



The Church of England  
Diocese of Ely

The Bishop of Ely

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The Churchwardens of St Andrew the Great

*By email.*

9 September 2021

Dear Piyush, Matthew, and Ugo,

I write to you – and through you to the people of St Andrew the Great in Cambridge – in support of your dear Vicar, the Revd Alasdair Paine. Like me, you know Alasdair as a godly and gracious pastor and teacher and as a good leader of your church.

Alasdair, like many others, has endured much through his abuse at the hands of John Smyth. Alasdair did the right thing by reporting the abuse at the time to the Revd Mark Ruston (the then incumbent of the parish) and, through him to the Iwerne trustees. He appropriately disclosed the abuse to me through my safeguarding adviser, as you know, when safeguarding procedures were properly in place.

He is now forced to live through it again after the publication of a book for which Alasdair was neither contacted nor interviewed. It is not for any of us to dictate how a survivor of wicked and savage abuse should manage their burden. Alasdair is no more a bystander than any of us. He is entitled to privacy and also to protect his own family and loved ones from distress if they are vulnerable.

We shall learn the truth of the whole tragic business when the report of the independent Makin Review is published, following a comprehensive and rigorous interview process. There will be lessons to learn for all involved and justice at last for all the survivors. We all have responsibility for holding to account the behaviours and attitudes of various parts of the Church, most particularly our own. That accountability is not served by targeting individuals who have already suffered enough.

I am very pleased to have Alasdair as an honoured colleague in the Diocese of Ely. I hold him and all the people of StAG in my prayers.

Yours ever in Christ,

cc. The Revd Alasdair Paine

*We pray to be generous and visible people of Jesus Christ*