

ST ALBANS DIOCESAN SYNOD

14 October 2023

QUESTIONS – FIRST NOTICE PAPER (with answers)

- 1) Canon Peter Adams (Lay Chair, General Synod and Luton Deanery) to ask the Bishop of St Albans as President of the Diocesan Synod:

"The ongoing investigation and reviews into the Mike Pilavachi I want to thank you, Bishop Alan for your answers to my questions at the June Synod, your letter to the National Safeguarding Team to advise them of the concern in the diocese for an independent investigation, and the subsequent meeting I had with the deputy director of the NST. I was assured then as to the rigour of the investigation, and that assurance appears to have been borne out by the announcement that the investigation has upheld those concerns. I regret that we are not able to see the investigation, though understand both the need to guard the pastoral sensitivity of those we now understand were victims and survivors of abuse, and the integrity of ongoing disciplinary measures. Would you please now put on record the current status of work on this very troubling matter, and give synod some understanding on how matters will proceed from here."

The Bishop of St Albans will respond:

I am grateful to Peter for his care and concern for victims of abuse within and beyond the Church of England and for diligence in keeping this matter before Synod. I can confirm that the investigation by the National Safeguarding Team and Diocesan safeguarding advisers into individuals connected to Soul Survivor Watford has been concluded. Having gained permission from the President of Tribunals to make bring action outside of the normal period allowed for complaints, formal action has now been initiated under the Clergy Discipline Measure by the National Safeguarding Team against Revd Canon Mike Pilavachi and against Revd Andy Croft. I am sure that it is widely understood that any action under the Clergy Discipline Measure is a formal process which must be completed in accordance with the measure and respecting the confidentiality of all parties. I am therefore unable to comment at all on the formal processes currently away, except to say that because I have prior relationships with the individuals against whom the action has been taken it would not be appropriate for me to hear these cases personally and I have therefore asked a retired Bishop from another Diocese to hear these cases.

- 2) Canon Peter Adams (Lay Chair, General Synod and Luton Deanery) to ask the Bishop of St Albans as President of the Diocesan Synod:

"Process leading to the incorporation of Soul Survivor into the diocese, and the ordination of Mike Pilavachi" It is stated that in the reports on the investigation into Mike Pilavachi that complaints were upheld relating to "conduct in his leadership and ministry, both before and after he was ordained in 2012, spanning 40 years from his time as a youth leader through to current day." Bishop, would you help us understand the process that led to his ordination, as well as the incorporation of Soul Survivor into the life of the diocese, and especially the lessons we can learn from this."

The Bishop of St Albans will respond:

I thank Canon Adams for his question.

For the reasons given in my answer to Question 1, I am unable to comment on matters covered by current processes. I understand that there is legitimate interest in the events directly involving the Diocese that are referred to in this question and I agree that it is important that any relevant lessons are learnt. Synod can be assured of my personal commitment to understanding in these areas and to sharing the lessons learnt at an appropriate time.