

THE LANTERN PROJECT

PRESS RELEASE 10TH OCTOBER 2011 - EMBARGOED

The content of this press release is embargoed until 1pm on Tuesday 11th October 2011.

The Lantern Project leaves Catholic Talks following Archbishops's refusal to meet with founder.

Graham Wilmer, founder of the Wirral based survivor group, The Lantern Project, has written to colleagues explaining why he can no longer take part in the talks with NCSC and CSAS, convened by the Catholic Church in England and Wales to determine how the Church should respond to and support victims of sexual and emotional abuse perpetrated within the Catholic Church.

In his letter to the other members of the survivor groups involved in the talks, Mr Wilmer said: "I am writing to tell you that I will not be attending the meeting on 11 October with NCSC/CSAS. This is primarily because Archbishop Nichols has told me, bluntly, that he is not prepared to attend a meeting with us all, to explain what exactly the Catholic Church is trying to achieve through our joint deliberations, nor will he grant me a private audience with him, to hear what I have to say about the many contradictions emerging in our discussions. He insists that he is only interested in hearing what CSAS/NCSC have to say, following their discussions with the rest of us, which have come to nothing.

"As I have said before, I can see no merit in continuing to deliberate with the Catholic Church through CSAS/NCSC, given their declared agenda, i.e., to show a more caring and responsible attitude to victims, in both spirit and in actions, while at the same time, I am having to support victims who are being crushed by the Catholic Church in the courts.

"I know that some of you feel there is still merit in you continuing to work with Adrian Child and his colleagues, and I will not try to dissuade you of those feelings, but I personally can no longer stomach the idea of being an active part of the illusion of goodness and understanding the Church is trying to create, so I am withdrawing from this particular endeavour.

"I will, of course, continue to actively support the many victims we work with, but I need to be able to challenge those who have harmed them, and I am unable to do that effectively, while I am seen to be part of the Churches on-going attempts to deny justice to those it has abused."

ENDS

Note to Editors:

The Lantern Project is a registered charity based in Wallasey, Merseyside, founded in February 2003, by Graham Wilmer and David Williams, both adult

survivors of childhood sexual abuse. The organisation has 5 trustees, each professionally qualified in their own fields, and more than 800 registered members. It is run on a day-to-day basis by a management team comprising a full-time project manager, two full-time volunteer counsellors and three part-time counsellors, all highly experienced in working with victims of psychosexual trauma. The organisation is a member of the Survivors Trust and is accredited by the BACP.

We support victims and their families using Unstructured Therapeutic Disclosure, a holistic recovery framework we developed from a combination of our personal experiences of childhood sexual abuse, and unique insight gained from working with more than 2000 other victims. Our objective is to help individuals progress from being a victim to becoming a survivor, work which can require ongoing support for several years in most cases, working in conjunction with other agencies and clinical interventions from GPs and psychologists, where deemed appropriate and/or necessary.

We provide therapeutic peer support counselling, advocacy and practical help at our premises in Wirral, and through our out-reach work in prisons. We also provide support by phone, e-mail and through our website. We also write and produce survival guides and information films, and we operate an interactive survivors' forum through our web site (www.lanternproject.org.uk), which is accessed on average 50,000 times every month. The web site contains over 10,000 pieces of information, covering all aspects of abuse and its impact, helpful to survivors and professionals alike.

Since the Lantern Project was established, we have provided on-going counselling and support to more than 2000 individual victims of abuse, male and female, aged between 15 and 65, who have made contact with us, either through the our web site, or as referrals from local GP practices, Social Services, the Prison Service, the Probation Service, the Criminal Cases Review Commission, Victim Support, Drug and Alcohol services, sheltered housing associations, local schools and Merseyside Police. We also deliver training and presentations on abuse related issues to local Social Services, GP practices and other agencies. We are currently working with around 380 cases, referred to us over the last 24 months, and we receive around 20 new enquiries each month. Our current local client list, ie those who are accessing our service on a weekly or biweekly basis, and who live in the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Trust area, comprises some 50 individuals who are all receiving one-to-one therapeutic support from us. In all of these cases, we are working in conjunction with their GPs and other agencies with who they are involved. We provide their GPs and these agencies with written updates on their individual progress, so that our input can be used by GPs to better understand their

patients' problems and progress, and any additional clinical needs, such as appropriate antidepressant medication or psychology services.

We have developed close working arrangements with all of the agencies listed above, and we are considered by these agencies to be a vital resource they can refer victims to in safety, knowing that we will provide the specialist care and support that is needed, which in most cases enables the referring agencies, especially GPs, to manage their patients' clinical care more effectively, in terms of the time they spend with them and the likely recovery outcomes. We have also recently developed a special support programme for deaf victims of sexual abuse, at the request of the Merseyside Society for Deaf People. We are the only group in our area offering this highly specialist type of support.

Graham Wilmer is author of 'Conspiracy of Faith - Fighting For Justice After Child Abuse', and 'Picking Up The Pieces - A Survival Guide For Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse"

This press release is issued by Graham Wilmer
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