyth was "brainwashing" boys as young as thirteen, who were being "pressurised" and "recruited".⁴³⁰ John Thorn's book described how some boys involved became "estranged" from their parents and other schoolmasters, with leaders from the Christian Forum becoming their "moral tutors".⁴³¹ Victim 005 described how talking to other members of the Christian Forum came to feel like you weren't really talking to them, you were talking to Smyth, even though he wasn't present, because it was his control and his words.⁴³² These are all examples of elements of what would today be described as "radicalisation" present within the Christian Forum.

This radicalisation was recognised by a number of witnesses. Witness 044 said that the Christian Forum engaged in "brain-washing by religious ideas".⁴³³ Witness 023, who was the brother of a victim of Smyth, said that looking back, he feels "he was the victim of spiritual abuse, as the school allowed the Christian Forum to promote extreme evangelical views and did not monitor its influence on boys, especially the ones everyone knew to be vulnerable".⁴³⁴ As stated above, Victim 002 expressed concern about the College hosting powerful evangelising events without monitoring the impact on pupils.⁴³⁵

Today, children's membership of an organisation like the Christian Forum, with its exclusivity and its intensive and isolating mandates, would likely be recognised as having the potential for radicalisation and would be identified as a safeguarding concern.

[Abuse at the Iwerne Camps and the link to Winchester College](#)

Some of the abuse which Smyth perpetrated took place during the Iwerne Camps, or immediately afterwards on the premises. The Iwerne Camps were organised by the Iwerne Trust and managed by the Scripture Union. Smyth's position of authority within the Iwerne Trust lent legitimacy to his presence and activities within the Camps.

⁴³⁰ Account of Witness 050.

⁴³¹ *The Road to Winchester*, supra fn. 62.

⁴³² Supra, fn. 161.

⁴³³ Account of Witness 044.

⁴³⁴ Account of Witness 023.

⁴³⁵ Account of Victim 002, supra fn. 399.

In accordance with the theology and aspirations of Eric Nash, the camps had a military structure and hierarchy. They were designed to recruit and indoctrinate young boys who were potential leaders of the future.

Attendance was by invitation only, which meant that campers acquired a sense of prestige and status similar to that conferred by membership of the Christian Forum. They were separated from their peers and from the rest of society and told that they were special. This was in keeping with Nash's theology of otherness.

Many victims of Smyth also held senior positions within the Iwerne Camps. The 2014 Titus Trust Report stated, "These men were promising senior campers or young leaders, several of whom were at Cambridge and attended the Round Church..."⁴³⁶

The Iwerne Camps provided Smyth with an opportunity to maintain and develop close relationships with young boys. Victim 003 stated, "he used the camp to exert more influence over me and others."⁴³⁷ Victim A said that he had reconnected with Smyth after leaving Winchester College through the Iwerne Camps.⁴³⁸ He was heavily involved in both physical activities and religious teaching at the Camps. Witness 025 described an incident in the communal shower, where Smyth joined in with young boys who were spraying one another with water and running around naked.⁴³⁹

Victim 015 spoke about how the camps had "quite an emphasis on one-on-one discipleship, so an older Christian reading the Bible once a week with a younger Christian".⁴⁴⁰ In the absence of appropriate monitoring and safeguards, this would have provided opportunities for predators like Smyth to groom and potentially abuse attendees.

Smyth also used the Iwerne Camps as an opportunity to physically abuse his victims. For example, Victim 008 said that he was beaten in a small house/bungalow in the grounds of Iwerne Minster during the Camp.

The Iwerne Trust had a dedicated program of "shepherding", whereby Camp attendees were contacted by Officers and sent termly letters encouraging them to remain loyal to Iwerne and adhere to the organisation's principles. Officers of Iwerne also provided guidance to attendees about persons outside the organisation who could be trusted. Witness 040, a former chaplain of Winchester College, said that while he was the chaplain at a previous school, a boy had shown him a letter that he had been sent by a Iwerne Officer warning him that Witness 040 was not "sound" and could not be trusted.⁴⁴¹

It is likely that the quasi-military, hierarchical structure of Iwerne instilled in the boys attending some deference towards those of higher rank within the organisation. It was

⁴³⁶ The 2014 Titus Trust Report, p. 2.

⁴³⁷ Account of Victim 003.

⁴³⁸ Account of Victim A.

⁴³⁹ Account of Victim 025.

⁴⁴⁰ Account of Victim 015.

⁴⁴¹ Account of Witness 040.

made clear to them through the camps that Smyth was such a high-ranking individual and that he was viewed as theologically "sound" and trustworthy.

In addition, the practice of "heavy shepherding", of older boys from Iwerne maintaining links with campers through letters in which they admonished others seen to be slipping and motivated their charges to be vigilant and steadfast in their religious practices may have taught the boys to accept such surveillance as normal.⁴⁴² Against this background, Smyth's intrusive monitoring and unreasonable demands, including his instructions for the boys to monitor one another, would not have seemed unusual. In any other context, the level of control which Smyth exercised over his victims would have been seen as cause for alarm.

As stated above, the reviewers have not seen evidence that Winchester College was aware of who was attending Iwerne Camps or that the school played any role in the issuance of invitations. Some Winchester College staff members attended, such as Peter Krakenberger, but they did not do so as representatives of the school.⁴⁴³ The Camps occurred outside of term time and boys would have required the consent of their parents to attend.

However, there is evidence that the Camps were promoted at Winchester College, within the Christian Forum. For example, Witness 046 said that boys were encouraged to attend the camps. They said that they attended a talk which was given in Peter Krakenberger's flat by Peter Wells with a slideshow promoting the Iwerne Camps.⁴⁴⁴

Questions regarding the Iwerne Trust's knowledge of and response to the abuse perpetrated by Smyth are outside the Terms of Reference of this review. However, it is notable that Smyth was able to engage in, at least, inappropriate sexualised behaviour at the camps without challenge and that the lack of oversight meant that he was able to physically abuse attendees at properties used for the Iwerne camps. It is also significant that, through the Iwerne Camps, Smyth had access to young men from other leading public schools. The reviewers are aware that there were a large number of victims of Smyth who were not Wykehamists, but as it is outside the Terms of Reference of this report, the reviewers have not been able to determine the extent to which non-Winchester College attendees at the Camps were subjected to grooming and abuse by Smyth.

Spiritual Abuse

The abuse perpetrated by Smyth was not only emotional and physical but was also a clear example of spiritual abuse.

Smyth positioned himself as a respected religious leader in the eyes of the members of the Christian Forum. His leadership role within the Iwerne Trust and his participation as a lay reader at Christ Church in Winchester helped him to establish and maintain this

⁴⁴² According to Victim 004, other methods employed included regular Winchester Prayer letters and Iwerne Officers' news and prayer letters.

⁴⁴³ Account of Witness 038.

⁴⁴⁴ Account of Witness 046.

status. His oratory skills and knowledge of the scriptures enabled him to preach persuasively to boys at Winchester College.

One recurring theme in the descriptions given to the reviewers by victims of Smyth was the way that Smyth used scripture passages to break down victims' resistance and to justify what he was asking of them. In the context of an evangelical group which adhered to the principle of biblical infallibility, this use of scripture meant that some victims felt unable to question his demands. He often used literal interpretations of Bible verses for this purpose. Mark Stibbe described this as follows:

"Smyth used and misused Scripture passages all the time, and he did so to exert spiritual control over his victims. A favourite verse of his contained, 'you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood' (Hebrews 12.4) which he exposed to a subtle and sinister reinterpretation, then employed as one of many justifications for beating us to the point where we would actually bleed. He also used scriptures about fathers not sparing the rod, and fathers disciplining their children, even if that discipline was not pleasant at the time (Hebrews 12.5-13)."⁴⁴⁵

Smyth introduced a theology of pain and punishment as a means of atoning for sin. This ideology was given weight and legitimacy by Smyth's status within Winchester College and the Iwerne Trust. Each of the victims had witnessed Smyth preaching at the Christian Forum and taking a leadership role at Iwerne Camps, and Victim 025 said that he assumed from Smyth's access to the Christian Forum that he had been approved by the school.⁴⁴⁶ They therefore trusted in his spiritual guidance, unaware that he was utilising scripture to create opportunities for abuse.

Smyth's victims were particularly vulnerable because of the feelings of guilt which he instilled in them regarding sex and masturbation. For example, Victim 025 inflicted pain on himself when he was directed by Smyth because he was told that it would rid him of "sinful homosexual yearnings".⁴⁴⁷ Smyth exploited Victim 025's feelings of confusion as he learned about his sexuality and his feelings of shame in Winchester College and a religious environment which taught that same-sex relationships were wrong.

The spiritual abuse described by victims of Smyth appeared to follow a pattern. Several victims said that Smyth used the book *Quiet Talks on Power* as a way to justify the beatings. Victim 002 said that the book was "referred to continually... and that led me to feel guilty about masturbation and sexual thoughts throughout my adolescent years. These talks described sexual thoughts or acts as being the blockage that prevents one experiencing God's love, power and forgiveness".⁴⁴⁸

Smyth told his victims that he had been sent by God, their father in heaven, to be their spiritual father on earth. This gave him an elevated, almost divine status in the eyes of the boys. The imagery of fatherhood created the framework which required the victims

⁴⁴⁵ Account of Mark Stibbe in the foreword to Oakley, L. and Humphreys, J. "Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures".

⁴⁴⁶ Account of Victim 025.

⁴⁴⁷ Account of Victim 025, supra p. 47.

⁴⁴⁸ Account of Victim 002.

to submit to John Smyth, as it suggested that he had the right and duty to discipline 'his sons'.⁴⁴⁹

Victim 002 described how Smyth perpetrated spiritual abuse. He said:

"As I fell under his spell, I felt special. He told me that I and a few others in our "club" had been chosen by God to do great things and that he was the man God had sent to be our spiritual father. I was forgiven but I could show my gratitude to Jesus by nailing my sins to the cross. And then he told me he had discovered a really effective way to do this, to become more holy."⁴⁵⁰

The descriptions of spiritual fatherhood, the nailing of sins to the cross and the pursuit of holiness would have been very powerful images to a young boy. Mark Stibbe said of Smyth's abuse:

"His primary tactic was to weaponize Scripture and use it to induce a religion of fear and of performance... Instead of becoming spiritual sons of a perfect father, we became slaves to a man who assumed the father's place and role in our lives. Fear became a way of life."⁴⁵¹

Multiple victims and witnesses who were members of the Christian Forum recognised that Smyth's actions contained strong elements of spiritual abuse. As stated above, Witness 023 said that he considered himself to be a victim of religious abuse, as the school had allowed the Christian Forum to promote extreme evangelical views without monitoring its influence on vulnerable boys.⁴⁵² Witness 030 said, "I think as well as sexual and physical abuse it was spiritual and emotional abuse, but we were not neglected. It was as most public schools were in that time."⁴⁵³ Witness 011 said, "Christian Forum was a huge spiritual movement which indirectly caused damage in families such as mine. John Smyth deliberately used and twisted Bible verses. I think it was spiritual abuse".⁴⁵⁴

Mark Stibbe wrote about the impact of Smyth's spiritual abuse in the foreword to the book *Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures*. He said:

"Yes, there was a physical component to his abuse in the beatings themselves. Yes, there was a psychological and emotional component. But what John Smyth did to us was first and foremost spiritual abuse. Without the spiritual dimension to his behaviour, there would have been no abuse at all. He would never have succeeded, over time, in eliciting our cooperation." ... "[Smyth] exposed me to a systematic pattern of coercive control in the context of the Iwerne camps, and at the Christian forum which these camps influenced, through Smyth, at my school.

⁴⁴⁹ Account of Victim 002; Account of Victim 005.

⁴⁵⁰ Account of Victim 002.

⁴⁵¹ Account of Mark Stibbe in the foreword to Oakley, L. and Humphreys, J. *Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures*.

⁴⁵² Account of Witness 023.

⁴⁵³ Account of Witness 030.

⁴⁵⁴ Account of Witness 011.

It is an understatement to say that his form of spiritual abuse did enormous damage...

Smyth's abuse was primarily spiritual. To focus on the beatings and reduce his abuse to something physical is not just an attempt to deny the existence of spiritual abuse, it is to misunderstand the process of abuse. When Smyth abused me, his abuse was not just the act of beating me, it was everything that led up to me submitting to that act. It was his targeting and grooming of me too. All that was abusive, and it was based on a spiritual belief that God is our father in heaven, but not on earth, and therefore he, Smyth, had to be that father to us. 'I will be his father and he will be my son' was his declaration over me (2 Samuel 7.14). In time, he went on to quote the rest of the verse, using it as a justification for the beatings: 'When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands'.⁴⁵⁵

Sexual abuse

None of the victims who have spoken with the reviewers disclosed that they were raped by Smyth.

Victim 025 described being assaulted on at least one occasion, when his genitals were squeezed by Smyth, who said they should be a source of "pain not pleasure".

Multiple victims described Smyth engaging in inappropriate sexualised behaviour with young boys, which suggests that there was an element of sexual abuse. This is supported by the highly sexualised conversations which Smyth had with his victims and by his preoccupation with masturbation and the idea of sexual sin.

One example of Smyth engaging in inappropriate sexual conduct took place in 1977, when he brought Victim 004 into the bedroom of his house in Morestead. He showed him a pack of condoms and talked to him in detail about his sexual activities with his wife.

Another example took place at Easter in 1978, when Smyth gathered a small group of Christian Forum members in the study of his house. He directed the conversation to sexual matters and spoke to the boys about masturbation. He asked each of them to promise that they would not masturbate over the holidays. He said that if they broke their promise, penance would be required. He encouraged the boys to observe and report back on one another. Those who broke the agreement were subjected to beatings by Smyth on the basis that they needed to atone for their sexual sins.

The reviewers have been told of many instances when Smyth stripped naked while accompanied by young boys. Reference has already been made to Smyth bathing in front of members of the Christian Forum at his house.⁴⁵⁶ Witness 025 described Smyth stripping naked on multiple occasions, including at Iwerne Camps while accompanied by young boys.⁴⁵⁷ Smyth told Witness 025 and other boys that they should be proud of

⁴⁵⁵ Account of Mark Stibbe in the foreword to Oakley, L. and Humphreys, J. *Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures*.

⁴⁵⁶ P. 25 supra.

⁴⁵⁷ Victim 025, p. 26 supra.

their bodies when in the communal showers at the College and questioned them about whether they felt shy being naked.⁴⁵⁸

Victim 008 told the reviewers that Smyth often stripped naked while he was beating them. He recalled Smyth sitting on the bed next to him after he had been beaten. Smyth was naked and his penis was visible.⁴⁵⁹

Victim 002 said that Smyth would only beat him on the buttocks and said that afterwards Smyth would kiss and caress him on his neck.⁴⁶⁰ This is referred to in the Ruston Report as being a common factor between several victims' accounts.⁴⁶¹

Victim 025 said that in conversation Smyth shared with him graphic accounts of sex.⁴⁶²

Multiple victims said that Smyth made them strip naked during the beatings, including one of the non-Winchester College victims who was referred to in the Coltart Report.⁴⁶³ Mark Ruston described the stripping of victims as a technique "to increase humility".⁴⁶⁴

However, Mark Ruston did not view Smyth's actions as being sexual abuse. He wrote in his report, "There was a very frequent association with sexual sins of a comparatively minor kind (masturbation and impure thoughts) and too many overtones, though it is clear there was never any overt sexual activity".⁴⁶⁵ This finding is inconsistent with Victim 025's account that Smyth had assaulted him by squeezing his genitals.

19. The impact of Smyth's abuse in the UK

It has been over forty years since the abuse took place, but the impact on the victims has been traumatic and lifelong. The impact has been made worse by the fact that Smyth died before he could face extradition and prosecution in the UK, and by the fact that many victims have been unable to disclose the abuse until recently. Some victims, of course, may still not have been able to come forward to share their accounts.

This inability to disclose is common in many cases of abuse due to a combination of factors, including fear of not being believed, guilt at their perceived cooperation with the abuser, and fear of the consequences of disclosure. Some of the victims who spoke with the reviewers also described as a barrier to disclosure their own revulsion at the nature and extent of the beatings and said that they feared how others may view their involvement.

As set out in Section 17 above, victims have spoken with the reviewers about the feelings of loneliness, helplessness, fear and anxiety which his abuse caused. For

⁴⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁵⁹ Account of Victim 008.

⁴⁶⁰ Account of Victim 002.

⁴⁶¹ Ruston Report, p. 2.

⁴⁶² Account of Victim 025.

⁴⁶³ Coltart Report, p. 3.

⁴⁶⁴ Ruston Report, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁵ *ibid.* p. 3.

some, these feelings continued for years as Smyth's reach extended beyond the school and into their adult lives.

The impact of the abuse has been described in the powerful victim impact statements shared with the College by Victim 002 and Victim 004. The reviewers recognise the extraordinary courage which it took to write the statements and to share them publicly. The statements are included as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of this report. We would urge all those who view the report to read the statements, to understand from these victims in their own words the lasting impact of the abuse perpetrated by John Smyth.

Smyth deliberately built intimate and intense relationships with his victims to ensure their loyalty. He created a deep bond with young men who were vulnerable and abused it for his own ends. That relationship was intrinsically linked to their faith, so that Smyth's betrayal amounted not just to criminal physical violence, but to the emotional and spiritual abuse of young boys.

The impact of Smyth's abuse in the long term cannot be overstated. Within the small group of victims who have participated in this review, two have made serious suicide attempts. The reviewers have heard evidence about the impact of the trauma on the victims and effect which the abuse has had upon their relationships and family lives.

In addition, the response to the disclosure of abuse by Smyth in 1982 and the decision not to make a report to the police or other external authorities meant that Smyth was permitted to leave the UK and continue to work in ministry with children in Africa. This gave him the opportunity to abuse at least 90 young boys over the following 30 years. Smyth's actions in Zimbabwe and South Africa fall outwith the scope of this review, but the fact that he was allowed to leave the country and to work unsupervised and unscrutinised with children over the following decades is an inescapable consequence of the decisions which were made by the leadership of the Iwerne Trust, by certain members of the Church of England and by John Thorn in 1982.

The reviewers have also heard evidence from people who were part of the school community in the 1980s, but who were not victims of Smyth. Evidence was taken from those who were masters, staff members and pupils of Winchester College at the time. Many of them, including those who could have had no way of knowing about the abuse at the time, described feeling as though they should have known or found a way to stop it from happening. These feelings of guilt are also part of the impact of Smyth's abuse and will likely be a life-long legacy for many who were at the school at that time. Although they are difficult to bear, they are also an important factor in ensuring that lessons are learned and safeguarding practices are vigilant.

We hope and believe that this review will identify key lessons to be learned from this case and contribute to a strong and effective safeguarding culture within the school. Ultimately, the most important legacy of the events described in this report is that it must ensure the determination of Winchester College that this will never happen again.

Part 3: Conclusions

Part 3 of this report sets out the authors' conclusions

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the conclusions seek to identify lessons arising from the events described in Part 1 and the analysis contained in Part 2 which are relevant to the context of safeguarding pupils at Winchester College.

Section 21 of the report sets out the results of a review of current arrangements which was undertaken in January 2021 to stress test the conclusions in Section 20 against the existing safeguarding framework of the College.

20. Conclusions

This section sets out key conclusions based on the analysis in Part 2. The conclusions relate specifically to the state of the College and the actions of its staff members in the 1970s and early 1980s.

In reaching these conclusions, the authors do not intend to make legal findings or assign blame, but instead seek to identify issues arising from the analysis for the purpose of learning lessons and stress-testing the conclusions against the current safeguarding arrangements at the College.

Conclusion 1: Access to Winchester College

Smyth was able to gradually gain unrestricted access to Winchester College and to its pupils over a period of time from the early 1970s until 1982. He regularly attended the College and participated in College events, including meetings of the Christian Forum. His access to the school was not challenged by the headmaster or the College, although there were some attempts by individual staff members to question his involvement or restrict his access to certain pupils.

Smyth was also able to hold one-on-one meetings with boys, including in the bedrooms of a member of staff at the College.

The reviewers have seen no evidence that there were any vetting procedures or restrictions in place which may have deterred or prevented his attendance, or evidence of appropriate supervision of Smyth while he was at the College. The reviewers acknowledge that the ordinary standards of vetting and recruitment were different at the relevant time to those of 2021, but even basic safeguards which were common at the time for those in ministry or teaching roles, such as the use of interviews or references, were not utilised in relation to Smyth.

Smyth's access to the College was facilitated at various times by staff members, including most significantly by Peter Krakenberger. Others who facilitated his access included John Thorn and Mark Ashton.

Smyth's unfettered access to the College allowed him to groom boys and created opportunities for abuse.

Conclusion 2: Supervision by staff members

The levels of supervision in Winchester College at that time were not sufficient to prevent or detect the physical or sexual abuse which Smyth perpetrated against pupils.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁶ The reviewers have not undertaken a wider investigation into similar schools in the period to determine whether this approach to supervision was commonplace or customary at the relevant time and are therefore unable to comment on this matter.

Multiple staff members, including the Headmaster, were aware that Smyth was in close contact with boys in the Christian Forum and that he had a powerful influence over them.

As stated above, pupils were often left unsupervised by staff in the company of Smyth and were able to visit his house during school time without the knowledge or permission of the College.

Teaching and extra-curricular activities, such as meetings of the Christian Forum, sometimes took place in the private homes of staff members. Pupils were left unsupervised in these locations with teachers and also with third parties, including in bedrooms. This also created opportunities for grooming and abuse to occur.

Conclusion 3: Information sharing

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the language of 'grooming' would not have been in use to describe Smyth's conduct. Nonetheless, some aspects of his behaviour should have been cause for alarm and some members of staff have stated that they did have concerns at the time regarding his relationships with pupils.

Some staff members took individual action, such as refusing to grant permission for pupils to attend lunch at Smyth's house, but the reviewers are aware of only one staff member challenging Smyth.⁴⁶⁷

When concerns were recognised by individual staff members or members of the College community, they were not escalated to the Headmaster or otherwise acted upon.⁴⁶⁸

Concerns were not generally shared between Houses or Masters, which meant that responses were not coordinated across the school. For example, when Jock Macdonald prevented boys in his House from visiting Smyth, this information was not shared more widely and corresponding action was not taken in other Houses.

There is some evidence that there was a meeting of the Housedons which was attended by Mark Ashton on 23 January 1979.⁴⁶⁹ There was discussion of "Smyth's slightly irresponsible behaviour" (sic) but there is no evidence that his conduct was recognised as abuse or that any coordinated action was taken as a result.

⁴⁶⁷ As stated above, Euan MacAlpine told reviewers that he challenged Smyth about his practice of targeting certain boys in 1978. However, his concerns were not escalated to others within the College. (Account of Euan MacAlpine).

⁴⁶⁸ There is a reference in *The Road to Winchester* which suggests that some housemasters did raise concerns with John Thorn. However, it is not clear that this was in relation to safeguarding, or instead, as other sections of the book suggest, religious divisions within the College. The reviewers have not seen any relevant records of child protection concerns and have not been informed by any staff witness that they did raise such concerns with John Thorn. This includes the concerns known to housemasters in relation to boys becoming godparents to Smyth's children, concerns about his selection of "good-looking" boys for the Christian Forum and other matters. Instead, multiple witnesses who were staff members at the time described an absence of effective systems for sharing information related to child protection.

⁴⁶⁹ See letter from Euan MacAlpine dated 24 January 1979, page 33 supra.

In addition, the concerns were not recorded, so when complaints arose and disclosures were made, there was no history available showing incidents over time.

If concerns had been consistently recorded and escalated or shared between staff members, Smyth's activities may have been subject to greater scrutiny and steps might have been taken to restrict or monitor his activities at an earlier stage.⁴⁷⁰

Conclusion 4: Targeting vulnerable pupils

Some victims had limited contact with their parents as boarders at the College and were consequently more vulnerable to abuse. Pupils did not have easy access to telephones on site to contact their families. Smyth exploited those pupils' desire for family connection and a father figure.

Others were more vulnerable because of their experience of previous abuse or bullying.

Multiple witnesses considered that there was a lack of pastoral support on the part of the College to address vulnerabilities of this kind.⁴⁷¹

In the case of Victim 025, Smyth abused his trust and used confidential information about his sexuality to manipulate and control. Victim 025 was vulnerable to the actions of Smyth in part because he experienced a lack of support and inclusion as an LGBT student at Winchester College in the 1970s. He received little or no pastoral support and input from the College about sexuality and relationships.

Conclusion 5: Barriers to disclosure

All of Smyth's victims felt unable to disclose the abuse to staff at the College.⁴⁷²

In some cases, this was attributed to the grooming undertaken by Smyth, which became coercive and controlling behaviour as the victims moved into young adulthood, and to his emphasis on secrecy within the inner circle of the Christian Forum.

However, the reviewers were told of other factors which contributed to an environment in which pupils felt unable to disclose abuse, including a lack of pastoral care, the lack of availability of female staff members, a culture of 'no sneaking', a lack of sex

⁴⁷⁰ The reviewers have been requested by the College to comment on whether this was "out of line with customary practice in boarding schools at the time". The reviewers are unable to comment on whether the approach taken to record-keeping by the College was in line with other similar institutions at the time, or whether it fell below the prevailing standards. This is because no investigation has been undertaken into the standards of other comparable schools as part of this review.

⁴⁷¹ The reviewers have been requested by the College to comment on whether this provision of pastoral support was "out of line with practice in other schools at that time". The reviewers are not able to comment on this matter, as they have not undertaken a wider investigation into similar schools in the period to determine whether this approach to pastoral support was in keeping with the standards of other relevant institutions at the relevant time.

⁴⁷² The reviewers note that in addition to this, no disclosures were made by victims to their family members, although several victims have stated that they confided in Church of England clergymen.

education, and a culture in which boys felt unable to discuss matters relating to sex and sexuality.⁴⁷³

Conclusion 6: Managing radicalisation

The inner circle of the Christian Forum which formed around Smyth in the 1970s and early 1980s shares many features of a cult. Its members showed signs of what would today be described as radicalisation.

The group grew in part due to the attendance of persuasive evangelical speakers at school events and in part due to the support which it received from teachers such as Peter Krakenberger. Winchester College did not take sufficient steps to monitor and manage the impact of these potentially powerful influences on pupils.

Some staff members were concerned about the divisive nature of the Christian Forum and the strong influence which it had on some pupils, but the only action in response was the appointment of new members of the chaplaincy staff by John Thorn to "be a bridge"⁴⁷⁴ or to "take back control"⁴⁷⁵ of the Christian Forum, which proved to be insufficient to address the radicalisation of pupils.

Conclusion 7: Making referrals to the statutory authorities

When the abuse was disclosed to John Thorn in 1982, he did not report it to the police.

The reviewers have not been able to determine whether John Thorn was made aware of the full extent of the abuse, including the severity of the abuse and the fact that the abuse was perpetrated against children at the school as well as adults.⁴⁷⁶ The reviewers have seen no credible evidence that John Thorn was shown the Ruston Report.

Information was not shared openly with him at the time of the initial disclosure in early 1982 and the contemporary correspondence demonstrates reluctance by some who had read the Ruston Report to share information about the abuse with Winchester College on the basis that dissemination of the information could "damage Camp".⁴⁷⁷

Nonetheless, there is some evidence that John Thorn was aware that the abuse was serious, including the letters of October 1982 which expressed his feelings of astonishment and horror at the disclosure, and the note of 15 September 1982, which the reviewers consider is an indication that he may have been aware of acts involving blood and nudity. In addition, it is clear from his own actions that John Thorn considered

⁴⁷³ The College has requested that the reviewers comment on whether these issues were "reflective of the norms in boys' boarding schools generally at the time". The reviewers are unable to comment on this matter as no broader investigation has been undertaken into similar institutions. This conclusion seeks to highlight only that the matters listed are factors identified by victims of Smyth as barriers to disclosure in Winchester College at the relevant time.

⁴⁷⁴ Account of John Woolmer.

⁴⁷⁵ Account of Witness 041.

⁴⁷⁶ See the discussion at pages 100 of this report onwards.

⁴⁷⁷ P. 56 supra.

that the events which had occurred were sufficiently serious to require Smyth's indefinite exclusion from the College.

As a result of his inability to participate in the review, the reviewers have not been able to determine the reasons why no report was made to the police by John Thorn.⁴⁷⁸

Peter Krakenberger also did not report the abuse to the police, nor did any other staff member of Winchester College who had read the Ruston Report or otherwise had received a disclosure of the nature of the abuse.

The parents of the victims and the victims themselves were not fully informed about the disclosure of the abuse or consulted regarding the College's decision not to make a report to the police. None of the victims were consulted or included in the decision-making process. Some parents were consulted, but others were not. Some parents who were consulted were not fully informed about what had occurred, for example, Witness 022 has stated that they were not told that the concern related to physical abuse.

Aside from the unsigned undertaking, the reviewers have seen no evidence that the College took steps to manage the risk which Smyth posed to those outside of the school. Whether or not it was signed by Smyth, the undertaking was wholly unenforceable and was not retained by the College. Access to it was limited to a list of specified individuals and the reviewers have not seen any evidence that efforts were made to enforce or monitor its terms beyond verbally informing some members of staff in 1982 that Smyth was no longer permitted to visit the College.

Two years after leaving Winchester College and in the absence of any restrictions or police action, Smyth moved to Zimbabwe and South Africa. He returned to ministry in a position of trust and went on to abuse as many as 90 young boys, possibly resulting in the death of one boy.

Conclusion 8: Support for victims of abuse

When Smyth's abuse was disclosed to John Thorn and other members of staff in 1982, no steps were taken to provide support for current or former pupils who had been the victims of abuse. The College was aware of the identity of multiple victims.

Nonetheless, no support was offered or provided at that time. The victims were not involved in the decision-making which took place in response to the disclosure. The reviewers have not seen any evidence that anyone from Winchester College spoke directly with the victims about what they had experienced at the time of the disclosure.

⁴⁷⁸ See the discussion at pages 100 onwards above. As stated in that section of the report, if the parents and/or victims had been fully informed and consulted and had instructed John Thorn not to make a report to the police about the abuse, then the reviewers would conclude that that decision would have been in keeping with the standards of the time. However, as set out in this report, there is some evidence that the parents and/or victims were not fully informed and consulted.

21. Winchester College in 2021

Jan Pickles OBE and Mary Breen, an external reviewer, conducted a remote visit to Winchester College from 1 – 4 February 2021 to undertake a review of the current arrangements. They will be referred to herein as "**the inspectors**".

The purpose of the review was to test the conclusions set out at Section 20 of this report against the practice, policies and procedures at the College in order to determine whether the events described above in relation to Smyth's presence at Winchester College could occur under the current arrangements.

The inspectors were given access to a wide range of materials, including policies, appraisals, training and induction materials and the results of previous audits/inspections. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the national lockdown, the visit to the school was conducted virtually. Interviews with staff and students took place online and the inspectors were given a virtual tour of a boarding house.

The findings of the inspection are set out below under the same headings as the conclusions in Section 20 of this report. The inspectors compiled a list of specific recommendations for further improvement. These were provided directly to the College and fall outside the scope of this report.

Conclusion 1: Access to Winchester College

The inspection found that the current policies for visiting speakers are thorough and the procedures are well understood and applied in practice. An example was given by several interviewees of the Second Master reviewing and declining a recent request for a visiting speaker to attend.

When attending the College, visiting speakers are escorted to and from the presentation. Staff members are present during talks and are trained to intervene if there is inappropriate action or content, including the expression of fundamentalist views per the College's "Prevent Duty" policy.

The inspection found that the College's "Site Security and Visitor Access Policy 2020" complied with safeguarding requirements in the KCSIE and the NMS.⁴⁷⁹ As the site is porous, visitors' lanyards are used to identify visitors to the school. However, staff are not required to wear identification. The inspectors considered that this could create difficulties in distinguishing between an unfamiliar member of staff and a visitor who was not wearing a lanyard.

The inspectors also reviewed the College's recruitment policies and practices, particularly in relation to the use of volunteers. They found that safeguarding was central to the appointment process and multiple references are sought to determine whether any applicant is unsuitable to work with children.

⁴⁷⁹ Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (2020); Boarding Schools: National Minimum Standards (2015).

The inspectors concluded that the threat of unsuitable or dangerous individuals gaining physical access to pupils at the school is minimised by the effective practices in place, in line with the suite of school policies for visitors and for the recruitment of staff.

Conclusion 2: Supervision by staff members

The inspectors undertook inquiries into the arrangements for supervising pupils at Winchester College. They found that the supervision of boys extends from the boys' presence in the house to their whereabouts around campus, in the city and also when going home to their families.

The inspectors found that Housemasters and Matrons believe that the levels of supervision within the House during the day, at night, and at the weekends are good and that there are no 'no-go' areas or times where boys would feel that staff may not be either present or available if needed. Through systems such as registration, signing in and out, and seeking permission for absence, the Housemasters feel confident that they '*know where the boys are*', and they describe this matter as a priority for them.

Boys are able to go into the city without special permission during certain clearly defined periods in the afternoon, and they are advised to be in groups of two or more if this time falls as the evenings become darker. Housemasters and Matrons have the mobile telephone number of every boy in the house and can, and do, follow up if, for example, '*a boy forgets to sign out*'.

It was noted that Dons are able to invite boys to their private homes although this is usually in groups and always with the permission of the Housemaster. When boys attend the house of a don alone, the Housemaster is notified.

A mutual understanding between staff and pupils of the golden rule of life in a boarding school, that '*we know where you are, and you are where you are supposed to be*' is underpinned by robust policies, and was evident in the reviewers' discussions at the school. Through interviews with Housemasters, Matrons and senior staff, the inspectors concluded that the supervision of pupils is systematic, suitable and age appropriate.

Conclusion 3: Information sharing

The inspectors witnessed an open, collegiate and collaborative atmosphere at the school. They considered this was especially evident at the meetings with groups of senior staff and with Housemasters. The Housemasters described major changes over the past ten years or so, with one saying, '*It was the end of the old system of fiefdoms*' and that '*Housemasters were not 100% consistent in the past*'.

One Housemaster commented that as the ethos changed, '*Housemasters did not really welcome it*' but that as new appointments have been made there has been a real acceptance of the need to approach matters such as pupil discipline, supervision and pastoral care more consistently across all houses, and also a sense of distributed pastoral care where Dons, Tutors and Chaplains are regularly invited to be present in the house: '*The more adults we can get into the house the better*'.

The inspectors found that Housemasters feel confident that they can consult each other, the senior Housemaster and any member of the Senior Management Team, including the DSL, for advice or direction.

The inspectors reviewed the practical structure of meetings and information sharing, including Housemasters' meetings, Matrons' meetings and other arrangements.

In addition to the professional relationships and communications between Housemasters as a group, and between Housemasters and the SMT, the reviewers saw robust and effective mechanisms by which pastoral and safeguarding information with respect to pupils is appropriately recorded by all staff and then shared, escalated where necessary and acted upon. Housemasters receive additional focussed training in terms of recording concerns and in acting on concerns recorded by others.

Conclusion 4: Targeting vulnerable pupils

The inspectors considered the College's framework and practice for ensuring the identification and protection of vulnerable pupils.

The supervision of boys at Winchester College covers not only knowledge about their whereabouts at any time of the day and night, but also their welfare. The inspectors found that Housemasters see their roles *'as a pastoral job. It's no longer disciplinary and that aspect is largely dealt with by SMT'*. Housemasters spoke engagingly about how well they get to know the pupils in their care, and how staff are alert to when things may be going wrong for a boy and where he might therefore be more vulnerable, including during lockdown where boys are learning from home.

Staff, including those from the medical centre, spoke about the various ways, both formal and informal, where boys who were vulnerable because of a characteristic or because of an occurrence in their lives could be identified and helped. The online record keeping system enables all staff to record concerns so that the Housemaster can follow up. Chaplains share the visiting of Houses in the evening among themselves and a Housemaster will often give a quiet instruction for the Chaplain to visit a particular boy who appears low or has some upset in his life. The in-house dining structure is seen by staff and boys as a particular strength at the school, where boys are seen by Housemasters and Matrons *'every day at breakfast, lunch and supper'* and where changes in mood or even eating habits are readily spotted.

The College has a Pastoral Support Group at which boys with particular concerns are logged in a traffic light system which ensures that urgent complaints are dealt with and follow-up is automatic. Housemasters, with the support of specialist help from the Medical Centre and/or the Pastoral Support Group produce Individual Welfare Plans for pupils in their care, and share them with the Medical Centre, the DSL and the Second Master via the online recording system. The DSL may also draw up a Monitoring Welfare Plan for pupils of concern. Mental health referrals are made to the Medical Centre as necessary and appropriate.

The reviewers also concluded that there are opportunities for boys to spend time with their families, or away from school, within a full boarding structure that also looks after those boys who may not leave school as regularly.

Conclusion 5: Barriers to disclosure

The inspectors considered whether the College has created an environment where pupils feel able to make a disclosure about safeguarding issues. They found that the school has in place an effective and open pastoral structure.

Central to an environment where pupils feel able to 'tell' is that they have a range of adults to whom they can turn, and also that they can speak about personal or troubling issues without feeling embarrassed or ignored. Housemasters acknowledged that boys may not always want to come to them to discuss particular issues and they referred to the Matrons, the Nurses, the Psychologists and the Chaplains as crucial resources for the pastoral support of boys. There was a refreshing lack of territorialism from Housemasters as they spoke about the variety of people to whom boys can turn. Some boys mentioned that they would go to their Matron if they were feeling unhappy; another boy spoke openly about how homesick he had been when he first arrived at the school and how he sought help from the Nurses who helped him with strategies to settle in.

Boys spoke about going to older boys in their House for support and Housemasters spoke about the training which prefects receive to enable them both to support younger boys, and to refer to an adult where necessary. The reviewers found that there is a well-developed 'tege' structure in houses where a line of boys one year older than the next form a support group.

The review found that the Nursing Team also provide support for new boys to help develop emotional literacy in "Group" sessions and that they have been successful in encouraging boys to speak about feelings and concerns.

The inspectors reviewed house appraisals, including one which stated:

All the boys spoke warmly of the part played in their lives by the domestic and support staff, for whom they clearly have respect and affection. Matron is always available for advice and support, and the domestic staff are "always up for a conversation". [The Assistant Housemaster] notes that the support staff keep their ears and eyes open and are very good at passing on any concerns they have (including finding anything suspicious in a boy's room for example).

One issue which the school is keen to address, and which was raised as a concern by some members of staff, is the absence of women in leadership roles. Women are amply represented in important pastoral roles such as Matrons and Nurses, and in senior positions in the support staff, but are seen by some staff as under-represented within Common Room, as Housemasters and in the senior team.

The recent announcement that the school will introduce girls into the school, initially into the Sixth form, is heralded by the school as a development which '*will bring multiple benefits: new intellectual challenge; diversity of thought; broader horizons*' and '*We also believe, on the basis of experience elsewhere, that this change will bring pastoral and extra-curricular benefits to both sexes.*' As a consequence, the school asserts that '*We look forward to recruiting a higher number of female colleagues into the school.*'

The PSHEE curriculum has recently undergone an overhaul and well-regarded external speakers are used alongside Tutors to deliver topics ranging from consent, masculinity, sexuality, gender issues, equal rights, protected characteristics, discrimination, managing strong emotions and mental health. PSHEE sessions include scenario-based discussions and some sessions are held with girls of the same age from a nearby boarding school.

A new Diversity and Equality Society has been founded at the school and is run by new members of staff who report that the levels of attendance and engagement from pupils are high. Staff reported that boys are willing to discuss their sexuality with adults and with each other, and that there are Dons with same sex partners who provide role models for boys and for other staff.

Conclusion 6: Managing radicalisation

The inspectors assessed the College's policies and practices for preventing radicalisation and responding to indications of extremism.

Various policies address the issue, including the 'Traditional Values and PSHEE Policy, 2020'. This policy describes the various ways in which 'Pupil Voice' is actively encouraged at the school.

The school has a thorough risk assessment and action plan with respect to the 'Prevent Duty' which outlines staff training (the Channel on-line training course), Governing Body updates, the work of the DSL, the work of the chaplaincy, visiting speakers and on-line safety.

In the case of on-line risks, the school has an On-line Monitoring Group that meets to ensure that a framework of risk management is in place, including software to filter and monitor on-line usage of pupils and employees. The College's Acceptable Use Policy, which is signed by the pupils and staff, forbids pupils and staff from accessing and using extremism websites. The PSHEE curriculum includes Cyber Safety talks.

Mobile phones are collected in at bedtime from boys up to the sixth form by house staff, and this prevents boys from accessing on-line material at night.

In terms of religious organisations within the school, the Christian Union has a small membership of about twenty pupils and the Lead Chaplain drops in to meetings on an invited or informal basis. As noted above, staff monitor the content of guest speakers' presentations.

A stand-alone risk assessment of 'religious operations' is an additional policy concerned with any visits from speakers from religious organisations, including the Christian Union and the Parents' Prayer Group, and also addresses the risks of any off-site retreats. This risk assessment highlights a letter from the Headmaster *'to parents of pupils attending the autumn Christian Union presentation by Titus Trust to say that [the pupils] have had a presentation and if they wish to book 'Iwerne' holidays then they should be aware of the historical issues.'* In addition, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is required to check that the Titus Trust's safeguarding policies and procedures are appropriate.

Conclusion 7: Making referrals to the statutory authorities

The inspectors considered not only whether the College has appropriate policies in place to ensure that referrals are made to the relevant authorities, but whether the policies are followed as a matter of practice.

The inspectors held extensive discussions with the DSL at the school, the Nominated Safeguarding Governor (**NSG**) and the Hampshire Local Authority Designated Officer (**LADO**). The LADO confirmed that he has a '*very good working relationship*' with the DSL and with other senior staff at the school. He gave benchmarking between Winchester College and other similar schools in terms of the volume and content of referrals and considered that all referrals made to him by Winchester College have been appropriate. The LADO spoke of his confidence in the staff at Winchester College who tend to call for advice with a proposed plan of action including a risk assessment and a proposal to speak with, for example, the police and / or Children's Services. The LADO described these calls very positively as 'This is what we've got, this is what we're doing, anything else we should be doing?'

Aside from referrals to the police and local authority, the school reports serious issues to the Charity Commission.

The inspectors also found evidence of positive communication with the Governing Body in relation to safeguarding, including in relation to the DSL and the NSG. Through reporting processes, the Governing Body is made aware of safeguarding issues and cases on an anonymised basis.

The inspectors found there had been a written audit undertaken by the school of 'Overall Effectiveness of Safeguarding Procedures', using the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's template which includes areas for development and an action plan. A 'quiz' is also sent to Governors to assess their understanding of KCSIE and their role as a Governor.

Conclusion 8: Support for victims of abuse

The inspectors also considered whether Winchester College has systems in place to ensure that victims of abuse are provided with appropriate support.

They found that pupils are advised in the safeguarding section of the school rules that they will be involved in any forward referral if a pupil discloses any form of abuse.

In line with KCSIE 2020, the school Safeguarding Policy makes it clear that on receiving an allegation of physical or sexual abuse, the DSL will take any steps needed to protect the pupil involved from risk of immediate harm, may include allocating an appropriate staff member to support the pupil.

The pupil will be informed of the next steps, having agreed them with the relevant authorities. Longer term support may include pupils receiving continuing support and protection from a staff member chosen by them, changing boarding accommodation or returning to their parents temporarily. The school will also make arrangements for any pupil who has been the subject of abuse to receive any necessary continuing

counselling and support, by agreement with their parents where appropriate. For pupils at the College, this can be provided by the medical team or on-site counselling service, which includes three counsellors, a Child and Adolescent Psychologist and two Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists.

Appendix 1: Victim Impact Statement of Victim 002

I was always destined for Winchester College. Two of my relatives had taught there while others had attended the school. My brothers went to a different school but, because I was the academic one, my name was put down for Winchester. I would now give anything for that not to have been the case.

How do I quantify the impact that meeting John Smyth has had on my life - being groomed by him and then physically assaulted by him many, many times? He took over my teenage years, ruined my 20's and has infected my whole life.

It's not the physical scars that hurt, although for years I bore the imprints of them. Just for the record, I'm Victim 002 who was chosen by John Smyth and groomed from the age of 13, had my first beating aged 17 while still at Winchester College and then between late 1978 and February 1982 received dozens of thrashings, including on one occasion over 1000 strokes and on another a beating that lasted from morning till night. I am one of the two victims whom Canon Ruston in his contemporaneous report cites as having received at least 8000 strokes over the course of three years. I don't think it's exaggerating to define what happened to us as physical torture, but with the added ingredient of the perpetrator so manipulating the victim that he agrees to it and equates the torture to God's love.

The figures I've just outlined may shock you but the real horror for me has been the mental torture. I wonder if you can imagine what it's like to feel that your life depends on monitoring every single thought for the slightest infraction or impurity - bearing in mind that every so-called infraction or impure thought might warrant a beating? Crazy as it may sound, by the end of this nightmare my inner world was one where I was terrified of my own thoughts. The only moments of peace came when I slept. I would long for the oblivion sleep would bring. The moment I woke up, the mental horror started all over again. Relentless, persecutory, leaving me full of guilt and despair. And I was completely trapped. I couldn't tell anyone - that was out of the question as my friend's suicide attempt attests. As far as I was concerned, this was going to continue in some form or another for the rest of my life.

University is traditionally a time when you spread your wings, meet new people and fresh ideas and begin to find out a bit more about who you really are. Unfortunately, that wasn't my experience. I never got drunk, didn't have any sexual encounters, had no wild nights out. None of those were permitted. I have this vivid memory of one rainy Wednesday afternoon. I was leaving our last seminar of the day and this guy on my course was headed down the road in the same direction as me. "Fancy coming to the pub?" he asked. "No 'fraid not" I answered, "I've got to be somewhere else". Somewhere else was of course [Smyth's] House in Morestead. I then caught the train to Winchester as I did every Wednesday for many months, not knowing if I was going to be beaten or be spared until next week. The following morning, I would be back at my 11am lecture, sitting gingerly on the chair only too aware of the blood that had seeped through the medical dressings beginning to stick to my black corduroys.

But by then John Smyth had taken over my life. My only friends were among the 'Bosloe boys', as we liked to call ourselves. He got between me and my parents, between me and my brothers and other friends. I spent considerably more time with John Smyth and his family than I did with my own family. I lived a double life and was having to tell elaborate lies to keep this secret world hidden. To the outside world, a

self-assured undergraduate but internally a terrified child whose every move was monitored. By this time, I had no privacy. I had no interior life that was mine. It all belonged to John Smyth. I couldn't make any decisions for myself. When I went abroad on my gap year, John Smyth arranged for another 'Bosloe boy' to come with me. And the same thing happened when I went abroad during my degree. He appointed a chaperone. There was no escaping. Everything had to be referred to him because otherwise getting it wrong might lead to a beating. I was living constantly in a state of hyper alertness. There was no rest, no mental peace during my waking hours except for a few minutes immediately following a flogging. Let that sink in. The only time I felt any peace during my waking hours was when I was lying down on the bed next to the bench over which I had been thrashed until the blood ran down my legs. And somehow, believe it or not, that seemed normal. That is what John Smyth did to me.

There are two things I will never forgive John Smyth for. The first occurred in 1979. While I was abroad on my gap year, for the first time in my life, I fell head over heels in love. On my return to the UK, John Smyth made me break off the relationship and then tear up all my girlfriend's letters to me and every photograph I had of her.

You might think that the "outing" of the beatings and the cessation of those visits to the garden shed would bring an end to my suffering but in some ways that's when the real hell began. The rug on which I have been standing for the last eight years was pulled well and truly out from under my feet. The person in whom I had put my total trust, who as far as I was concerned controlled my whole existence, had gone. I suddenly had no reference point around which to orientate myself. I was in a kind of anxiety freefall. Rather than helping us face up to and explore the complexities of making decisions during our adolescence, John Smyth had kept us as children where he, the parent, imposed and enforced with extreme violence a simplistic rule book where things were either right or wrong.

Without an outlet for my anxiety and guilt, I started suffering from severe bouts of obsessional compulsive behaviour and chronic anxiety, worrying about the order in which I had closed doors, inventing endless routines to try and create some semblance of order and safety in my life. The huge sense of guilt that permeated my whole being by this time had no outlet now. Without any physical punishment to grant me relief from this constant guilt my mind found other ways to deal with it. I would lurch from anxiety attack to anxiety attack. The most common were medically related. I would for example suddenly get it into my head that a particular mole was cancerous, and this irrational fear would invade my every waking minute. These obsessional anxiety attacks were relentless and could last for weeks. I was in a state of heightened all consuming anxiety which then could disperse as inexplicably as it had appeared - although inevitably I lived in constant fear that another attack was just around the corner.

This went on for a very long time and for years I took anti-depressants and beta blockers just to be able to function in the world.

I have, since those dark days, felt a huge amount of shame, not least because everyone else seemed intent on brushing what had happened under the carpet. It felt like I had been involved in something dirty and shameful. I carry this thing around me like a lump of toxic waste. I find it difficult to engage emotionally with the horror of those events. I'm taken by surprise when I tell someone and see their reaction. Imagine what

it felt like having to sit down and tell my children about what had happened to me. How could they possibly comprehend the madness I was caught up in, although I could see their anger and sorrow at what I had been through? Only recently has the magnitude of what happened to me begun to hit home. Of course, cutting off from emotions around abuse is common among those who have suffered traumatic events. Huge swathes of my teenage and subsequent years have been erased from my memory and I have no emotional memory of what my feelings were like at the time.

It has taken years of intense therapy to enable me to maintain a long-term relationship, to loosen certain addictive behaviours, to stop being a workaholic, to get a modicum of pleasure from my relationships and life itself. I have spent much of the last four decades suffering from endless bouts of psychosomatic symptoms, where the distress of the traumatic events of my adolescence gets repeatedly expressed through feeling unwell often for several weeks – for me, it comes out in the form of chronic sinusitis, stomach pains and fatigue. I've lost count of the pleasurable events that I've had to forgo because I've been too unwell.

Forty years on, I wish I could say to you today that what happened back then is all in the past, long forgotten. But it isn't. For eight of my most impressionable years, John Smyth got inside of me. I've worked hard over many years to try to see things differently, to believe that people are often good and can be trusted, that catastrophe isn't just around the corner, that my feelings are there to help me rather than persecute me, that I'm not guilty and deserving of eternal damnation and punishment and that, rather than being full of shit, I too can give love and am deserving of receiving love.

I said earlier that there were two things for which I will never forgive John Smyth. The second is how my relationship with him and what he did to me tainted my relationship with my mother. She couldn't bring herself to talk about it, I suspect because she blamed herself for not protecting me. This thing, this horror, lay between us. For years, because she so obviously shrank from it, I found it impossible to raise it with her, not least because I felt a huge amount of guilt since I believed myself, in some unexplained way, complicit in this sadomasochistic madness. My mother and I spent the next 35 years in a rather polite and distant relationship. That is, until 2017.

Knowing the Channel 4 program exposing this abuse was about to be broadcast and finally beginning to understand that I hadn't been a willing participant but instead a victim groomed over many years, I confronted my mother somewhat unfairly with my anger at the way we as a family never talked about things and how I felt that had contributed to my being exploited by John Smyth. She was unable to hear this. We fell out and stopped any form of communication. The next time I saw her was two months later as she lay in a hospital bed in a coma, having fallen down the stairs at her house. She never recovered and we never spoke to each other again.

There is no happy ending here. Life is certainly better than it was. I now know what a good day looks like because I have them from time to time but the legacy of what happened in that shed 40 years ago continues. I still shrink from emotional closeness. Intimacy terrifies me. I'm always anticipating that those I depend on most will let me down. It's easier for me to rely on structures than on relationships to make me feel safe. I'm constantly assailed by persecutory thoughts. In some ways, I'm allergic to my own feelings. I'm wary and find it difficult to be spontaneous. I feel abnormal. I have seen an

aspect of human nature that almost everyone connected with it has wanted to run a hundred miles from. And once you have seen it, you can't unsee it. It lives inside you.

Appendix 2: Victim Impact Statement of Victim 004

I want to start by explaining something. I am going to try to talk coldly and dispassionately. It is the only way I can cope. I ended up, as you know, at The Tavistock Hospital with a diagnosis of complex PTSD. But one thing I discovered is that I have no memory of the details of the abuse, the shed, the pain. My body, my brain, defends me by hiding that away, somewhere as yet unreachable. Do not mistake a cold voice for absence of pain. I have felt physically sick much of the last week and this is incredibly stressful for me.

I am also paranoid about my anonymity. My name has been leaked three times by Church employees. You will recall that in February 2017, as the story was breaking, I was approached directly by a representative of the school. I spoke six months ago to an ex Common Room member who told me that of course they knew I was involved. How?

Secondly, I do not trust you. I have had trust issues all my life. I trusted someone to an extreme that is beyond your imagination, and was grievously let down, by the man, by God, by all I believed in. I am not sure I have ever trusted anyone since and that has had a devastating impact on my life, and relationships. So, my starting position is that I do not trust you. But overlaying that is a fear and a deference. Under pressure, I revert back to a child, and so the whole dynamic in this room is difficult for me. I sit opposite you not as an equal, another human being, but with fear and anxiety. I have spent most of my life in hiding, avoiding people. I have not worked since 1994. I avoid people, avoid situations, avoid stress.

I have spent much of my adult life thinking about the abuse, and on and off it has reared its head. I have had five lengthy periods of therapy, starting in Harley St in the mid 1990s. I have had treatment for addiction since about 2000. While I thank you for the support three years ago, that financing ended. My need to talk to someone did not end. The effects of the abuse do not just go away. Now, each victim will be different: we are not a homogenous whole. But, we each need treating with kid gloves if you are to avoid angering, distressing, and further damaging us.

You are presumably aware that I am the one who first came forward in 2012, just coming up to ten years ago. William Hague was Foreign Secretary, the London Olympics had not yet happened. Since then, the Smyth story has dominated my every waking hour. I spend 10-20 hours per week doing something Smyth related. I have given evidence to six bodies and Reviews: the police, the Makin Review, Scripture Union, 31:8, NST and Jan's Review. I have been unable to think about anything else, do anything else. I have faced obstruction, incompetence and lies from people who just should know better. I am absolutely exhausted, ground down, re-abused. What affects me now is not the 1980s abuse, it is the denials, the blanking, the obfuscation and why the Winchester Review has taken two and a half years.

We were denied justice by the death of Smyth. For me, what I want now is the story told, fully, openly, truthfully. I want acknowledgement of errors made, without the handprint of lawyers, PR advisers and insurers. I want sorrow, I want reflection, I want lament. I do not expect you to understand, to begin to understand what happened to us. I cannot explain how a Wykehamist, Oxbridge-educated person would ever have allowed that to happen. So, please, do not pretend to understand.

What has made me most angry particularly is the outright deceit by parts of the CofE. At Synod, possibly three years ago, a promise was made to victims that the CofE would do "whatever it takes". In the Church of England, that has proved farcically hollow.

So, to conclude, I challenge Winchester. For victims, each with our own needs, our own trauma, our own way of coping or not coping. Will you do "Whatever it takes"?

Appendix 3: The Ruston Report

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

1. I was on the spot, and as one of those involved came to see me on February 1, I have now talked at length to thirteen of the twenty-two young men involved, and one who was on the verge of joining in. So it seems sense that I should get some of it on to paper before we meet on March 16th. (18)
2. The Practice began in 1978, with J. offering a 17-year old the choice of a beat from him or being reported to parents/school. He chose the beating given with cane in the summer house. *for shoplifting*
3. For a term or two, it continued with four 17-year olds, on the bare bottom with gym shoe (because it leaves less evidence) but was voluntarily accepted as a deterrent to masturbation. Beatings varied from a dozen to 40 strokes. (In all mention of figures I quote what they have told me, in every case taking the low figure). These were technically all criminal offences under the Offences Against the Person Act of 1861, Sec.47.
4. Since summer 1979 it has gradually escalated, in frequency and severity of beatings and in the number of men involved.
5. The motives were always seen as good by operators and participants - the sanctifying of young Christian men, and the blessings of fatherly discipline. I believe this but cannot really understand it. Prayer, praise and loving Christian concern in Christ's name were evident at every point. There was never the slightest evidence of overt sexual excitement or interference. But the psychiatrist describes it as suppressed masochistic sexual activity (or sadistic I suppose in the operators). Several men simply said 'I trusted J' 'I went in it on trust'.
6. The scale and severity of the practice was horrific. Five of the 13 I have seen were in it only for a short time. Between them they had 12 beatings and about 650 strokes. The other 8 received about 14,000 strokes: 2 of them having some 8,000 strokes over the three years. The others were involved for one year or 18 months. 9 spoke of bleeding on most occasions ('I could feel the blood spattering on my legs' - 'I was bleeding for 3 1/2 weeks' 'I fainted sometime after a severe beating'). I have seen bruised and scored buttocks, some two-and-a-half months after the beating. Beatings of 100 strokes for masturbation, 400 for pride and one of 800 strokes for some undisclosed 'fall' are recorded. The beatings were with garden canes, with some sort of a handle. S, wanting 'to be the best for God' beat as hard as he could. A year or so ago 'training' beatings of some 75 strokes every 3 weeks were instituted, as being better than only going down after a 'fall', though these persisted. One told me he was receiving beatings at least every 4/5 days one vacation. The custom of semi nakedness gave way to complete nakedness 'to increase humility'. For training beatings a man undressed himself, for 'falls' he submitted to being undressed by the operator.
7. By design or by circumstances, the system seems to have 'conned' men into accepting the beatings. There was a first talk on wholeheartedness with great emphasis on naming sins and making a list of one's personal failings, a second talk on Sex adding to the pressure, and then one or two personal talks when for the first time it was suggested that the list should be shared. Then there would be mention of the 'blessing' to be had through this system and a fair amount of pressure ('You want to be the best, don't you? Let me be a helper to you ...') and the invitation to visit. At this stage the beating was often thought of as 'six of

- the best on the seat of the pants'. It was usually not until arrival, prayer and talk, and actually reaching the shed that the severity of the beating was mentioned, and the benefits of nakedness as a self-humbling was disclosed. At that stage there was considerable persuasion for anyone who held back. It had almost become a cult, with a powerful group dynamic.
8. Immediately after the beating the man lay on the bed, while J and/or S would kneel and pray, linking arms with him and kissing him on the shoulder and back.
 9. Quite separate from these post-beating embraces, several have spoken of J's putting his arms around them at emotional moments, and one of being kissed on the neck.
 10. Setting aside one's sense of the outrage against human dignity and the cruelty of all this in the name of the Lord, numbers of reasons against the practice emerge. Those I have seen are as follows:
 11. Scriptures used commonly were: Hebrews xii.5-11, 2 Samuel vii.13, St Luke xii, and many 'spare the rod' and 'fathers and sons' verses in Proverbs. But none would have suggested the practice to anyone not already emotionally committed (cf. the hold the cults have), the fathers and child verses do not apply (they were neither sons nor children).
 12. Similar practices (not exactly the same, to my knowledge) are known and regarded as aberrations in church history.
 13. All Christian leaders would condemn the practice.
 14. J and S saw this as a 'ministry' from God. But the 'ministry' of discipline in this sense, was secret, self-appointed and never approved by other Christian leaders (cf. Acts xiii.1-2), and of course unknown in lists of ministries (cf. Ephesians iv.11, etc.).
 15. The knowledge of other people's sins, and 'power' over them through their humiliation, nakedness and beating, is exceedingly bad for the operators.
 16. There was a very frequent association with sexual sins of a comparatively minor kind (masturbation and impure thoughts) and too many sexual overtones, though it is clear that there was never any overt sexual activity.
 17. The practice destroys the direct access of the believer to the Lord (Hebrews xii etc.) and makes the way to be always through one of the operators with whom sins were shared. This seems to strike at the great Reformation truth, and is very akin to the Roman Catholic system of confession and penance, with the list of sins to be shared with J and S, and the severity of the beatings being proportionate to the seriousness of the fall as they saw it.
 18. It magnifies sins of thought and other little daily failures and consequently builds up a guilty conscience when everything is not shared with J. Apart from the known suicide attempt, another man got as far as writing a suicide note and sitting looking at a bottle of pills because he could not go on with the beating and 'this was the only way of holiness'. And another is still suffering pangs of guilty conscience over failings of seven years ago, revived through this practice.
 19. It keeps young men as children (the cane and the cuddles might be suitable between a father and a small boy). It keeps them immature and unable to make their own judgments and fight their own battles.

20. S was brought into sharing the 'ministry' in the summer of 1980; two others had been approached, one of whom was unwilling to take part,

21. The rehabilitation of S and one of the others who has been in it for four years is a cause of concern. The latter, with a very unstable home background, very dependent on J indeed (and/or J on him?). All but one of the others I have spoken to seem amazingly resilient.

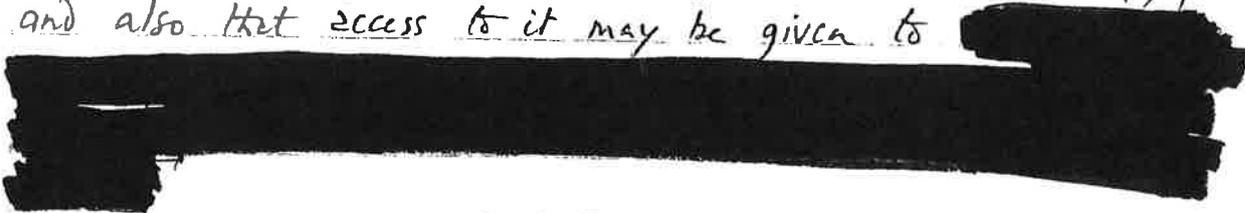
22. The whole thing displays frightening blindness: in the operators who were blind to Scripture, to sense, to propriety, to possible consequences for Gospel work, to men's welfare, to church history and to the very heart of the Gospel; and in the participants who could voluntarily accept such treatment as God's appointed way of blessing.

Appendix 4: Handwritten Undertaking (Unsigned)

The following undertaking is given by Mr. John Smyth Q.C. to Mr. John Thorn, Headmaster of Winchester College and Vice-Chairman of the Headmasters' Conference on this day of October, 1982.

1. I undertake unequivocally to break completely with those I have implicated in a practice I now accept as misguided and wrong. I accept that "completely" implies no steps to approach them and no steps to allow them to approach me.
2. I undertake to receive specialist medical advice at once and to receive treatment if so advised.
3. I now accept that my mission can no longer lie with boys and young men, and I undertake not to take on again the rôle of spiritual counsellor to them.

I accept that 2 copy of this undertaking will remain with the Headmaster of Winchester College and his successor(s); and also that access to it may be given to



signed

and endorsed by

Appendix 5: Draft Information Sharing Agreement

Dear Mr Makin,

Thank you for your emails and for sending through a draft copy of your “Joint Working Protocol for the John Smyth Learning Reviews”. I have now had the chance to review the draft Protocol and to speak with Genevieve Woods, the barrister who has been working alongside me on this review.

We appreciate you reaching out in the spirit of cooperation and we welcome this opportunity to assist in ensuring that the three reviews are as effective as possible. My apologies if this letter covers points which are self-evident or which are already contained in your draft, but we believe it would be helpful to set out our position in writing so that it can form the basis for our future cooperation.

Our review is, and must continue to be, focused on the victims and their experiences. As we proceed, we are guided by two core principles:

1. The review must be conducted with respect for the rights and views of each of the victims in this case, including by protecting their confidentiality and ensuring that any disclosures to third parties are made with their prior informed consent and in accordance with our legal obligations, including in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation;
2. The review must be conducted in a manner which is independent; the reviewers must act with professionalism and impartiality so that the final report is free of any conflict of interest, third party influence or bias.

We recognise that there are clear and compelling reasons to support communication and cooperation between the three reviews. The sharing of information could help to ensure that key documents are provided to the relevant reviewers in a timely manner, so that the final reports accurately reflect the events that took place.

However, as discussed in previous correspondence, the terms of reference for each review are quite different and the accounts provided to Winchester College in interview are likely to be of limited use to the other reviewers. We also believe that for any review to be truly victim-focused, it is essential that survivors are interviewed and given the opportunity to provide a direct account in their own words.

We therefore confirm that we are willing to cooperate with the Church of England Learning Lessons Review and the Scripture Union Review as follows, subject to the two core principles set out above:

- i. We agree that we are willing to share the names and contact details of victims, subject to their prior informed consent and our legal obligations, including under the General Data Protection Regulation;
- ii. We agree that if we find documentary records which we determine are of relevance to the terms of reference of the other reviews, it is appropriate for us to share that information, where the rights of the victims and witnesses and confidentiality obligations permit.

The above proposal is based on reciprocal agreement, which is essential in order to ensure that each review is robust and complete. We welcome the same commitment from the other reviewers and we believe that if this can be achieved, it will form a sufficient basis for cooperation and enable the reviews to proceed without further delay.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jan Pickles', written in a cursive style.

Jan Pickles OBE

Appendix 6: Amended Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

This 'Terms of Reference' document has been written to define the purpose and structure of this Review commissioned by Winchester College.

1. Background

In brief: from the 1930s the 'Iwerne Trust' ran several evangelical Christian holiday Camps in which pupils from Winchester College and other public schools participated. Attendance was by invitation only by the Iwerne Trust and limited to boys at major Public Schools. The Camps provided a range of activities while also providing Bible studies and discussion groups on the Christian faith. The longer-term aim of the Camps was to promote evangelicalism in the Church of England and within senior leadership positions in the British establishment. Some boys who attended the Iwerne Camps went on to become influential church leaders. Winchester College was one of the public schools from which these boys were drawn by the Iwerne Trust.

The Christian Forum was an evangelical group that met at the College and was particularly strong in 1970s and 1980s; many boys who belonged to the Christian Forum attended Iwerne Camps.

Sometime after the events a number of serious allegations were made by boys who attended the summer Camps during the 1970's and 80's of 'savage beatings' by John Smyth QC, a former Chairman of The Iwerne Trust in a garden shed in the garden at his family home [Smyth's] House at Morestead in Hampshire. Reports of his alleged physical abuse of up to some 30 boys and young men in the UK (of whom it is estimated that about half had attended Winchester College) were revealed in an investigation by Channel 4 News in February 2017. John Smyth QC had been wanted for questioning by the police in connection with these reports at the time of his death in August 2018. John Smyth had previously worked as a barrister representing the controversial Campaigner Mary Whitehouse and was himself an Evangelical Christian.

These allegations of abuse were first made to the Iwerne Trust in 1981 according to the report prepared for the Titus Trust in July 2014 (Victims 002 and 004 believes that this is incorrect, and it was in 1982), despite the 1981 date being repeated a number of times within that report. Victim 004 believes there was no knowledge prior to the anonymous letter written by 003 to David Fletcher in January 1982 and the then attempted suicide of 003 in February 1982 and the almost simultaneous approach by 014 and 015 to the Revd Mark Ruston. The Mark Ruston report is written within days of being approached in Feb 1982 and shared with Trustees of the Iwerne Trust. The Headmaster of Winchester College is contacted by the father of Victim 003 in July 1982. John Thorn's biography which details the abuse was published in 1989 but this did not lead to any action on the part of the College. The allegations were only officially reported to the Police in 2013 by the Titus Trust, the successor body of the Iwerne Trust.

Winchester were made aware of the allegations resurfacing in January 2017 by Channel 4 and they reported them to the Police at that time.

Winchester College acknowledges that at the time these allegations first came to light it did not report them to the Police; likewise, neither did the Iwerne Trust nor any other party.

As a result, the allegations were not investigated by the Police though in that era there is no certainty as we now know that they would have considered it their responsibility to do so. John Smyth left the UK in 1984 for Zimbabwe where he went on to establish similar Camps and allegedly was involved in the beatings of up to 90 children. Following the death of a 16-year-old boy in 1997 by drowning at a Camp he was arrested but the Court case was dropped. John Smyth then moved on to South Africa and died there in 2018.

The Church of England and Scripture Union have established their own reviews of their relationships with the Iwerne Trust and these allegations.

2. Focus of the Review

The Review will establish what facts are known about the relationship between John Smyth and the Iwerne Trust (later known as the Titus Trust) and Winchester College. Winchester College has commissioned Jan Pickles OBE and Genevieve Woods of Counsel to review all available (to the school and other interested parties) documentation and to obtain where freely given information and opinions from old boys and staff of the Smyth era who were employed there, and others connected to the school at the relevant times. The Review will be the property of Winchester College.

3. Hindsight Bias

As with any review into historical events it is important that we remain aware that past events and actions are being viewed through our current standards, knowledge and understanding. The question is whether it would have been reasonable to have expected individuals to have reported what they had seen, heard or suspected to the responsible authorities at that time and had they done so what response would have been likely to have been made by those authorities to any such report.

4. Statement of Independence

Although commissioned and paid by Winchester College Jan Pickles is an Independent Registered Social Worker who works to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and Genevieve Woods is an independent barrister and member of the Bar of England and Wales and regulated by the Bar Standards Board (she is also in passing a solicitor on the rolls of the Supreme Court New South Wales, Australia) Jan Pickles and Genevieve Woods have had no previous professional or personal contact with Winchester College, the Warden or Fellows (although tangentially Genevieve Woods is a graduate of New College Oxford which shares the same founder with the school) Winchester College has agreed to provide Jan Pickles and Genevieve Woods with all relevant material held by them in terms of documentation and contemporaneous notes. As all staff at the school at that time are no longer in the employment of the school, Winchester College will do what it can to gain their cooperation with this Review but cannot require it.

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/for-barristers/bsb-handbook-and-code-guidance/the-bsb-handbook.html>

5. Aim of the Review

- 5.1 To establish a factual chronological narrative and disclose as many relevant facts as possible.
- 5.2 To identify safeguarding learning from these events.

6. The Process of the Review

The Review will establish a chronology of the relationship of John Smyth and The Iwerne Trust (later the Titus Trust) with the school, its staff and pupils. The Review will work with the victims/survivors of Smyth and from the chronology develop a narrative and an analysis of the events and the safeguarding issues it has identified. The Review will also seek to establish how Winchester College responded to any concerns relating to John Smyth or the Iwerne Trust which may have been communicated to it prior to 2017 (which is when the Channel 4 investigation was aired) and review the safeguarding consequences and make recommendations about any further steps to be taken.

7. The voice of victims in the Review

The Review aims to provide victims/survivors with an opportunity to be heard – something many feel they have been denied to date (and of course by Smyth's death) and it will seek to involve and learn from victims/survivors of John Smyth (and others who may have been witnesses) who come forward and who were or had been pupils at Winchester College. To ensure the ability of old boys to participate in the Review the College has written to some 1500 of them from the Smyth era to explain the purpose of the Review and to provide them with contact details for the Review team so that they can offer relevant evidence should they have any.

8. The Review will focus on

- 8.1 Events at Winchester College - The nature of the contact and relationship with John Smyth and the Iwerne Trust.
- 8.2 How Winchester College was informed of the allegations in 1982 and the nature and methods of its responses, including any response to statutory authorities
- 8.3 The contemporaneous response by Winchester College to the victims of any abuse reported to it prior to 2017.
- 8.4 Safeguarding learning from these events

9. Limitations of this Review

- 9.1 This Review has no access to documents relating to the relationship between the Church of England or the Scripture Union or the Iwerne and Titus Trust and John Smyth. It is the responsibility of those parties to review their behaviour and decisions. However the Review has established contact with the equivalent reviews being undertaken by the Church of England and the Scripture Union and has, subject to the confidentiality provisions below, agreed a protocol for exchange of information relevant to each others' reviews in the form of the correspondence attached.
- 9.2 The Review has no current access to but will endeavour to obtain and examine relevant documents in the possession of the Police in respect of its investigations in

so far as they relate to pupils or former pupils of Winchester College or the nature of the contact and relationship between Winchester College and John Smyth and/or the Iwerne Trust.

10. Confidentiality

- 10.1 It is imperative that the victims/survivors of Smyth are not further harmed by this Review: some of them may not have told their families and fear exposure, therefore the protection of their confidentiality is paramount. However, if it is disclosed at any point in the Review that a child or an adult at risk is at risk of harm then a referral will be made to the statutory services.
- 10.2 This Review has been commissioned by and is confidential to Winchester College and those victims/survivors who have taken part in it. Any decision to share the Review beyond these parties will be only be undertaken with the informed consent of all parties involved, unless required by relevant public authorities. Winchester College gives an absolute guarantee to protect all information provided in the course of this investigation and will only release information to the level agreed by those who have contributed to it.

Jan Pickles OBE and Genevieve Woods

July 2020