

7 HIGH CROFT MINCHINHAMPTON GLOUCESTERSHIRE GL6 9BJ

28th. January, 1993

Dear Chief Inspector Murdoch,

Reference : The Right Reverend the Bishop of Gloucester, Peter Ball.

I gather from some of the young Christians in Sussex that you have been taking statements from them about the Bishop and I hope that it is in order for me to write to you as someone who has known him for the past thirty two years and seen his involvement with young people throughout that time.

I was appointed as a young man to be Headmaster of Ellesmere College, Shropshire in 1961 and then to be Headmaster of Lancing in 1969 before going to be Head Master of Harrow in 1981. I retired in 1991 and am now Chairman of the England Sports Council. I have been a magistrate in four counties since the early sixties.

I first met Peter Ball when he came to preach at Ellesmere in the autumn of 1961. At the time he was setting up the Community for the Glorious Ascension in Stroud.

His influence for the good with the young was remarkable and I asked the Bishop of Shrewsbury if he could be elected a Governor. This duly happened and he has governed several schools since as well as becoming Chaplain to the Headmasters' Conference for a period of time.

On several occasions in all the three schools that I led I was faced with having to help [REDACTED] sharing in the monastic life so that he could help them. On each occasion the boy returned to school and resumed normal school life with success. Peter's influence was remarkable.

He also took Lenten courses; something he has done in many schools and pupils flocked to him for confidential help and advice.

At Harrow we hosted a group of the young Christians involved in the Bishop's scheme in Sussex. They worshipped with us and by their example spread the Christian message.

There has never been an occasion when any child or parent has suggested that they were concerned about his relationship with the young. And that, sadly, cannot be said about all the adults for whom I was responsible and over thirty years of headship have had to report several to the D.E.S. and/or the Police.



Finally, I would wish to add that there is a deep spiritual dimension to the Bishop:- his own disciplined life of short nights with long periods of private meditation have given him in my eyes, and the eyes of many, an almost saint like quality. He is the only man that I have ever met in the established church who challenges one at a very deep level. He is so often physically exhausted by putting all other people before his own well-being. He has surrounded himself all his life with the young who are damaged and need help. He has changed the lives of many for the good.

Of course I would be prepared to do anything to see that the right action is taken and that justice is seen to be done for all who are concerned in this investigation.

Yours sincerely,

*Ian Beer.*

I.D.S.Beer,C.B.E.

