

Church Society & Michael and Kate Andreyev

This is a briefing paper put together by Lee Gatiss originally for the use of Church Society (CS) Council and Church Society Trust (CST) Directors with regards to the situation at St.

Peter's, Stapenhill in the Diocese of Derby which is a Church Society Trust patronage parish — and our relationship with the Vicar, the Revd Michael Andreyev, and his wife, Mrs Kate Andreyev. It is his understanding, based on testimony from those concerned, emails, documents, and online material.

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1. Michael and Kate Andreyev

Michael Andreyev (born 1962) joined Church Society as a member in October 1991 while an ordinand at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. His wife, Kate, joined in March 2018 following the merger with Reform. They stopped paying their subscriptions in March 2020.

2. St Peter's Church, Stapenhill

St. Peter's is a parish in the Diocese of Derby. Church Society Trust is the patron of the parish, with certain legal rights during a vacancy with regards to the appointment of a Vicar, as regulated by the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 and Patronage (Benefices) Rules 1987. The Revd Michael Andreyev (ordained Deacon 1996, and Priest 1997) moved there from Christ Church, Surbiton Hill as a Non-Stipendiary Minister in 2002. He became Priest-in-Charge in 2003, and Vicar (with Freehold) in 2006.

During the course of Revd Andreyev's tenure as Vicar of the parish, the churchwardens report that the electoral roll shrank from around 300, with a usual Sunday attendance of 200-250, to a roll of about 100 and an attendance of around 80. Congregational giving went from around £58k to £26k, and there were eventually no longer any staff and virtually no youth or children's work. It appears that the majority of the church membership lost confidence in the Vicar.

Local clergy report that over the same period there were arguments within the church for several years. It appears from reports that several of them considered Mr Andreyev as having an authoritarian and aggressively dictatorial leadership style, and as having the view, which he shared with them over a number of years, that pastors ought to be unquestioned benevolent dictators.

3. Vote of No Confidence

In October 2017, about 50 people from the church signed a letter to the Bishop of Derby (copying in the Archdeacon of Derby, the Bishop of Maidstone, and the Director of Church Society), expressing their "Vote of No Confidence" in the Revd Michael Andreyev. The reasons they gave for this were, in their words, his:

- Fundamental disagreements with successive youth leaders
- Bullying of the group leaders
- Aggressive and volatile behaviour
- Failure to trust
- Inability to work with people
- Presiding over a decline in all areas of ministry.

They added that, "We understand the severity of this decision and did not arrive at it hastily." I informed the CST Directors' meeting about this, since they (not me) handle our patronage church responsibilities. While CST have rights and responsibilities in terms of appointments and reorganisations within our patronage parishes, they do not however have any disciplinary powers or legal capacity to enable them to act for or against a congregation or Vicar in such a situation. In the Church of England's system of governance, this is the role of the Bishop and the diocesan staff. We had not been asked to get involved, only informed of the situation as patrons, who may need to be aware of the situation should a vacancy occur in the near future.

4. Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM)

Subsequent to this, a complaint of bullying was made by one of the former Churchwardens (one of the two reps who had been involved in his initial appointment) against Revd Andreyev, under the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM) in 2018, supported by evidence from members of the congregation. Selections of the paperwork for this CDM was sent, entirely unsolicited, by Mrs Andreyev to Church Society. These show that further detailed complaints were made not just against Revd Andreyev but also against Mrs Andreyev, alleging: her attempting to take control of Bible study groups and women's ministry; her "relentless pursuit" of members of the congregation whom she allegedly

“hassled and deluged with correspondence”; and ways in which she misrepresented the situation when she spoke at the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Mrs Andreyev responded to such claims by saying that it was as if the other person “was deliberately trying to create an impression that she was being hassled.” From the paperwork we were sent, it is clear that there were complaints of a “dictatorial” leadership style on the part of both of the Andreyevs, who “expected total obedience and loyalty” from people, and that Michael’s behaviour was considered “unacceptable and extreme” and even “intimidating.” We were not sent any paperwork by the Complainant herself.

After discussion with the Bishop of Derby as part of the CDM process, the churchwarden reluctantly decided not to put the decision to Tribunal for review — but only on the understanding that the Vicar would move on and not be part of future ministry at the church. Mr Andreyev announced to the church in June 2018 that this was his intention. He then said that he would not resign, but go on leave, until he had a new place to go. He was officially given 6 months leave, with a view to finding another job in that time.

CST became aware of this at their July 2018 meeting. In November 2018 and January 2019 we were told that the Vicar’s leave would probably be extended, providing he continued applying for jobs. In March 2019 we were told that another 3 months would be granted, and possibly a further 3 months after that if necessary. Dick Farr, Chairman of CST, told Bishop Rod Thomas that this ongoing situation was not good for the health of the parish and this period of uncertainty should be concluded. We heard in June 2019 that the diocese was trying to help the Vicar to find opportunities to minister in the diocese.

After more than 3 years on leave and, we understand, several job applications and the offer of a diocesan post, the Vicar has still not moved on. He remains on full pay and benefits in the Vicarage but has apparently played no active role in this or any church since the CDM complaint was voluntarily withdrawn.

5. Irretrievable Pastoral Breakdown

In November 2019, the PCC unanimously passed a resolution that there had been “irretrievable pastoral breakdown” between the congregation and the Vicar (in full awareness of the impact and import of such a phrase in church law). A serious breakdown of the pastoral relationship between an incumbent and the parishioners is construed in the Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) (Amendment) Measure 1993 as a reference to a situation where “the relationship between an incumbent and the parishioners of the parish in question is such as to impede the promotion in the parish of the whole mission of the Church of England, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.” Where there is such a breakdown, it is grounds for an inquiry into the pastoral situation between the Vicar and the parishioners which can lead to a tribunal, and the eventual removal of the incumbent.¹

¹ See *Halsbury’s Laws of England Volume 34: Ecclesiastical Law* (5th edition; eds. David Hay and Mohini Tulloch; London: LexisNexis, 2011), §484-502 (pp. 389-408).

The parish have not as yet been informed of any proceedings by the Bishop of Derby to remove the Vicar. On Twitter, however, Mrs Andreyev has suggested that in late 2020 the diocese made some kind of approach which allegedly would have involved the Vicar and his family leaving the Vicarage and asking the Vicar to sign a Non Disclosure Agreement (NDA), both of which he refused to do.

The Vicar disputes the PCC's version of events. In his June 2018 announcement to the congregation he said that he and his wife had "been on the receiving end of unacceptable behaviour from a small group in church" which had "taken its toll on us and on our health." At one point it appears that the Andreyevs went to a Police Station to report various elderly members of the congregation for bullying them. The Police investigated. They visited one of those members and, after being shown the CDM paperwork by them, they did not take it any further. The Vicar's wife has since repeatedly claimed on Twitter that she and her husband have been the victims of "mobbing", a form of bullying of an individual by a large group.

6. Church Society's Involvement

The Andreyevs later approached Dick Farr personally, not explicitly as Chairman of CS Trust to begin with but "as someone they had been told might be able to help." They explored together the possibility of a meeting with Bishop Rod Thomas so they could air their unhappiness towards Rod (who had been involved since at least 2017 with the Andreyevs, it seems). Bishop Rod apparently agreed to this, although in the end no acceptable mediator could be found to chair the meeting. They also discussed the possibilities of another job in the Church of England, along with someone from CPAS, but as time went on, they seemed to become resistant to talk of moving to another role.

Dick Farr spoke to them on the phone, and had an email from Mrs Andreyev on 7th October 2018 complaining about Rod Thomas's handling of things there, that he had allegedly condoned and colluded with bullying, harassment, and abusive behaviour by the parish towards the Vicar. She thought it would be "relevant to you as chair of Church Society Trust after we have left and there is a vacancy here, as it would not be good for a minister to come here without knowing the full facts." On Sunday 14th October 2018, Dick also visited the Andreyevs before preaching at St Peter's, and says that while there was talk of "bullying", he at no time thought this a safeguarding issue, and they never discussed the CDM. She had said in her email that she wanted the situation to be "resolved within our circles", and that Church Society needed to know what had happened so that, as Mrs Andreyev put it, "our reputation as a ministry couple is upheld and not affected in any way."

She also emailed William Taylor (then a member of the CS Council) on 9th October with this same reputation management issue in mind, concerned that some "clergy have been given the impression that we were not bullied out of the parish but that there was conflict/breakdown/disagreement, that we may have got things wrong, that we are leaving because we couldn't handle it etc... What this means is that things will need to be

corrected more publicly than I first thought would be necessary.” He replied the next day that, “From my point of view your fears of a widespread misunderstanding in ReNew circles are understandable but, at present, not well founded. Your email to me before the weekend was the first substantive communication to me on what has been going on.”

Mrs Andreyev also telephoned Paul Darlington (a member of the CS Council), claiming that there was an emergency and she needed to speak to him immediately about it. He was having a rare evening meal with his widowed mother and sister away from home, but the urgency of the message he received meant he phoned her back straight away. She wanted to make sure he was not “misinformed about what is going on”. She went on to make various accusations against several people which she thought he needed to know about. He reports that “As the length of the call went on it was evident that this was not an emergency and it was easily something that could have waited until the next day or beyond. I suggested this to KA [Kate Andreyev] given my circumstances that evening. KA was unwilling to offer me this grace.” He was clear that he could not judge the situation in Stapenhill and that CS and CST had no authority in the matter, but others who did were already involved and engaged with it.

Mrs Andreyev also telephoned Jason Ward, a local clergy friend of the Andreyevs and someone they knew to be on Church Society Council, who says he was “harassed for further action” (having had several phone calls from her previously, in which he says he was “very careful not to agree or disagree with her about all her accusations, since I was not in a position to verify or deny what she said, or take action on it.” She was “highly agitated” and “aggressive” on the phone. He tried to sympathise with her, but was accused of “re-victimising her”.

7. A Discussion at Shallowford House

The Church Society Council met at Shallowford House in Lichfield Diocese for a two day residential meeting 16th-17th October 2018. Bishop Rod Thomas had been asked (for the first and only time) to join them for part of this, to discuss the work of the Society and our engagement with the Church of England, since he is Honorary President of CS. While he was there, after the Council discussions were over, a small group who were aware of some of the things happening in Stapenhill discussed this with him (Dick Farr, William Taylor, Paul Darlington, Lee Gatiss, and Mark Burkill). This was not an official CS or CST meeting and there were no official decisions recorded. William Taylor wrote a letter to the Andreyevs afterwards on 24th October, to again reassure them that “the issues you describe really have not been widely, or even moderately, ‘discussed’ in our ReNew circles.” The vast majority were “completely unaware” of it all and “there is certainly no sense whatsoever of ‘pointing of fingers’ or gossip or any such thing. Quite the reverse.” He also told her that the group had met at Shallowford “as you requested”, and had shown nothing but the deepest concern for the Andreyevs, though most knew very little of the details. Afterwards, Mrs Andreyev emailed and telephoned a number of people for details of what had been said.

8. Telephone calls with the Director and Chairman

In December 2018, Mrs Andreyev phoned Mark Burkill (at the time, Chairman of CS Council) 2 or 3 times. He spent a lot of time listening to what she said. However when she urged him to “address the behaviour” of various people, he said he believed that he could not do this unless he was given the opportunity of speaking face to face with all the people involved.

On Wednesday 26th June 2019 at 19:55 I was phoned out of the blue by Mrs Andreyev as I was about to serve up dinner to my family. I said I had 5 minutes now, otherwise she could ring back another time if it was going to take longer (as she had not said why she was phoning or where she had obtained my mobile number). The phonecall lasted 42 minutes. The main issue she wanted to discuss seemed to be how Derby diocese were allegedly complicit in bullying towards her and her husband. She claimed Rod Thomas had written something in her husband’s safeguarding file which had prevented him getting another job, so could I have a word with various people about this and sort things out for them. Mrs Andreyev said that her husband’s file was full of disparaging comments about him. They had a Union representative involved, who had apparently said various things the diocese had done were illegal. She seemed to think that because she told me that the Archdeacon and Bishop did not like conservative evangelicals, that I would therefore intervene. I said repeatedly that it was not my place as the Director of Church Society to do that and that she was overestimating my authority and ability if she thought I could deal with things when the Bishop of Maidstone, the Bishop of Derby, her union representative, and others could not, and she had ruled out an appeal to those over them. I had to say repeatedly that the proper course of action was to have recourse to the duly constituted authorities, whether the Bishops and Archbishops of the Church of England, or diocesan and national safeguarding teams — not to ask me as the safeguarding officer of a parachurch organisation to deal with it behind the scenes for her (she was ringing me having got my phone number from the CS safeguarding policy online, it seemed, where I was listed as the contact).

I said I was not the person to talk to about safeguarding issues (such as bullying and abuse) in individual CST parishes or about complaints against bishops, but this was dealt with by the diocese and, failing that, by the Archbishop. She came across as dismissive of attempts at mediation which had been tried and/or suggested by others such as William Taylor and Dick Farr. I said I could sympathise and empathise with how things felt from her perspective, and how I could understand what she was saying. But she very definitely wanted me to feel responsibility for the situation and therefore to address it for her, including the reference that had been written in her husband’s file by a bishop. I encouraged her (and her husband, who I did not speak to) to take things up with the new Bishop of Derby who may be able to approach things with a fresh pair of eyes. She continued to pressure me into doing something for her. I continued to listen but not to judge or express a judgment on what she was alleging about various people, since I was only hearing one side of the story and it was inappropriate for me to investigate the complexities of it all when it was being handled by the proper authorities.

She continued to push, and I felt I had no choice but to agree to speak to people she had named about how they had “colluded” with “emotional abuse” against her by “doing nothing”, or doing the wrong things, and to get back to her. I made her aware that she was making me feel very uncomfortable and seemed to be “pressurising me in a very intense and repetitive, resilient way” but this was dismissed as “sinister” and as me bullying her, and that if only I had done what she asked sooner the phonecall could have ended more quickly. At all times throughout the call I tried to follow the official Church of England safeguarding advice for dealing with such conversations: Receive - Reassure - React - Record - Refer.

After this phonecall, I did contact various people about the situation, but not so as to interfere, only to pass on the concerns she had raised. In July 2019, she began to claim on social media that she had “raised an issue of abuse with some on the Church Society Council/Trust. The responses I received were in themselves abusive and bullying.” I referred this all on to Derby Diocesan Safeguarding, because of her repeated use of the language of “abuse” against her, because they and not me were the competent authority to deal with such allegations. Derby diocese were also one of those organisations/individuals whom Mrs Andreyev had mentioned in her phonecall that she wanted me to speak to, because of the mistakes she said they had made.

I also referred myself and the situation to Ely Diocesan Safeguarding (my diocese) to make them aware of the allegations of “abuse and bullying” against me. Dick Farr, Andrew Towner, and Paul Darlington have also done the same, referring themselves to their diocesan safeguarding departments (with, I believe, all receiving a “clean bill of health”). I told Ely Diocesan Safeguarding how Mrs Andreyev’s interactions with me felt “intimidating, threatening, and deeply unfair.” I explained more to Ely Diocese about this when my Permission to Officiate (PTO) was up for renewal at the end of the year, and requested that they also contact Derby Diocese and look into the allegations against me before deciding on my PTO. My PTO was renewed as expected, without any expressed reservations. The Safeguarding officer in Derby Diocese advised the safeguarding officer in Ely Diocese that “he is not aware of any safeguarding concerns arising from the situation that the safeguarding team at the Diocese of Ely would need to be aware of in relation to your Permission to Officiate here.” The conclusion was, “While I recognise that this is a stressful and difficult situation for all concerned, on the basis of the available information, the information you have referred does not meet the threshold for management under House of Bishop’s Policy and Practice Guidance relating to safeguarding.”

I explained to the Derby Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor that in my understanding, “Because Church Society is a voluntary association, then any clergy she [Mrs Andreyev] is complaining about have been serving in a voluntary capacity, and so her recourse against the alleged abuse and bullying she says she has received from our volunteers (as I understand it) is via Derby diocese via e.g. diocesan policies and people / CDMs / Bishop’s licenses and so on. It would be very helpful to know if this is how you also see this.” I received no reply to this point, despite asking a number of times. Ely Diocese have

several times recommended that I seek legal advice (i.e. for libel) and/or report Mrs Andreyev's continual behaviour towards me and others to the Police, and gave me contact details for a counsellor I could see to talk about how this was affecting me.

I reported back to Mrs Andreyev via email on 12th July that I had been in touch with the people she had named and complained about "to let them know your thoughts on it and urge them to do what they can towards a resolution." I again explained that "I am not the competent authority, so to speak, to take this further, nor is it my job to judge or investigate the claims you have made (according to current Church of England safeguarding procedures, by which I must abide). If you did wish to take it further to look for a resolution that you feel is not forthcoming from the current process, I think the best people to contact, as I said in our call, are the [Archbishop of Canterbury](#), or the Church of England's [National Safeguarding Team](#)." (With links to the contact details for those.) She was unhappy with my response, and also wrote several emails to Andrew Towner (now Chairman of CS Council) to complain about me.

I replied to her again on 24th July, after two further emails from her, telling her that the situation had caused me a huge amount of stress. I also said that:

"I may have made a mistake. If so, I apologise. The advice and training I have been given is that it is not my place to judge or investigate allegations of abuse. They must be reported to the appropriate authority. As I understand the law, the appropriate place to report allegations of abuse against you by Church Society volunteers is to the local diocesan safeguarding officer. You asked me in our phonecall to be in touch with all those you had mentioned as not dealing well with your situation in the parish (which was what you spent the bulk of our conversation talking about), which included Derby Diocese. This is exactly what I did. If I hadn't contacted them then I would have failed in my promise to you.... I am personally finding this emotionally distressing and alarming on a daily basis, being anxious every day that I will turn on my computer to find more emails and tweets and Facebook posts and comments on blogs with allegations and accusations trying to somehow intimidate me or others in Church Society into some kind of action. I only ever wanted to be of help to you and to Mike in all of this, and I am disappointed that my efforts have not been acceptable or sufficient. I am sorry if this is due to my ignorance of due procedure in some way or to some kind of misunderstanding. Obviously I will reflect with others on how I could have done better. I will also continue to pray for a satisfactory solution to all these difficulties."

Mrs Andreyev wrote me a long email on 24th July 2019, copied to Andrew Towner and the Derby Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. In this she complained that I had not also referred her complaints to Rochester Diocese (because Dick Farr was in that diocese), and London Diocese (William Taylor), and Southwark Diocese (for Jonathan Fletcher, although he was never actually mentioned in our phonecall, so this was puzzling as he was not a member of CS Council or a Director of CST).

Twice we were emailed in July by Canon David Banting, the Bishop of Maidstone's Pastoral Advisor, saying of this situation: "Do not get involved and do not get drawn in. This has been going on for well over a year now and is in the hands of the Bishops and their advisors."

9. Online engagement

Social Media in 2019

On 14th July 2019, I discovered a hidden comment by Mrs Andreyev on my personal Facebook page (i.e. the comment was made, and remains available to the account holders, but is hidden from the view of others). I did not know before this that comments on Facebook even could be hidden, and I certainly had not done it myself. Given the context, it felt like a (literally) veiled threat to use her public platform to make serious accusations. The comment was repeated three times, and hidden, and said, "I raised an issue of abuse with some of the Church Society Council/Trust. The responses I received were in themselves abusive and bullying. I am not the first person to have experienced this." As I commented to Ros Clarke at the time, "I unhid one of the 3 comments on mine, to screenshot it, but then Facebook wouldn't let me hide it again. So I've had to delete it." I tried dozens of times to find a way to hide the comment, and I could not do it.

On 15th July 2019, more identical comments to this were made by Mrs Andreyev on a Facebook post (about Jonathan Fletcher) from two weeks prior, and also somehow hidden, on Church Society's own Facebook page. I checked, and this was not done by me or anyone within Church Society. Nothing in the Page's Activity Log for that day indicates that CS had hidden any comments.

On 19th July 2019, a longer, more detailed public post from Mrs Andreyev was made on the CS Facebook page. Ros Clarke and I agreed it should not be deleted. However, the whole conversation on that post was later deleted for different reasons (because ungodly speculative comments were made by others about a different case, we decided to delete the thread). Mrs Andreyev also opened a Twitter account (possibly two?), on which she presents herself as "Survivor. Raising awareness of abuse in the Renew/Church Society constituency." As part of a thread on Church Society, she noted that her tweets had disappeared after she had said, "Church Society needs to tackle abusive behaviour among its own leaders first", saying, "My tweets disappeared strangely". It is not possible to delete tweets made from a different Twitter account. So obviously we had not hidden or deleted her comments there.

In July 2019 there is another post where she says "I wonder how long this will stay up." It is clear that we did not delete it, but it appears she wanted people to think we would do so. In response to comments on July 19th, we made a public statement on how allegations of abuse could be properly reported, to dioceses and/or the Police if necessary, giving details on how to do this:

These allegations and the whole situation at Stapenhill have long been in the hands of the bishops of Derby and Maidstone, their advisors and safeguarding teams. Therefore, it would be inappropriate for us to comment further here.

Anyone who wishes to make a comment or express a concern is encouraged to contact the appropriate authorities, e.g. Derby Diocese safeguarding team via this link. <https://derby.anglican.org/en/safeguarding.html>

And also, when comments continued and the accountability of CS Council and CST leaders was questioned, we added this, publicly, on Facebook:

It is always a deep sadness when relationships break down within the church. Social media is not usually the best place to address this, or to handle allegations of abuse. Many members of Church Society have spent many hours in private conversation and via email over more than a year seeking reconciliation and progress on these matters. We realise you are living through an extremely hard situation, and are very sad about that.

Church Society cannot comment on safeguarding investigations being undertaken by Diocesan Safeguarding Teams. We, and our volunteers, are not privy to all the details of such investigations, nor is it our place to judge or investigate claims independently of the Police and the proper diocesan structures, or to presume on the outcome of such investigations that there has or has not been abuse. Allegations of harmful advice given privately by people who serve on our committees in a voluntary capacity are rightly handled by the safeguarding team in the diocese where the abuse is alleged to have been suffered, and when we have heard of such allegations we have passed on the information to the correct authorities immediately.

All of the specific allegations here (both those regarding alleged abuse in the church and those against members of Church Society who were asked for advice) are being handled by the Bishop of Derby and the Bishop of Maidstone with the involvement of their advisors, plus the Archdeacon, Diocesan Registrar, and Safeguarding Advisor in Derby Diocese within a wider context of issues being dealt with by senior clergy and Diocesan staff. Any appeal against their decisions or processes can be made to the Archbishop of Canterbury, or to the National Safeguarding Team of the Church of England via <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church-safeguarding>.

As a charity, Church Society is accountable to the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Serious complaints against Church Society can therefore be made to the Charity Commission via <https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/> if anyone so wishes. The Police can also be contacted about allegations of harm and abuse; Derbyshire Constabulary can be contacted via <https://www.derbyshire.police.uk>.

The members and Directors of Church Society Trust are accountable to and appointed by the Church Society Council. Members of Church Society Council and our Honorary Officers are accountable to and elected by the membership of Church Society at our Annual General Meeting, in accordance with our Articles of Association. Details can be found on our website at www.churchsociety.org.

We pray regularly for all the churches in which we have a patronage interest, and for their ministers (and families).

Mrs Andreyev claimed on Facebook that "Trying to direct people to Derby Diocese appears to me to be a way of trying to bully and harass us further rather than dealing with the issues." She then recounted the issues as she saw them in her church and added, "I would love it if some of the Church Society leadership would do what is right before the Lord and would tackle some of these things." On Twitter the same day she claimed that "I tried to report abuse to Church Society leaders and got more abuse." Two days later she also said, "It is appalling to describe the abuse we have suffered as 'relationships break[ing] down in the church.'" It is not clear why that was thought to be appalling. She began in further Facebook comments and comments on blogposts by others, to call not just the behaviour of her congregation "abuse" but also to describe the conversations she had initiated with Church Society members about it, "abusive" and "bullying".

Mrs Andreyev began to tweet along these lines further, involving members of the press, bloggers, and various others by tagging them and interacting with them. On 2nd September 2019 she accused CS/CST of having gone along with abusive behaviour from Rod Thomas and being complicit with it, and being "linked to JF [Jonathan Fletcher] too." More comments followed throughout September. On 8th October she replied to a prayer request on the CS Facebook page to say, "and [pray] for those on the Council who have behaved abusively or condoned abuse to repent and put things right." Further comments turning our daily Facebook prayer requests into opportunities to make accusations against CS/CST on entirely different subjects followed.

On 24th Oct 2019, having realised we needed to formulate a specifically public policy on how we would handle negative social media comments and complaints, the new [CS social media policy](#) was posted online. Mrs Andreyev responded to this with the same sort of claims, that she and her husband had been abused by CS/CST leaders. She also claimed that social media is "one of the very few ways in which Church Society leaders can experience some accountability". CS staff are, of course, directly accountable to the CS Council and have disciplinary procedures written into their contracts, while CS Council members are accountable to the membership who elect them each year at the annual AGM (points which were made publicly). The Associate Director of Church Society, Ros Clarke then (and not before) hid some of Mrs Andreyev's comments on posts, that made unsubstantiated allegations of "abuse" against CS staff and leaders which were inappropriate in that forum, and warned her that she was in breach of the new policy (which enabled us to hide such comments, now that we knew such a thing was possible).

On 25th October, Mrs Andreyev claimed that “interaction with @ChurchSociety has to be on message”, which is not correct, as we often have people disagreeing with our blogposts and social media output without them being banned or hidden, though others do this without making repeated and frequent accusations that CS is abusive, condones abuse, and colludes with abuse. Even notifications of reviews of children’s books on our website were turned into opportunities for sarcastic comments about CS (4th November 2019).

On 5th November, Mrs Andreyev claimed on Facebook that, “My husband and I have suffered abuse from leaders in the CofE conservative evangelical network. Those involved and complicit include Rod Thomas, William Taylor, Dick Farr, Lee Gatiss, Jonathan Fletcher, Paul Darlington, David Banting. I have suffered trauma. Others are aware but cannot be bothered to do what is right.” On 30th December she retweeted our daily prayer request (“Please pray today for those with mental health problems and those who care for them”) by saying “And those who have been made ill as a result of abuse from those in the JF/ReNew/@ChurchSociety/lwerne clique.” The loaded language of “abuse” was consistently used to describe the conversations she had initiated with members of CS/CST.

Social Media in 2020

There was further ongoing social media activity, attacking staff and Council members of CS/CST, and “trolling” our social media output. Internet trolling, according to Wikipedia, is “posting inflammatory and digressive, extraneous, or off-topic messages in an online community (such as a newsgroup, forum, chat room, or blog), with the intent of provoking readers into displaying emotional responses and normalizing tangential discussion. This is typically for the troll’s amusement, or to achieve a specific result such as disrupting a rival’s online activities or manipulating a political process” (Wikipedia.com, 27th April 2021).

On 14th January 2020 on Facebook, Mrs Andreyev suggested that, “There is a lot of self interest among senior leaders. Almost as if they have been bought off.” On 30th January she retweeted our blogpost from Justin Humphreys to say that “Church Society/ReNew/lwerne are not a safe place, and especially not for the vulnerable.”

On 6th February 2020, Mrs Andreyev commented on a post on the CS Facebook page, making vague and unsubstantiated accusations about the actions of Bishop Rod Thomas, who as well as being a bishop is the Honorary President of CS. We discussed whether we could simply turn off commenting on our Facebook page altogether, but Facebook did not allow it. Only at that point did Ros Clarke hide the discussion and ban Kate Andreyev from commenting further on the CS Facebook page. Mrs Andreyev claimed that several other people had contacted her to say they had also been banned by CS. On 25th September 2020 she was still repeating this idea, tweeting “@ChurchSociety’s web page asks for feedback on their articles... So why do people keep telling me they’ve been banned for asking questions or disagreeing?” However, at that time only one other person had been banned in this way, for consistent negative “trolling” activity on our

posts, along with two impersonal “bot” / fake accounts which shared inappropriate material. That remains the case today.

On 7th February 2020 she responded to a tweet which shared my scholarly article on Anglican ecclesiology in *Evangelical Quarterly* by commenting, “A pity Lee is complicit in abuse, shows no repentance and seeks to silence me and dissemble. I am not sure that I could trust anything written by such a person.” Other social media comments by her also attacked me that month.

Her social media output has escalated. Often it simply repeats earlier accusations, saying the same things again and again. Sometimes new claims are made, such as when she claims Church Society “delights in being harsh and almost brutal”, and are not truthful (12th March 2020) or have been “unscrupulous and dishonest, and have not stood up for the gospel” (13th March 2020), or “Evangelical witness is lost because of the dishonest and abusive behaviour of Church Society leaders” (27th March 2020), or “Power hungry Church Society leaders lie, abuse & trample on others” (27th March 2020). On 9th April 2020 she shared a photograph of the cover of my book *Fight Valiantly* in which she had crossed out the word “Fight” and written “Fudge” over the top of it. Other attempts at satire include an image labelled “Septic Tank Farr” on 10th October 2020 (now deleted) and, the same day, a drain cleaner called “Refresh” (poking fun at a CS-FWS conference title). On 21st May 2020, she asserted that “Church Society Council is definitely bad for mental health”.

Mrs Andreyev attempts to get other leaders, especially on Twitter, to do her bidding, just as she did with us by phone. E.g. on 3rd July 2020 she berated John Stevens of FIEC on Twitter, “So then, will you listen to me about abuse from senior ReNew and @ChurchSociety leaders, take it seriously & tackle them?” On 14th July 2020, she again challenged John Stevens in a similar way, alongside Lee McMunn, Glen Scrivener, Chris Green, and Sam Allberry. On the same day she tweeted, “Complementarian guys who have anything to do with the Church Society/ReNew constituency, you are fast losing credibility. I thought being a Christian man was about taking the initiative? Are you willing to work with abusers?” She retweeted a similar statement she had made 23 minutes prior and tagged John Stevens, Chris Green, Sam Allberry, me, Pete Nicholas, Pete Matthew, Glen Scrivener, Steven Kneale, and Stephen Watkinson. Later, in September, Marcus Honeysett was also urged to “take on the abuses going on in the senior leadership of the ReNew/@ChurchSociety constituency”. A week later she urged Justin Humphreys of 31:8 not to speak at the ReNew conference because that would be, “So painful for those of us who have been treated abusively by these men. Those who really care about safe churches will not share a platform with these men.” And other similar statements for at least the next half an hour. (Justin Humphreys did subsequently pull out of speaking at the ReNew conference.)

On 28th July 2020, Mrs Andreyev replied to one of our daily prayer tweets to say “Pray for repentance for abuse among Church Society/ReNew constituency senior leaders.” Two days later she called this constituency a “cult” that was “rife with abuse”. On 4th

August she said "an unloving & abusive culture of the inner circle prevails in the upper echelons of @ChurchSociety/ReNew." The next day, "abusers (& their protégés) run riot in para church organisations and networks e.g. Iwerne, ReNew, Church Society etc." She claimed on 8th August 2020 that her husband might not have had to look for another job if it were not for "the abusive and dishonest behaviour of the President of Church Society and Council members." She also claimed, "I have experienced hate rather than love from Church Society / ReNew leaders" on 7th September 2020. On 24th October 2020, she claimed "@ChurchSociety leaders kick people when they have already been wounded."

Social Media in 2021

On 4th January 2021, Mrs Andreyev berated the newspaper *Evangelicals Now* on Twitter for publishing articles by me (I had a regular column), because of the allegations she had made about me. She claimed on 2nd February 2021 that "the work of Church Society is not gospel work/true Christian ministry as long as the abusive and dishonest behaviour of CS leaders goes unaddressed." She continued to tweet about the issues to *Evangelicals Now* and members of its board. On 8th February she seemed to be trying to misrepresent the issues involved in her husband's CDM as merely flimsy complaints from a few petty parishioners: "The CDM was created to deal with SERIOUS misconduct. NOT, 'the vicar is not doing what I tell him', 'the vicar preached on the Cross', 'I didn't like the vicar's tone', 'I would prefer a different vicar' or the whim of a bishop or archdeacon." She failed to mention the repeated allegations of bullying, aggressiveness, and volatility against her husband which had actually caused the CDM complaints against him.

On 15th February she claimed "@ChurchSociety running to lawyers to silence the truth" . This is not correct. We had not engaged any outside lawyers with respect to this case, nor would we attempt to "silence the truth". On 17th February she claimed that "Andrew Towner has very much been part of the bullying towards me, as written correspondence shows and he has lied to me." Mr Towner's letter to CS members, reprinted in *Evangelicals Now*, was "written to suggest that it's really the allegations that are the serious problem, rather than any behaviour on the part of the leaders concerned." (On 19th March she described the letter as "defamatory".) The only acceptable viewpoint seems to be to agree with her accusations, as fact, and not bother investigating to see if they are true. To even suggest that an investigation or hearing an alternative perspective might be desirable, was dismissed: "They should, if they are Christians, be owning up to this and repenting rather than commissioning a review", she claimed. She claimed the sentence in that members' letter "We have agreed to appoint a suitable external examiner" ... "gives the impressions that there has been proper agreement and discussion with me. There has not." Actually, the context shows that the "we" being referred to here was clearly the CS Council, not Mrs Andreyev: "I'm writing to update **you** on progress with respect to **your** complaint against Church Society. We have agreed to appoint a suitable external reviewer, but the person we had approached is now unable to take this forward, due to their personal circumstances. We recognise the need for an independent external investigation to give full weight to **your** allegations, and are working to make this happen." She suggests that the various people considered in previous years as mediators

were actually suggestions from us as independent external reviewers, which I cannot agree accurately represents the situation.

On 18th February 2021, Mrs Andreyev published a letter she had written to Andrew Towner. Part of this claimed that he had misled her and been dishonest about CS's engagement of Alison Bennett of Fly Higher Coaching to mediate. Andrew Towner had said that Alison Bennett might recommend certain leaders should resign from CS, whereas Mrs Andreyev claims that Ms Bennett said "she was there to explain to the Church Society leaders in a positive way how to make improvements in the future." These things hardly seem incompatible, and do not indicate any intention to deceive. On 19th February she also published a reply in which Mr Towner said CS's desire was "to apologise for whatever we have done wrong and to repent in changed behaviour", but attacked this as insincere and as "gaslighting." Many tweets around this time also attack *Evangelicals Now* for apparently being "the mouthpiece" of Church Society. Editor of *Evangelicals Now*, David Baker, was told "Stop bullying us" because the paper had said "No allegations have been proven thus far." This was "patently untrue" and "Someone is lying", she claimed. EN was simply "printing lies & facilitating bullying by @ChurchSociety."

On 22nd February, Mrs Andreyev tweeted of Church Society, "The issue there is that you have a group of senior leaders who care about nothing except themselves and their power and reputation. They are indifferent ... to the suffering of people who have been bullied." Of course, we were not indifferent to the suffering reported by members of the congregation at St Peter's, Stapenhill who claimed to have been bullied over years by the Andreyevs, nor to any suffering of the Andreyevs who, in response, reported the opposite. But it was never our place to investigate and sort out this situation behind the scenes, especially when many people in the Diocese and the Bishop of Maidstone and his staff (and others) were already deeply involved, and told us to stay out of it. However, Mrs Andreyev claimed that Church Society had abused the power imbalance between her and CS and that "Of course all Council members are complicit as they're going along with the others." However, CS has made no public statement about the Andreyevs or the situation in the church at Stapenhill to counter the many public statements made by Mrs Andreyev, despite frequent and strong provocation. This was out of concern and care and compassion for those involved in the situation, and respect for proper process and Anglican polity.

On 5th March 2021, Mrs Andreyev tweeted, "I want a full, independent investigation into the ministries & conduct of the senior leaders of the ReNew ChurchSociety constituency. Much broader than just their treatment of me, so that anyone adversely affected by them or concerned about their conduct can give evidence." She also had repeated contact with Jake Eggertsen, Niv Lobo, and Tom Woolford from the CS Council, via Twitter and email. She then complained on Twitter if they did not immediately answer her questions. On 9th March she concluded, "Even this last month, @ChurchSociety handling of my situation is dire... public misrepresentation; refusal to answer vital, simple questions; dealt with by those complicit". Tom Woolford replied on Twitter to say she had misrepresented him,

but she characterised this as “@ChurchSociety council members continue to try to smear me”, and a number of times she demanded answers to questions about who had voted on things at CS Council. “If senior Christian leaders are shown to have repeatedly lied, abused power, denigrated others, misused safeguarding processes and been misogynistic”, she tweeted, “have they disqualified themselves from Christian ministry? @ChurchSociety”. There were further calls for others to get involved and speak up on her behalf to sort issues out, and seeming frustration that others were not doing this: “You are okay with me being ‘burned at the stake’... But I’m not okay with your lack of support” (19th March 2021), and “So, if you’re not ok with @ChurchSociety’s treatment of me, please speak up publicly” (22nd March 2021).

Niv Lobo, a member of CS Council, was publicly berated on Twitter for (e.g.) going along “with those who are abusive”. Mrs Andreyev also emailed him about her complaints. He resigned from CS Council on 30th March, giving as one of his reasons: “I have found myself accused of going along with bullying and abuse. I don't think those accusations are fair with respect to Church Society; I think that the situation with the Andreyevs is painful, messy and that--from all I can tell, which is very little--it is certainly not as one-sided as social media accusations portray. For all that, I still don't feel qualified to judge the situation. I feel remaining on council I’m pitched into a situation beyond my understanding and my conscience feels torn up by every encounter... My wife saw what was being said to me and about me on Twitter and it really upset her. I don't want her, or my friends, to be in that situation. I've felt put in a situation with challenges to my integrity, faced with questions I can't answer and accusations of complicity. It wounds my conscience to the point where I can't continue. Let me stress, again, that this is a conscience issue, rather than an indictment of anyone else on Council.”

These are just a sampling of the main highlights of the social media engagement involved in this case. As of the date of this report, I have over 1000 screenshots of social media posts by Mrs Andreyev which make various claims and comments about me and Church Society, and she has repeatedly engaged in online behaviour which I consider threatening and harassing towards members of CS Council. However, despite claims that we have sought “to bully and silence her”, to this day we have not blocked her from the Church Society account on Twitter. She repeatedly turns our social media daily prayer requests, or sharing of our blogposts on completely different subjects, into opportunities for her to complain about CS/CST and individuals within it. Most recently she did this several times with a series of tweets accusing CS of “spiritual abuse” and “gaslighting” on 16th July 2021 when we shared some resources from our blog on Twitter, and she replied to our daily prayer request tweet on 20th July saying what was needed was repentance from members of CS Trust. She also repeatedly re-shares her own blogpost from SurvivingChurch with its various accusations.

As of July 2021, Mrs Andreyev has 473 followers on her Twitter account. Her publicly-readable profile identifies her as “Survivor. Raising awareness of abuse in the ReNew/ Church Society constituency”, and provides a link to her kateeandreyev.com blogpost allegations (which she also retweets every so often, such as on 3rd July 2021 when she

said that “It would be good to have the decibel level raised over this.”). She continues to tweet at others whom she considers are “keeping quiet in the face of extensive wrongdoing by senior leaders” or are “mute in the face of evil behaviour from the senior guys”, saying “I’m waiting for repentance from those in ministry in the ReNew / @ChurchSociety constituency for not speaking up or holding the senior leaders to account for their abusive behaviour” (several tweets on 20th July 2021).

10. Kate Andreyev’s *SurvivingChurch* blogpost

On 5th December 2019, Mrs Andreyev wrote a c.1400 word blogpost for *Surviving Church*, a blog “exploring abuse in the Church”, and added to it a nine page letter with further details of her allegations against various people including Rod Thomas and members of CS and CST. These ranged from charges of “abusive behaviour and dishonesty” by Rod Thomas, and that CS had colluded with bullying. She alleged that I was threatening, aggressive, and “told her off” for delaying my dinner (which is not the case). She claims that her children were “harassed” and “assaulted” at St Peter’s church by an elderly lady. She claims that the CDM against her husband was “finally dismissed by the Diocese” (which is not what actually happened). She accuses various people of meeting and talking together about the situation in the church — which it was not only their job to be doing, but which she also explicitly asked them to do on many occasions. She also accuses various ministers of misusing and misapplying scripture, and claims she and her husband have been “ganged up on”.

Dick Farr is accused of wanting to speak to Michael Andreyev, the Vicar, and not just his wife, about the situation in the church. Mrs Andreyev was particularly concerned with Dick Farr because of the details she recounts of her conversations with him, and so attempted to persuade all of those organising the Derby Bible Conference for 2020 not to invite him as their speaker, providing that nine page detailed letter as evidence (though much of it seems entirely irrelevant to that purpose). The Bible Conference committee responded that, “After very careful, and prayerful, consideration at our committee meeting this morning, we have decided to stand by our invitation to Dick to speak at our event. Whilst we realise that this is not the decision you were looking for, this decision was not taken lightly and was the unanimous view of our committee.”

11. Claims of abuse allegedly confirmed by leading experts

Mrs Andreyev has made repeated claims online that certain recognised authorities had agreed with her assessment that she had been bullied and abused by the church in Stapenhill, by CS/CST, and others. However, when we contacted those authorities to ask how they had come to such a conclusion and on what basis, they replied to say that they had not conducted any investigation of the facts nor delivered any verdicts.

For example, Mrs Andreyev claimed in various online forums, that the safeguarding organisation 31:8 had pronounced CS to be abusive. But Justin Humphreys of 31:8 assured me that they had not undertaken a review or investigation or anything of that nature concerning the very complex situation in Stapenhill and had not made any comments or determinations about CS and our handling of these issues. He had

interacted with Mrs Andreyev online but was usually careful not to prejudge things because he didn't want to give an endorsement of her views when he didn't know the situation.

When Mrs Andreyev published on Twitter something she claimed Paul Darlington had said to her, the Chairman of 31:8, Andrew Pierce, had declared (on Twitter) that it was "an example of spiritual abuse." However, when it was pointed out to 31:8 that misrepresenting and publicly shaming someone who was not even on Twitter to defend himself was not great for their reputation of impartiality and care, someone else from 31:8 made a written apology for the offence and upset this had caused to me and to Church Society (although Mr Pierce himself did not personally apologise to us or to Revd Darlington). They confirmed that the statement about Revd Darlington's alleged comment being spiritual abuse "in no way reflected an organisational view or position". Sadly, they did not make a public correction or apology.

In a similar way, Mrs Andreyev claimed on Twitter a number of times that highly-regarded expert Dr Diane Langberg had advised her that Church Society were abusing their power in a disturbing way and should not be engaged with. E.g. on 5th November 2019 on our Facebook page, she responded to us posting details of the Church as a Refuge Conference by saying "Diane Langberg advised me that the behaviour of some of the Church Society Council towards me and my husband was an abuse of power and that she found it disturbing. She advised me not to engage with the process that they were suggesting as it would cause further harm." This was repeated on Twitter the next day. However, when I wrote to Dr Langberg to ask about this, I was told by her assistant who spoke to her about it, that she "has not been involved with any church in the UK and does not have any idea what you are referring to. She is so sorry that you have had to carry this burden. Sometimes people hear a talk or read something she has written and say things as if she herself has been involved." After a follow up email, Dr Langberg herself also replied that she had no way of knowing what had actually happened and "nor do I render such judgment." She was grateful that we had contacted her for clarification rather than simply assuming that she had indeed given such a judgment on our case, as reported. She did not, however, make a public correction or comment.

Further, Mrs Andreyev claimed on Facebook (7th May 2020) that she had spoken with Zena Marshall in the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team, and that she "fully accepted that what had happened to us was abuse — psychological and emotional, gaslighting, bullying and mobbing... She also took the view that the behaviour that we have experienced is totally unacceptable, that discipline would be appropriate for the perpetrators, and that there was no place for it in the church... as the NST [National Safeguarding Team] acknowledge, the way that we have been treated by William Taylor, Rod Thomas, Dick Farr, Lee Gatiss, Andrew Towner, Paul Darlington, Jonathan Fletcher etc is indeed a recognised form of abuse." She also began a discussion in a Facebook group thus:

Straw poll: Whom would you trust over whether behaviour qualifies as abuse?

a) Church of England diocesan safeguarding team

b) Diane Langberg (clinical psychologist with 35 years of working with trauma victims and clergy)

c) Thirtyoneeight and other respected safeguarding organisations.

However, I also wrote directly to Zena Marshall to discuss this report of her supposed views, and to ask if it was true that the NST had had an investigation and made such judgments about us, telling Mrs Andreyev about them (but not us). She said "I would like to clarify that the National Safeguarding Team are not investigating you." She also reiterated the advice I had been given by my Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor in relation to seeking legal advice, that is advice about having been libelled. I also asked the NST to consider "whether there is something about the process of hearing complaints and allegations which is not quite right, and has led to such egregious claims online. I was taught, for example, in recent Church of England safeguarding courses, that one should not express opinions about or promise to investigate such allegations when they are made to us, but only receive and listen to them carefully and respectfully, before referring them on to the proper authorities for investigation if necessary. It may be that you have been misrepresented by Mrs Andreyev. In which case it is important that you know this. You may wish perhaps to seek to disabuse her of the idea that you have made a judgment in her very public case, or discourage her from repeating on social media such claims that you have done." I do not know if this was ever followed up by Zena Marshall or the NST. Sadly, they did not make a public correction or comment.

12. Detailed response to accusations made on KateEAndreyev.com

On 24th February 2021, Mrs Andreyev started her own website and posted a range of her accusations and allegations on it. She said: "I would like Church Society (and the individuals involved) to respond to the following points." Many of the points have been made in repeated tweets and Facebook posts over the last few years. I will quote her points (without correction of typos etc), and try to answer each one in detail.

1. The power differential involved in the situation is huge. Kate Andreyev is one individual without a leadership position or a large platform. Church Society is a national Christian organisation. Church Society has a large platform, staff, members, support from other powerful Christian leaders and organisations, made up of those who are Christian leaders. It is not right for Church Society or its leaders to portray themselves as those with equal power or indeed the victim or weaker party in this situation.

I am not aware of any statement where Church Society has portrayed itself in this way. We are very much aware of the differences alluded to.

2. When Michael and Kate were abroad on leave in June 2017, Bishop Rod Thomas attended a PCC meeting at the church, although he had not been invited by Michael as the incumbent. Michael and Kate found out about this by accident. Rod then said that he would carry out a 'process', but did not give clear answers or explanations to Michael or Kate's questions about this. He at no time suggested to the Andreyevs that it was a 'formal mediation', although this is how he spoke of it with the Archdeacon of Derby. A lawyer, a diocesan registrar, later examined the documents and stated that Rod Thomas had not conducted a mediation or conciliation, but had written a report and acted as judge.

Rod Thomas is the Bishop of Maidstone, and was clearly acting here in that capacity and not in his capacity as Honorary President of Church Society. So it is not the business of Church Society to respond to this point. As a Bishop, Rod Thomas is accountable to the Archbishop of Canterbury. He is accountable to Church Society's membership only in the sense that he was elected by them as Honorary President for a year at the AGM, and could be un-elected by them at a subsequent AGM if the members so wished. We believe he may well dispute the claims Mrs Andreyev makes here.

3. Church Society President Bishop Rod Thomas repeatedly ignored the Andreyevs' concerns about bullying towards them in Stapenhill and wrongly told them that he would need to seek legal advice in order to deal with bullying (a lawyer and diocesan registrar later explained to Michael that this is untrue – legal advice is not needed to tackle bullying).

Again, it is not Church Society's business to explain or defend any alleged individual action or comment by the Bishop of Maidstone. Bishop Rod Thomas is accountable to the Archbishop of Canterbury. We cannot be responsible for all his ministerial actions, any more than we can be held responsible for the actions of any of our elected Council members when preaching or ministering in their parishes or secular workplaces. However, it is likely that for the investigation of any bullying complaint in such circumstances there would need to be an investigation, and the Bishop would need to act in accordance with e.g. the Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) Measure 1977 section 10 as amended by the Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) (Amendment) Measure 1993, where their powers in cases of breakdown of pastoral relationship are outlined (with regard to both sides). This would surely involve the necessity of proper legal advice for any bishop going down this route. It is also of note that Mrs Andreyev frequently uses the word "bullying" to describe others, but does not provide a working legal definition of it.

4. Rod Thomas told Church Society in writing that the problems in Stapenhill were with Kate (22 May 2017) and that the situation there was likely 'pastoral breakdown' (23 May 2017). He wrote this before being involved in the situation or ever meeting Kate. In this letter Rod Thomas also wrote that he could act as a mediator (22 May 2017), even though he had prejudged the situation. In fact, the term 'pastoral breakdown' has a specific meaning in the Church of England and

requires a legal process (which has not happened) to take place, so Rod was knowingly misusing the term. This was adopted and other Church Society senior leaders have subsequently also misrepresented the situation, sometimes using the term 'pastoral breakdown'.

Once again, Church Society is not responsible for every alleged email or comment of the Bishop of Maidstone. Bishop Rod Thomas is accountable to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It should be noted, however, that a large proportion of the congregation at Stapenhill did in fact write to the Bishop of Derby about their "lack of confidence" in Michael Andreyev as their Vicar in 2017 because of his "fundamental disagreements with successive youth leaders, his bullying of group leaders, his aggressive and volatile behaviour, his failure to trust, and his inability to work with people." In 2019 the whole of the PCC unanimously voted that there had been "irretrievable pastoral breakdown", using that term deliberately and advisedly.

5. Unknown to the Andreyevs, Rod Thomas was corresponding with the Archdeacon of Derby and, even before ever speaking with the Andreyevs, was discussing with the Archdeacon and with Church Society that the way forward was probably for Michael Andreyev to move on to another post. It is common for those in senior positions to collude with bullying towards an individual by moving the person on, rather than tackling the bullying. As a result of this, other members of church were bullied out by the group in question.

Again, Rod Thomas is accountable to the Archbishop of Canterbury and not to Church Society, and was clearly acting as Bishop of Maidstone here. I am not sure why it would be problematic for him to be speaking with an Archdeacon (surely a regular occurrence for a bishop?), or that he mentioned that the way forward might be for Michael Andreyev to move on, since that was the Vicar's own publicly stated view from at least 2018. It is unclear why this is considered bullying. Mrs Andreyev's claim is that they were the ones being bullied, but members of the congregation claim the opposite. Church Society has never undertaken a detailed investigation of the situation in order to adjudicate between these competing claims, nor has it assumed either side was correct or in error, since it is not the competent authority to do so.

6. Rod Thomas consulted with Rev Jonathan Fletcher about Michael and Kate's situation after Jonathan Fletcher had already lost PTO for abusive behaviour. Rod Thomas passed on to Church Society Jonathan Fletcher's view that the best thing would be for the Andreyevs to move on (23 May 2017). This was a view that Jonathan Fletcher expressed to Michael later on in September 2017. Others have also expressed their concerns about the involvement of Rod Thomas in their diocese, for example <https://new-northern-souls.blogspot.com/2020/08/integrity-matters.html>.

Again, Rod Thomas is accountable to the Archbishop of Canterbury and was clearly acting as Bishop of Maidstone here. However, it is difficult to know why it is thought odd

that Bishop Rod might have had a conversation with Jonathan Fletcher about the situation. The Bishop has said that he did not know about the removal of Mr Fletcher's PTO at this point, and that is irrelevant to the situation in Stapenhill anyway since he was not being asked to minister there. He did have knowledge of the people involved. Jonathan Fletcher's sister is a member of the parish in Stapenhill. The Andreyevs are very old friends of Jonathan Fletcher himself: from Mrs Andreyev's tweets it appears that they were given £2000 by Mr Fletcher to go on holiday recently, for example, and the Andreyevs were both leaders of Iwerne camps, and Michael was part of the infamous so-called "Iwerne D" camps with Jonathan Fletcher. Mr Andreyev was also in charge of the money side of things for Jonathan Fletcher's "hand-picked" private conferences (as detailed on the [Surviving Church blog](#)) as recently as March 2017. Mrs Andreyev reported on Twitter that she had seen an email where Rod Thomas reported that "JF 'wonders if the best thing would be for them [my husband & I] to leave & both get a fresh start'" (Twitter, 5th December 2020). But this is hardly "a claim of sufficient magnitude as to require a thorough external investigation" as @matthewwmason replied. It is very clear why Jonathan Fletcher felt able to wonder such things, about people he knew very well indeed, and who were very much part of his inner circle.

Jonathan Fletcher has never acted on behalf of Church Society or Church Society Trust in Stapenhill (and was in fact removed from membership of CS and CST in 2019, [as detailed on our website](#)). Any comments he may or may not have made to Rod Thomas about the situation in Stapenhill were therefore nothing to do with CS or CST as such and his opinion was never solicited by us. His opinion was not sought by CS/CST, and nor was it in any way determinative of our actions. Nor did Fletcher's one recorded comment on the situation result in "ludicrous injustice to Incumbent [sic] and their family" as Bishop Alan Wilson claimed on Twitter (14th December 2020).

7. In November 2017, a complaint under the Clergy Discipline Measure with false accusations was made against Michael Andreyev. +Rod Thomas and the then Archdeacon of Derby discussed by email that they wanted to be sure that Michael Andreyev left the parish as vicar, even though Michael had not been found guilty of any wrongdoing. Correspondence reveals that the CDM process was being used to get Michael to leave, even though this is a misuse of the CDM and Rod and the archdeacon should therefore not have been a party to it. Church Society leaders were still discussing the CDM in 2019 and whether it was active, even though it had been dismissed in 2018 and Rod Thomas knew this to be the case. A common form of bullying by senior people in organisations is to treat someone cleared of wrongdoing as if they were in fact guilty.

Again, Rod Thomas is accountable to the Archbishop of Canterbury and was clearly acting as Bishop of Maidstone here. Church Society was not a party to any CDM proceedings against Mr Andreyev, and so was not kept officially informed about them (because, as mentioned before, CST has a role in appointments but not in church discipline, in Anglican polity). It would appear quite natural therefore for there to be uncertainty in CST about whether the CDM was still active or not, and there is no

suggestion or proof at all that we assumed the guilt or otherwise of Revd Andreyev. It should also be noted that Michael Andreyev was not, to our understanding “cleared of wrongdoing” in the CDM process: the complainant decided not to proceed to Tribunal on the understanding that the Vicar would leave the parish (which he in fact stated publicly he would seek to do), and the CDM concluded with “no further action”, not a dismissal or exoneration (as Mrs Andreyev herself complained about on Twitter on May 1st 2021).

8. In June 2018, Rod Thomas wrongly directed Derby Diocese to think that Michael and Kate Andreyev had involved their children in the situation at Stapenhill and that this was an issue for the diocesan safeguarding team. What Rod said to Derby Diocese led to untrue statements being made on Michael's personal reference for over a year, suggesting that Mike and Kate were being dishonest. These accusations were eventually acknowledged to be untrue in August 2019. When Michael and Kate tried to raise the issues of this and Rod's other behaviour with him from 2018 onwards, he tried to avoid and close down the subject.

Again, Rod Thomas is accountable to the Archbishop of Canterbury for his ministry as a Bishop and was clearly acting as Bishop of Maidstone here. CS and CST have never seen Michael Andreyev's personal reference. Mrs Andreyev did send us (unsolicited) the letter written by her children to the Bishop of Derby in her and her husband's defence. It is not our business to adjudicate on arguments about this letter, the facts it purports to recount, the process by which it was written and sent, and the record of it in Revd Andreyev's personnel file. Since we have no knowledge of the facts behind this (because it is not our place to investigate), or of what the personal reference actually says (because it is not our business to see it), it is certainly not our place to lobby bishops about the content of such a file. We have no knowledge of whether or why any accusations contained in it were acknowledged to be untrue.

9. In emails to one another, Church Society leaders wrote of Michael and Kate Andreyev in a derogatory manner, using expressions such as “Let's keep praying, especially that the Lord saves them from themselves” and when we responded with necessary questions, “I was hoping things had gone quiet for a positive reason, hey ho”. In emails to one another, Church Society leaders mocked the Andreyevs for suggesting different, independent reviewers, using expressions such as, “We're now into a game of Top Trumps” and “This is fun!” Kate Andreyev's attempts to get the issues dealt with in a professional manner appropriate to a Christian organisation were described as pestering. This approach was in spite of the fact that Kate had made the Church Society leaders aware at the outset that she had been made ill by the mistreatment she and Michael had suffered, including that she had lost a considerable amount in weight, was unable to attend church and was on anti-depressants.

Even if CS and CST trustees were to have used such expressions, it is a leap to say they were derogatory. Context and intent may be important. Mrs Andreyev says that she was attempting to “get the issues dealt with in a professional manner appropriate to a

Christian organisation”, but she had been told many many times by different people within CS and CST that it was professionally inappropriate and legally impossible for CS/ CST to interfere in her husband’s case as she demanded, as we have absolutely no jurisdiction over church discipline in the Church of England or authority over the Bishops, Archdeacons, and safeguarding departments that were handling it. It is not our place to attempt to exert pressure on the duly constituted authorities on behalf of a Vicar and their spouse who have been accused by their congregation of dictatorial and authoritarian leadership, or to investigate the truthfulness or otherwise of such claims. Nevertheless, we would acknowledge with sadness the effect this has all had on the Andreyevs, and have often prayed for them in this, without making any judgment on whether their view of it all is correct or not (the Lord, to whom we pray, knows). Others within the parish and within CS/CST have also struggled with dark moments personally because of this situation, with their physical, emotional, and mental health; that does not guarantee that any of them are in the right, of course, though it does lead us to pray and commit the messiness of the whole situation to God.

10. After Kate had raised serious concerns in writing with Church Society Council and Trust members (Rev Dick Farr, Rev William Taylor, Rev Lee Gatiss, Rev Mark Burkill and Rev Paul Darlington) about Rod Thomas, these five leaders met privately with Rod Thomas and with him decided what to do to deal with the situation. The leaders attempted to hide this from the Andreyevs. Rod Thomas was misrepresenting the situation.

William Taylor says in his letter to the Andreyevs after this discussion at Shallowford House (recounted above) that this had been at her request, and he reported back to her about it. Jason Ward also informed her of it when she rang him. I have not found evidence of any attempt to hide the fact that this discussion took place, yet Mrs Andreyev tweeted to me on 16th October 2020, “You all tried to hide all of this from me & my husband”. On 17th November 2020 she said on Facebook that at this meeting we “agreed together to manipulate and cover up a complaint of abuse.” This is not correct. Far from deciding with Rod Thomas what to do about it all, or agreeing to manipulate anyone or cover up any complaints, those who remember the meeting describe their feelings at it of deep concern both for the Andreyevs and for the congregation, and a sense of difficulty in knowing the best way forward.

11. Whilst a party to the derogatory comments and discussion of the Andreyevs, William Taylor dishonestly wrote to the Andreyevs to assure them that they were loved and that they were not being spoken of negatively.

This is a question for William Taylor to answer directly, and not for CS/CST corporately to answer. It is not clear what “derogatory” comments are being referred to and how they might conflict with what Revd Taylor may have said. To my knowledge there was no widespread awareness of the situation in Stapenhill beyond what Mrs Andreyev herself has put into the public domain; before that, the vast majority of people in ReNew or CS/ CST circles were unaware of any allegations against Revd or Mrs Andreyev and quite

possibly did not know who they were or even where Stapenhill is. There was, to my knowledge, no concerted campaign to speak negatively about them throughout the constituency.

12. Church Society Trust Chair Dick Farr spoke in an aggressive manner to Kate Andreyev on the telephone on two occasions. Although she was raising the matter of abusive behaviour towards her, Dick Farr told her that he wanted to speak with Kate's husband rather than Kate on the basis that he (Dick) was a complementarian. Although not a witness to any of it, Dick told Kate that the abusive behaviour towards the Andreyevs in Stapenhill had not been at all serious. Although Kate was trying to report abusive behaviour, Dick asked Kate what she and Michael had done to occasion the abusive behaviour towards them. Dick was sarcastic and aggressive (an observation which is supported by the derogatory tone of his emails about the Andreyevs to other Church Society leaders) and on the second conversation, Dick slammed the telephone down.

I have seen no transcript and heard no recording of these conversations so cannot reliably comment on the claims made here about what was said and in what tone. Recollections of them differ. However, it would not seem unreasonable for the Chairman of CST to ask to speak to the Vicar of a CST parish, rather than his spouse, about the situation in the parish and with regard to the Vicar's job. This is not "misogyny" as she suggested (e.g. on Twitter, 15th February 2021). Indeed, it is highly unusual for a minister's spouse to be so involved in publicising such parish situations and contacting so many people about it (I can think of no other case where this has happened), while the Vicar himself remains silent and unseen, so it would appear to be quite natural to ask to speak to him and ascertain his own views on the matters being discussed.

13. In 2018, Dick Farr and William Taylor suggested a process to deal with the concerns Kate was raising about the conduct of Rod Thomas. They suggested people to oversee the process who were not genuinely independent from them, such as Hugh Palmer, Christopher Ash and William Taylor's Churchwarden. William Taylor described them as 'giants of the faith.' Dick and William refused to consider Kate's suggestion of Dan and Susie Leafe as those who would be far more independent, or indeed others outside the Church of England. Dick ridiculed Kate for suggesting this.

It is not clear if these discussions were part of any official involvement by CS/CST since patrons have no legal role in CDM disputes between a Vicar and their congregation, or were rather suggestions by William Taylor and Dick Farr in their personal capacities (or perhaps by William as an old friend of the Andreyevs, or as Chairman of ReNew?). It is not clear here what kind of process was being suggested, and whether strict external independence was required for it or simply expertise as honest brokers or mediators. Certainly it would be unusual for someone to suggest their own Churchwarden for the role of external independent reviewer into a dispute someone had with them, but it seems that this is not what Revd Taylor was actually suggesting and the dispute was with

Rod Thomas, not William Taylor anyway. Usually if a Vicar or Vicar's spouse has a dispute with a Bishop it is not the role of an outside patronage body or a longstanding friend of the Vicar's to arrange mediation, but the Church of England should have processes for dealing with such disputes. Suggesting various people who are well-respected within conservative evangelical circles (such as those named here, and Andrew Cornes, who was also suggested) can hardly be thought of as patently wrong when Mrs Andreyev herself had clearly expressed the view that she hoped it could be dealt with within such circles. Dick Farr and William Taylor had the ability to reject Mrs Andreyev's suggestions (for example, on the grounds of their independence) and she was permitted to reject theirs. To mediate, one needs to find an acceptable party to mediate and if there is some discussion of this and rejection of proposals and counter-proposals that seems to be entirely normal in such circumstances.

14. In 2018 when Kate Andreyev approached Church Society to raise serious concerns about the conduct of Rod Thomas, Church Society did not have a complaints procedure or other policies in place, as Andrew Towner acknowledged to the other leaders in email correspondence. This is surprising as Church Society has long been a registered charity. As there were not proper procedures in place, Church Society's handling of the situation was chaotic, with Kate having to try different people, although the leaders blamed Kate for this chaos. In a recent article on the Anglican Ink website, Andrew Towner gave a misleading statement, saying that Church Society had "full careful robust policies and procedures in place", omitting to mention that this had not been the case in 2018 and 2019 when Kate and Andreyev had been trying to get serious issues addressed.

Church Society did not have a complaints procedure published online at this point, although that does not mean that it did not have policies and procedures. It did subsequently publish one, which Mrs Andreyev has not used. In any event, no complaints procedure of CS or CST, could properly deal with a complaint against the Bishop of Maidstone, who is accountable not to CS or CST but to the Archbishop of Canterbury. He holds an honorary office as President in Church Society and is not a member of CS staff or CS Council or the CST or CST Directors' board. Mrs Andreyev was not passed around from person to person in a chaotic manner by CS or CST; she was told early on that none of us had jurisdiction to intervene or interfere in her or her husband's case anyway, and she simply kept trying different people within the Society again and again in an apparent attempt to see if she could get a different answer or persuade people to do what she asked despite this. There is nothing whatsoever in Andrew Towner's comment in the Anglican.ink article which is inaccurate or misleading.

15. In Summer 2019, Church Society Council Chair Andrew Towner misled Kate over a proposed process with a third party to address the issues Kate had raised. Andrew told Kate that the issues would be taken seriously and the person involved would have the power to recommend that the Church Society leaders involved should have to resign. In fact, the person involved had not been given this brief or responsibility and was given the role of telling the Church Society leaders in a

positive way how they might be able to improve their future practice. Kate tried to ask Andrew questions on the telephone to understand what was being suggested, but Andrew insulted her to the other leaders. In addition, although Kate was told that the person was independent, Church Society correspondence reveals that the person was a "friend" of one of the Council members, but that at the same time Church Society leaders seemed to consider this person independent! One of the Council members suggested that Kate might be mentally unstable, a common attitude of abusive organisations towards victims of bullying. It is striking how, if they believed this to be the case, they were not kinder.

In August 2019, Church Society engaged Alison Bennett of Fly Higher Coaching to spend time talking with Mrs Andreyev to understand issues from her perspective, with a view to making recommendations to Church Society about a way forward (with a maximum budget set at £4,000 for this process). She has extensive experience in HR, organisational development, leadership development, coaching, and conflict resolution and mediation. The precise terms were: "1) Engage with Kate with a view to defining appropriate routes to conflict resolution (2) Review Ch Soc's engagement with her, in order to assess its appropriateness and lessons to be learnt for the future." Alison Bennett had two phonecalls each around 30-45 minutes long with Mrs Andreyev in August. Mrs Andreyev emailed Andrew Towner speaking positively about these two calls. Two provisional dates were set for further conversations between them. Ms Bennett is not a "friend" of Rebecca Hunt, but is described by Mrs Hunt as "the mother of a school friend of my daughter... an acquaintance who I have chatted to at social events around school on various occasions".

However, on 22nd October 2019, Mrs Andreyev wrote, "From looking at the Flying Higher website and from speaking with Alison, it appears that her areas of expertise are in coaching senior management, mediation and conflict resolution. I appreciate that these are valuable skills in their own right and could also potentially be of use to Church Society leaders, but this would be a thoroughly inappropriate route for our situation. It is true that organisations often try to redefine harm and abuse as 'conflict' and 'relational issues' where bullying and abuse have occurred, but it tends to mean that there is little accountability for those who have behaved abusively." She was unwilling to engage in a process which it was felt might clarify the things at issue between CS/CST and her and her husband, or lead to a process of mediation and resolution. Instead, she summarily recommended "the resignation of those from the Council/Trust who have colluded in the abuse towards us, especially William Taylor, Dick Farr, Paul Darlington, Rod Thomas".

16. Church Society Director Lee Gatiss wrote to other organisations, one of them Derby Diocese, describing as "pestering" Kate Andreyev's attempts to raise serious concerns about the abusive treatment she had suffered. In fact, Kate had only spoken once with Lee on the telephone and up to twice with other Council members. When Kate eventually began to write about what had happened publicly, Lee asked on his Facebook page if anyone knew a libel lawyer. Lee dishonestly wrote to other Church Society leaders and to Derby Diocese that Kate was making "hidden" comments to him on the Church Society Facebook page and

that he found this threatening, although in fact only the page administrators Lee Gatiss and Ros Clarke were able to “hide” comments, as was acknowledged by Ros later on. Lee Gatiss gave Derby Diocese the impression that he was being harassed by Kate Andreyev when this was not the case. It is also dishonest for the Director of a national organisation to misrepresent an individual’s legitimate criticisms of that organisation as an attempt to intimidate him personally. It is worth noting that a number of respected ordained ministers have been blocked from the Church Society website and from Lee Gatiss’s social media for pointing out inconvenient truths. There are other clear examples of Lee Gatiss responding very personally to reasonable criticism of the actions of Church Society from other ministers, or exaggerating the severity of opposition or hostility to him.

It is not clear what other organisations Mrs Andreyev is referring to, and she provides no details of the allegation. I wrote to the safeguarding department of Derby Diocese to report the allegations of abuse Mrs Andreyev had made to me on the phone, as Church of England safeguarding protocol demands. How I chose to characterise my own feelings about her allegations is up to me. I believe this document shows evidence of a pattern of harassing and “pestering” behaviour (defined as “frequent and persistent requests and interruptions”) here from Mrs Andreyev, both towards people in her church (as already noted) and towards the Bishops and others that her husband had to relate to as a clergyman. Her subsequent behaviour on social media towards such people, including me, is further evidence.

Mrs Andreyev says that she had only spoken “up to twice” with other Council members. My understanding is that she has spoken to several of them, on several occasions, about the same issues repeatedly, as well as emailing them at length. Andrew Towner, for example, reports several phonecalls and emails from Mrs Andreyev in Summer and Autumn 2019 (at least 10 hours in July alone, to the detriment of his health and other significant distress to him and those around him, it should be added), and emails provided for the Subject Access Request show that there were several long email chains between her and Council members. William Taylor has a number of emails from and to the Andreyevs on these issues, and recalls several telephone conversations, as do others.

Mrs Andreyev says it was dishonest of me to claim that she was making hidden comments on my personal Facebook page and on the Church Society Facebook page. As I previously mentioned above, I did not even know this could be done until it happened with her comments, and CS staff insist they did not do it. Nothing in the CS Page’s activity log for that day indicates that CS hid any comments. I unhid one comment, to read it, and was unable to hide it again despite repeatedly trying to see if I could. In an email to Rebecca Hunt in October 2020, Mrs Andreyev claims that Ros Clarke did this hiding, but Dr Clarke was unaware of it until I pointed it out to her, and asserts that she did not do it. If Mrs Andreyev did not do it, then I am unable to explain who did and she may want to take the issue up with Facebook.

Ros Clarke and I most definitely did *not* later acknowledge that we had hidden Mrs Andreyev's comments, as alleged here. So Mrs Andreyev is incorrect. Her assertion that Dr Clarke was responsible for it is incorrect. What was said, some months later, is that now that we knew it could be done, we reserved the right to use the "hide comments" feature of Facebook to hide comments if they contravened our then public social media policy, if that was possible.

These repeated comments she made did feel like threats to me, even when not hidden. At the same time, she was setting up one or two Twitter profiles and beginning to attack CS using that platform too, so she obviously was making an attempt to undermine CS online. (There have been suggestions online that she is also behind a certain pseudonymous account which is used to make very similar comments to hers on various blogs.) I am at liberty to express that unsafe feeling to a safeguarding professional in my own diocese (especially if using an online form or my personal email), if I choose to do so. I wonder if Mrs Andreyev has reflected on the impact upon my feelings of having my private communications to a safeguarding department about my sense of safety and wellbeing made public, repeatedly, on her social media. Her behaviour towards me personally online is by no means mischaracterised as "personally intimidating". She wrote to Andrew Towner about me on 24th July 2019 that, "I was really surprised that, being a director of a national organisation and someone who publishes books and articles, he would say he felt upset by my comments." It is not clear why my role and writing would be relevant, and this perhaps shows her having a lack of insight into her behaviour and when and why it impacts upon others.

No-one has been blocked from Church Society's website. As mentioned already, in addition to Mrs Andreyev, only one minister and two sex-bots / fake accounts had been blocked from the CS Facebook page. She is not blocked from CS's Twitter (to my knowledge, only one minister is among the 6 accounts blocked by CS for contravening our social media policy). Who I do or don't block on my own personal Twitter account is irrelevant (but I have blocked 9 particularly egregious trolls and fake accounts). Plenty of people express their disagreements with me online, often in very vigorous and crude ways, and are not blocked. I have received threats of violence and abuse and death on Twitter, which have been reported in the press (and to the Police) so I am wary, rightly in my opinion, about the sort of people I allow on my personal social media accounts. Mrs Andreyev's dismissive underplaying of the effect of such engagement on me and others is disappointing to say the least.

17. William Taylor (co-opted on to Church Society Council during the period when Kate approached the organisation for help) later dishonestly involved Rev Charlie Skrine to approach Kate Andreyev twice. Charlie Skrine tried to involve London Diocese in order to deal with Kate, misusing the safeguarding process in order to do this. Charlie claimed to be acting for safeguarding reasons, but this cannot be true as he had consulted with William Taylor, the subject of the concerns. It is a basic aspect of safeguarding procedure when reporting allegations to safeguarding to not go and consult with the person the allegations are about and Charlie Skrine,

having a particular role with safeguarding at St. Helen's Bishopsgate, would have known this.

This is nothing to do with Church Society but appears to be a matter related to St Helen's Church in Bishopsgate, London and their own safeguarding policies and relationship to London Diocese. Again, the fact that an individual is elected or co-opted onto CS Council or any of our committees does not make CS responsible or accountable for all of their words or actions, especially when they are acting in other roles.

18. Various Church Society leaders have dishonestly used the term 'allegations' to describe the issues raised by Kate, even when they are aware that what Kate has raised is a matter of fact. This includes Andrew Towner, Lee Gatiss and William Taylor (via Charlie Skrine).

An allegation is a claim made by someone against someone else, that they have done something wrong. Some allegations are true, and some are false. Calling them allegations does not prejudge the issue of truthfulness. Mrs Andreyev may consider all her allegations to be unquestioned facts, but others may disagree, and until both sides can be considered in their contexts and a judgment made by a competent authority, the word allegation is appropriate.

19. In 2019, Church Society President Rod Thomas's Pastoral Adviser, Rev David Banting, contacted a couple offering pastoral support to Michael and Kate Andreyev. David misrepresented the situation in Stapenhill and told the couple that Derby Diocese would be taking action within the next few months to remove Michael as Vicar. (David also said this to one of those in the group who had bullied the Andreyevs out of church.) David asked the husband of the couple concerned not to mention this conversation to the Andreyevs, but rather to manipulate them to a certain course of action. The couple refused to go along with this because they realised that it lacked integrity. David Banting claimed to be trying to help. However, a couple of weeks before, unknown to the Andreyevs, David Banting was writing letters against Michael Andreyev to the acting Bishop of Derby, again misrepresenting the situation. When Kate and Michael flagged up David Banting's behaviour, pointing out that it was harassment, Rod Thomas refused to take action on his Pastoral Adviser's behaviour. When Michael and Kate pointed out that pastoral support should be independent from the influence of Rod Thomas and his staff (a point flagged up by the GP wife of the couple offering support, Rod wrote to say that he had not promised not to contact the couple in question in the future.

Again, this is absolutely nothing to do with Church Society. Rod Thomas is the Bishop of Maidstone and was clearly acting here in that capacity. Neither he nor his Pastoral Advisor, David Banting, are accountable for their actions in arranging and paying for pastoral support for a clergy couple, to Church Society.

20. *Following the publication of an article describing how various Church Society leaders had treated Kate, there were email discussions between Church Society leaders about consulting lawyers and taking legal action against Kate. The Church Society leaders were looking to engage someone supportive of them rather than someone independent. There was also email discussion with Andrew Towner about having some sort of investigation in order to then take action against Kate.*

It is not clear what ethical or moral boundary it is being suggested has been crossed here. As mentioned already, various Church of England bodies recommended that legal advice be sought in this case, and it is not clear whether Mrs Andreyev thinks Church Society should not be entitled to discuss that as a possibility or indeed to consult a lawyer and, if she does so, why?

21. *Correspondence reveals that Church Society leaders have engaged in trying to get Derby Diocese to take action to remove Michael and Kate Andreyev. This would remove the Andreyevs and their two young teenage daughters from their home and means of financial support. Correspondence also shows Church Society leaders saying that their concern is the evangelical succession of the parish of Stapenhill (rather than doing what is right as Christians). Instead of acknowledging that the behaviour of Church Society leaders needed to be properly addressed, Lee Gatiss wrote to the other Church Society leaders that the answer was for the Andreyevs to move on.*

I am not sure what correspondence is being referred to that it is felt reveals that CS leaders have tried to get Derby Diocese to remove the Andreyevs. Someone is quoted in the [link](#) provided saying that in their opinion "for the well-being of the parish", the Diocese should be encouraged to make a decision "sooner rather than later", but it is not stated what that decision should be, and nobody mentions "remov[ing] the Andreyevs and their two young teenage daughters from their home and means of financial support". It is possible that Mrs Andreyev's reading of this document is that "the well-being of the parish" *must* equate to removing Michael and Kate Andreyev, but this is not what is stated in the document.

We do know that Revd Andreyev announced publicly on 3rd June 2018 (we have seen a verbatim transcript of his words, taken from a recording of the service), that it was actually his intention to move from Stapenhill. He has had more than 3 years "on leave" since then, on full pay and benefits, in order to do so. This has impacted the ministry at St Peter's which remains without a functioning Vicar, and impedes its ability to begin the process to appoint a new one. I also know that Mrs. Andreyev has specifically asked a number of CS leaders for help with the process of finding her husband another job, stating that moving on is what she and her husband want to do. So I am not sure why it is being presented here as a surprising or shocking thing.

At no time have CS or CST *contrasted* their concern for the parish with their responsibility to do what is right as Christians, or pitted those against each other. Church Society Trust is

the patron of the parish of St Peter's, Stapenhill. It is therefore its legal duty and responsibility under its constitution and under charity law to be concerned for the appointment of the next minister there. That is their specific role in the parish. They also consider that to be the right thing to do as Christians, to think about how best to fulfil their legal duty there. As trustees, the Directors of CST have a legal duty to be concerned for the succession of ministry in that parish. They do not have any legal duty or responsibilities as CST for the discipline of ministers or the adjudication of disputes between congregants and ministers. If they did arrogate to themselves such responsibilities, it would be strictly *ultra vires*, acting beyond their legal power and authority. It is the duty of all Christians to respect the proper authorities in church and state, and there is nothing especially Christian about impertinence in that regard.

22. In conversation with Kate Andreyev in 2018, Rev Paul Darlington used Scripture to tell Kate to go away and suffer, rather than raising her serious concerns about mistreatment by Rod Thomas and having those concerns addressed. Correspondence supports this, although Paul Darlington disputes the Bible passage concerned (1 Peter 2 rather than Philippians 2). Paul trivialised the issues that Kate was raising by impressing upon her that she was interrupting the evening meal, having first agreed to speak with her.

This names a further person with whom Mrs Andreyev discussed these matters. As already mentioned above, she telephoned Paul Darlington (a member of the CS Council and a trustee of CST), claiming that there was an emergency and she needed to speak to him immediately about it. He was having a rare evening meal with his widowed mother and sister away from home, but the urgency of the message he received meant he phoned her back straight away. She wanted to make sure he was not "misinformed about what is going on" and to make various accusations against various people which she thought he needed to know about. He reports that "As the length of the call went on it was evident that this was not an emergency and it was easily something that could have waited until the next day or beyond. I suggested this to KA given my circumstances that evening. KA was unwilling to offer me this grace."

Revd Darlington's position is that he was clear that he could not judge the situation in Stapenhill and that CS and CST had no authority in the situation, but others who did were already involved and engaged with it. He also says: "It was clear to me that KA felt she was suffering a serious injustice. In the light of this I referred her to 1 Peter 2 v20-23. I said there are some situations where, whilst acknowledging the reality of the genuine injustice, it is appropriate not to resist, but to entrust oneself to God. I then asked her if she thought that her current situation was one of these or not. I could not answer that for her then and neither can I now. She declined to engage with the question or to complain about it being asked of her." She did however insist that he talk with others about it, which he agreed to do (and did), although Mrs Andreyev here claims he did not (he told her to go away and suffer, *rather than* raising her serious concerns with others, she claims).

23. In 2020, Church Society unlawfully withheld Michael and Kate Andreyev's personal data for over six months. Church Society claimed to have taken appropriate advice and complied with the law. The Information Commissioner's Office had to write to Church Society twice to tell them to comply with the law on data. When the Andreyevs' personal data was eventually provided to them in a dropbox, Church Society also unlawfully shared the Andreyevs' personal data with various Church Society leaders, including Rod Thomas, about whom Kate had raised serious concerns. Kate asked if her personal data had been shared with others, but Church Society did not answer this question. The personal data eventually provided also revealed to the Andreyevs that Rod Thomas had himself unlawfully withheld the Andreyevs' personal data, following their Subject Access Request to him.

A Subject Access Request (the first and only one we have ever received) from the Andreyevs was received by Church Society in March 2020, asking for data from January 2017 to March 2020. As a (non-practising) Barrister with legal expertise, Rebecca Hunt took the lead as the Church Society Council member responsible for overseeing this request, and carefully considered what data should be disclosed and whether and what to redact. She ascertained that we had:

1. Membership documentation in relation to the Andreyevs.
2. A complaint letter about Rev Andreyev sent to Church Society by 48 members of Revd Andreyev's congregation
3. Emails sent between our Director and third parties in relation to the situation that had arisen at the church.
4. Minutes of Church Society Trust Meetings with references to the situation at the church.

We immediately handed over all the membership documentation we had in relation to the Andreyevs. After consulting with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), Mrs Hunt did not feel that items 2-4 should be disclosed, and she gave five reasons to the Information Commissioner for this:

1. The records at 2-4 above involve third-party data i.e. data from which third parties can be identified.
2. As Church Society, we owe a duty to third parties to safeguard their information.
3. The regulations required me to undertake a balancing exercise in this situation. I was required to consider whether disclosure with consent from the third parties, or redaction of the document would be consistent with our duty to the third parties.
4. The nature of the information in these records is of such sensitivity that I had no doubt that a duty of confidence arose in relation to the third parties. In particular the complaint letter referred to above was sent in confidence by members of the congregation at the church where Rev Andreyev remains the Vicar. All the other records I refer to relate directly to this complaint.

5. As such I did not consider it to be appropriate to request consent from any of relevant third parties in the circumstances, nor to redact the documents (even if I did this it is likely that people will be identifiable bearing in mind the relatively small number of people concerned).

As the Information Commissioner's Office agreed, "data controllers have an obligation under data protection law to ensure they do not inappropriately disclose the personal data that they process, including when responding to information rights requests." However, they asked CS to send an extract of the other data so they could advise on whether disclosure in redacted form would be feasible. This we did. There was further correspondence with the ICO, and all the emails and documents were provided to them via Dropbox. There was no reference to the Andreyevs in Church Society Council Minutes over the relevant period. Mrs Hunt continued to point out that it did not seem right to hand over every piece of documentation in its entirety because she believed CS "was exempted under Schedule 2, Part 3, Para 16 DPA 2018, because such disclosure would involve disclosing information relating to third parties, who could be identified from the information." She also pointed out that, "The information requested here is highly confidential and sensitive. Even with names redacted, due to the circumstances, the individuals concerned would be identifiable... In relation to the other parties, the correspondence is so clearly confidential and written with that expectation that I did not think it appropriate to ask for consent to disclosure. You will also see that the minutes of the Trust meeting I have disclosed is headed 'Private and Confidential'". On 15th September 2020, the ICO responded that "It seems feasible that email correspondence containing relevant personal data could have reasonably been included in the disclosure in a suitably redacted form." A sample of our email documentation was redacted by the ICO as an example of how to do this.

Mrs Andreyev kept Twitter up to date with what was going on with many tweets, e.g. on 17th September 2020 she tweeted, in response to a prayer request about the CST meeting that day, "Praying that you would stop withholding our personal data and that you would comply with the law." The "personal data" she refers to would be items 2-4 above, i.e. private emails sent by the Director to his diocesan safeguarding advisor, and private and confidential correspondence from the 48 members of the church (which included all their names and addresses).

We revisited the Subject Access Request data after the clarifying exchange with the ICO. Rebecca Hunt requested various CS/CST people to search their CS and personal email accounts for references to the Andreyevs and to send that information to the CS office. As she later wrote to the Andreyevs, "As the trustee given responsibility for handling your subject access request, please be advised that Church Society at all times followed my advice in responding to it. You will understand that I had to be very mindful of our obligations to protect the data of third parties in this. As such the decisions made were mine and should not be attributed to the Director."

In October 2020, Mrs Andreyev again emailed Mrs Hunt to request further information and more emails, including emails from third parties about the situation at Stapenhill, and any replies we had made to them. She claimed that public clarification was needed that she had not libelled Church Society, although Church Society had never made any such accusation. She also requested copies of various emails that had been previously sent to her already by Dick Farr and Andrew Towner, and minutes of discussions which were not actually official CS/CST meetings and had not been minuted.

David Meager compiled all the documents into a Dropbox folder. Rod Thomas's secretary Rachel Lickiss emailed David to say, "Rod says that it is essential that he sees copies of any emails where his name has been redacted or which refer to him. If his intention was that the communication was confidential then he will be asking for it to be redacted in full." As already mentioned, Church Society owes a duty to third parties to safeguard their information. David Meager therefore sent a link to this to Rod Thomas's secretary so that they could check references to him. As Bishop Rod later told us, "I can confirm I didn't take any copies or store any of the information. In fact I didn't really look at it apart from checking that I wasn't named in it." David also asked for advice from Rachel Lickiss about how the redaction had been done, since she had extensive experience of having done a Subject Access Request herself recently.

In response to complaints from Mrs Andreyev, the ICO emailed Rebecca Hunt on November 18th 2020 "to urge your organisation to work to fulfil it as soon as it reasonably can and keep Ms Andreyev updated on its progress as it does so." The emails were sent to Mrs Andreyev using Dropbox on 20th November 2020. On 27th November, Mrs Andreyev wrote to complain that the Dropbox had originally been created with Lee Gatiss, Ros Clarke, and others having the ability to see the documents. She was unhappy with that because it was "my personal data" (although it should be pointed out that it was in fact copies of emails between various members of CS Council and CST Directors). Neither Lee Gatiss nor Ros Clarke had the ability to edit the pdf documents anyway, and did not copy or share them. Their access to the Dropbox was immediately taken away.

Mrs Andreyev complained on 30th November that Rod Thomas had also had access to the Dropbox. She was assured that Rod Thomas did not make any changes or edit anything. There were several further complaints. On 4th December, Rebecca Hunt replied to her:

Thank you for your email of the 2nd December. The compilation of the data file to comply with the Subject Access Request has been an enormous amount of work. For the purposes of the efficient administration of the task as swiftly as possible, a Dropbox folder was created. This was shared with myself (as co-ordinator of the response), Lee Gatiss, Ros Clarke and the PA to Rod Thomas for the purposes of ensuring the data was complete and appropriately redacted. Church Society is obliged to take the privacy of all concerned into account and the data concerned contained personal data belonging to them. I would however like to apologise for the fact that we have now realised that this system potentially made it possible for

the data of all parties to be seen by the others. I can however confirm that they only accessed the Dropbox to check their own data.

Mrs Andreyev made a number of further complaints in response to this, including that CS/ CST had not used churchsociety.org email addresses. Members of staff did have churchsociety.org email addresses, but these had not been given to every member of Council and CST Directors, until early 2021.

The ICO wrote to CS in April 2021, and we were able to reassure them that we had realised our mistake with the Dropbox, had switched to churchsociety.org email addresses for all members of Council, and were signing up for further GDPR training, so the mistakes we made would not happen again. We should also have been somewhat quicker with the processing of the SAR: there were several delays as Rebecca Hunt tried to gather the data, and some Council members were not quick to reply to the request for emails, and we missed our own self-imposed deadline at one point. The SAR took us by surprise and took time for us to understand and process.

Mrs Andreyev claims that "One common indicator of bullying is withholding information which the target has a right to see or hear, @ChurchSociety" (4th December 2020). We may have made mistakes, but we never sought to bully her in this very unfamiliar and unusual process which she initiated with us (in the context of a pandemic when many had other things on their plates and minds).

24. In the February 2021 letter to its members, Church Society misled its members in using the term 'serious allegations' when much of the behaviour of its leaders is a matter of recorded fact e.g. via the links in this article. Church Society also misrepresented the situation in the February 2021 letter by omitting to mention that Kate had spent a considerable amount of time trying to raise matters privately with Church Society (2018-2019). When asked to comment in an Anglican Ink article on 8 December 2020, Church Society Chair Andrew Towner had said that Church Society could not comment on individual cases, yet in the February 2021 letter to members, Church Society is commenting misleadingly on an individual case.

An allegation is a claim made by someone against someone else, that they have done something wrong. Some allegations are true, and some are false. Calling them allegations does not prejudge the issue of truthfulness. Mrs Andreyev may consider all her allegations to be unquestioned facts, but others may disagree, and until both sides can be considered in their contexts and a judgment made by a competent authority, the word allegation is appropriate.

Andrew Towner and Ros Clarke did not misrepresent the situation in their letter to CS members in February 2021 (later inappropriately published and labelled as a "press release", without permission, [online](https://www.anglican.ink) by Anglican.ink). It should be quite clear at this point in the story from this already lengthy document you are reading, that no short letter can

comprehensively and exhaustively give the entire background to this case — and nor was it the intention of that letter to do so. The letter did not in fact even name Revd or Mrs Andreyev, or the church in Stapenhill.

25. The recent Church Society letter to its members says that Church Society's goal is "that the truth shall be made known", but this is not supported by Church Society and its President Rod Thomas withholding and excessively redacting Kate and Michael's data. The personal data that has been provided to the Andreyevs is still redacted such that it protects senior leaders of CS who have behaved wrongly, as can be seen in documents linked throughout this blog post. Therefore, if Church Society is interested in making the truth known, it and its President Rod Thomas should comply fully with Michael and Kate's SAR and release to them the data un-redacted, save for names of third parties unconnected with CS who are not or have not been on the Council, or Trust, or Directors or Officers.

Church Society has sought to obey the law regarding Subject Access Requests and redacted the emails provided to Mrs Andreyev in line with guidelines given by the Information Commissioners Office to balance our obligations to others. Mrs Andreyev's decision to publish many such emails and documents online in public confirms that we were right to do so.

26. The February letter from Church Society to its members was signed by the Church Society Council Chair, Andrew Towner, and the Associate Director, Ros Clarke. Yet Andrew Towner was himself involved in the bullying and dishonesty towards Kate Andreyev. Both Andrew Towner and Ros Clarke were aware that Church Society had withheld and then wrongly shared Kate Andreyev's personal data, the data having been shared with them both. Yet both put their name to a letter which spoke of "allegations", as if both were personally unaware that what Kate Andreyev had been saying was true, when the opposite was in fact the case. Likewise, Andrew Towner wrote privately to Kate about the proposed review and invited her to ask questions about it – questions that were not then answered. It is clearly inappropriate for a Church Society leader who has been involved in the bullying behaviour to then be the Church Society leader to write to members and Kate as if he had not been involved. When Kate raised this with the Church Society Council members, she then received an email response from another trustee, Rebecca Hunt. Yet Rebecca Hunt had been responsible for responding to Kate's Subject Access Request to Church Society and was the trustee responsible for the decision to unlawfully withhold and then inappropriately share Kate Andreyev's personal data.

It is not clear why an allegation from Mrs Andreyev would disqualify someone from being elected as Chairman of Church Society Council. Since all her allegations are available online in several different forums and in copious detail, they are available to any member of CS who is entitled to vote at the Church Society AGM and to any member of CS Council. Mr Towner was elected by the membership to the Council, and by the Council to

its chair, in free and fair elections as per our constitution. So there is no reason why he should be barred from writing a letter to CS members. It is difficult to identify anyone involved in CS who has not been accused by Mrs Andreyev of something, and this would make it difficult if that were to be a reason to disqualify someone from Church Society from writing letters to Church Society's own members. We excluded from decision making in this case any of those who had been accused by her online, until it became clear around March 2021 that nobody on CS Council was omitted, and therefore we had to simply do what the Council as a whole thought was best within those circumstances.

13. Mrs Andreyev's letter to *Evangelicals Now*

The monthly newspaper, *Evangelicals Now* reported on Mrs Andreyev's allegations against Church Society in their March 2021 edition. They called it a "scandal" and put it alongside the scandals of sexual and physical abuse involving Jonathan Fletcher and Ravi Zacharias. Because of the serious nature of the insinuations and accusations made, Church Society had been in discussions with the safeguarding charity 31:8, Christian Safeguarding Services, Professor Keith Brown, Dr Lisa Oakley and Kath Kinmont, GRACE (netgrace.org), and others to discuss the commissioning of an independent review by an external body of our handling of the situation with the Revd and Mrs Andreyev, in response to public calls for such a review by Mrs Andreyev. This would not be mediation or attempts at reconciliation led by someone who may be known and trusted by both sides, as previously attempted and suggested, but an entirely different independent review by an external body. From 2019, Council had decided that those explicitly named in the complaints (Jason Ward, Dick Farr, Paul Darlington, Robin Weekes, Mark Burkill, Lee Gatiss) would not be included in decision making about such things. Andrew Towner wrote to Dr Lisa Oakley in November 2020 to ask her to lead the independent review, which she agreed to do. Sadly, she had to pull out sometime later because of illness, before it could begin.

We undertook further investigation looking for other external bodies and/or individuals who could undertake such a review. Andrew Towner wrote to Mrs Andreyev on February 15th 2021, to explain at her request how such an independent review would differ from previous processes suggested by Dick Farr and William Taylor in autumn 2018 (which were attempts to mediate between her and Rod Thomas), and that provided by Alison Bennett from Fly Higher Coaching in 2019. Mr Towner explained that the intention was "to commission the same sort of review that was published into *The Crowded House*, written by a professional, or pair of professionals, within the field. This would be a full investigation, with findings and recommendations. If you do not consider that sort of investigation appropriate, or if such findings and recommendations are not what you seek, please do say so. My decision in terms of process was that I should seek someone out, and then make contact with you before any contracts etc were signed. That would be so that you could have time to learn about them, and meet with them, and decide whether you had trust in them, before any process was formally begun. This is still my intention - but, again, do please say if you consider this incorrect."

Mrs Andreyev replied to ask: "1. What exactly is your process? 2. Who has endorsed it and how? What are their names and roles? Are there any links to Church Society? 3. Who has taken decisions? What are their names and roles? Are there any links to Church Society? 4. Whom do you consider to have been named by me?" To which Revd Towner replied:

1. By process, what I mean is decisions and discussions relating to your complaint.
2. The person who endorsed this is totally independent of Church Society (not a member, never been a member, not at a Church Society church) and a leading expert in the field. I would wish to seek their permission in giving you their name with regard to this advice, which was received verbally. I can seek that permission, but when writing to them this morning I received an out-of-office covering this Half Term week, so I cannot promise to have that permission swiftly.
3. The decisions I referred to are internal Church Society ones, specifically our decision to pursue an independent external investigation into your complaint.
4. In our e-mail exchange last year you asked me to take the document on Surviving Church as my starting point, and I've done that.

To summarise the above: no-one you have named to me or in that online document has had any say in any decisions within Church Society regarding our response to your complaint. Those excluded from any discussions and decisions on this includes: Lee Gatiss, Robin Weeks, William Taylor, Jason Ward, Dick Farr, Paul Darlington, Mark Burkill. Bishop Rod Thomas is not a member of Council, and neither sees our Minutes nor takes part in any Council decisions, so he too has not been a part of any of the above.

Mrs Andreyev claimed in response on 17th February 2021 that it was dishonest to plan an external independent review without acknowledging wrongdoing first, before the review. Mr Towner replied the next day reiterating Church Society's "desire to apologise for whatever we have done wrong, and to repent in changed behaviour. The best way to do this is to invite independent judgement so that everything can be considered, and the required apologies and repentance can be understood and enacted by us in a holistic manner. We are committed to putting ourselves under that professional external scrutiny."

Just as it looked likely that we would commission someone else in place of Dr Lisa Oakley, at a stated estimated cost of more than £20,000, a letter appeared in the April 2021 edition of *Evangelicals Now*, from Mrs Andreyev and two others. It said that rather than commissioning such a review, "Church Society should simply address our grievances publicly on a point-by-point basis." This was a change in her stated demands as we understood them.

In the light of this public letter in *Evangelicals Now*, the CS Council therefore concluded after a great deal of discussion that it had to abandon plans to commission the costly independent review by an external body but, as requested by Mrs Andreyev, respond to her allegations directly and in public. On 19th April 2021, Mrs Andreyev also tweeted that, "For an investigation to be truly independent, it mustn't be commissioned or paid for by the organisation being investigated." So it would seem to be impossible for CS to commission any review that would be considered acceptable to Mrs Andreyev in any case.

In May 2021, despite calling for a point-by-point response to her accusations rather than an external investigation, Mrs Andreyev began to complain on Twitter that there was no independent review published or seemingly in process. We did not immediately publish a response to her accusations as she demanded in *Evangelicals Now*, because it has taken time to compile this document you are reading as carefully as possible, check the facts within it, and have it discussed at CS Council. Without this proper briefing into the situation, the Council are not in a position to know how to respond appropriately to the accusations, since many of them were actually not aware of the details of this case. This document now provides them with a fuller picture and should enable them to take a more considered view on how to respond to the Andreyevs.

In order to reply to her allegations adequately, the background and development of the case, above, had to be set out to provide the proper context for our actions. That is when I undertook to compile this document, to brief Council on the background and development of the case. The Andreyevs have been unhappy with suggested processes, including the various third-party mediations conducted or offered to them, and publicly stated that any external investigation should not be commissioned or paid for by us, and that rather than an external investigation, we should make a public point-by-point rebuttal. Given the difficulty of operating within their parameters in a way that might satisfy them, it seems we must comply with her request for a response to the allegations.

14. Letter from Stapenhill Churchwardens

On 8th April 2021, the churchwardens of St Peter's, Stapenhill wrote to me, saying:

Dear Lee

As the current churchwardens, we wanted to write to you for two purposes, both flowing from the list of accusations made online by Kate Andreyev (<https://kateandreyev.com/2021/02/24/church-society-bullying/>), the wife of the vicar here, who has been on paid leave for nearly three years and hasn't been working as vicar throughout that time.

Firstly, we would like to thank you, your staff, Trustees and Council members for all the work you do, contending for the Gospel within the Church of England. You all have our support, gratitude and prayers. We fully understand that Church Society cannot provide pastoral or mediatorial support in the unfortunate case of Irretrievable Pastoral Breakdown between Revd Andreyev and the congregation

here. We are sorry that you have been, wrongly in our view, dragged into this situation by Mrs Andreyev. We are particularly upset to read of her many accusations on her website. Doubtless, this must have cost you all a considerable amount of time, effort and heartache. We were especially saddened to see the article in Evangelicals Now about her accusations of 'abuse' against you, which the paper foolishly linked with the sexual abuse cases involving Jonathan Fletcher and Ravi Zacharias. We can only imagine the stress and upset this must be causing you, the rest of Church Society and your family.

Secondly, we are concerned that many of the things Kate says are inaccurate, or fail to reflect the real situation. Therefore, we thought it might be of help to you to know the actual facts, as far as they pertain to her public accusations (attached as a separate page). We hope this letter is of real help and encouragement to you all.

Wishing you all God's blessings in your work and assuring you all of our support and gratitude.

In his service.

Elaine Dickinson
Terry Shenton

They also provided the following 5 points "pertaining to Kate Andreyev's ('KA') accusation on her website":

1. KA does not mention the massive decline in the ministry of St Peter's, Stapenhill under her husband's ('MA') leadership. This was a key reason for the loss of confidence vote in MA's leadership sent to the Bishop of Derby in 2017 (see point 2. below). The church MA inherited had an Electoral Roll of nearly 300, a usual Sunday attendance of around 200-250, annual congregational giving in excess of £50,000 (£58,907 (unrestricted) in 2003) p.a., a small but united paid staff team, a thriving youth and children's work and had always paid its Parish Share in full. By the time he stopped any work here in mid-2018, the Electoral Roll was around 100, usual Sunday attendance was around 80, congregational giving was just over £26,000 p.a., there were no staff, virtually no youth or children's work and we hadn't paid more than a small proportion of our Parish Share for many years. This massive decline means that it is now highly unlikely that the Diocese will let us have another full-time vicar.

2. She writes that "In 2017, a group within our parish orchestrated a campaign of harassment and bullying against us in order to drive my husband out from his post". What actually happened was that a vote of no confidence was emailed to the Bishop of Derby, Archdeacon of Derby and Bishop of Maidstone, signed by around 50 church members (all but 3 were on the Electoral Roll, 2 of those 3 were regular attenders and 1 was a member of the Ladies group and occasional church

attender). A few of the signatories had recently stopped attending St. Peter's due to the behaviour of MA and come off the Roll. Her claim that this letter was "signed by people who had never even met my husband or been to the church here" is patently false, as is endorsed by the copy of the email and attached petition (see pages 3-8), which we have checked against the then current Electoral Roll. It is shocking to us that her long list of complaints of bullying are an almost exact reversal of the perception of the majority of the church membership here. The email to the Bishop states the main reasons for the loss of confidence in MA's leadership:

"The reasons for this are as follows -

- Fundamental disagreements with successive youth leaders
- Bullying of the group leaders
- Aggressive and volatile behaviour
- Failure to trust
- Inability to work with people
- Presiding over a decline in all areas of ministry."

We could provide you with a long list of detailed cases behind these claims, along with a recording of MA's public bullying in the APCM of a Licenced Reader, and his manipulation of the voting for PCC/Deanery to only have those he wanted on the PCC/Deanery over a number of years.

3. KA mentions the complaint of bullying against MA by a previous warden under the Clergy Discipline Measure taken out in 2018. This action was supported by evidence from other members of the congregation. After discussion with the Bishop of Derby as part of the process, the Bishop confirmed to the complainant that MA understood that he was not to be part of the future ministry of St Peters, Stapenhill and on this basis, after prayerful consideration, the complainant decided not to put the decision to Tribunal to review.

4. KA neglects to mention that the PCC unanimously passed a resolution in 2019 (see minutes extract on pages 9-10 and the actual letter on page 11) informing the Bishop of Maidstone (who forwarded it to the Bishop of Derby) that Irretrievable Pastoral Breakdown had occurred between the congregation and Revd Michael Andreyev. This was passed by the PCC because it is the only reason that an incumbent can be removed from post by a diocese under the Clergy Discipline Measure. Unfortunately, and we haven't been told the reasoning, the Diocese of Derby hasn't as yet instigated proceedings for his removal as Vicar.

5. Finally, despite MA's statement to the church on 3rd June 2018 (see verbatim transcript taken from the recording of the service on page 12) that he was intending to find another job and then move, he and his family still live at the vicarage, drawing his stipend and pension contributions, having done no work at

all for the parish for nearly three years thus completely wrecking any possibility of finding a minister to lead Christ's flock here.

15. Conclusion

Prior to this point, it has been our policy *not* to comment publicly on this case, as it was being dealt with by the properly constituted authorities within the Church of England and it was not our business to publicly interfere in that as a voluntary association / charity. We also considered it best to remain quiet about the behaviour of Michael and Kate Andreyev that we knew about from the congregation and local ministers and our own experience, so as best to enable them to move on from Stapenhill, as they clearly wished to. It did not seem to us to be the right use of our social media channels or network of contacts to inform people publicly about the behaviour of the Andreyevs. It is not our policy in any such situation to do so. We thought that this was, at that time, in the best interests of all concerned.

Mrs Andreyev claimed on Twitter that "it is not good when senior Christian leaders remain aloof & feel no need to respond" (27th November 2020), yet we have wanted to respond for a very long time, but felt the need not to *for her and her husband's sake*. When we may have had opportunity to publicly embarrass and/or discredit them, we have at no moment even considered such things — at some cost to ourselves personally and to the reputation of Church Society. Our policy has been to imitate the one who when reviled did not revile in return, but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly (1 Peter 2:23), and to value others above ourselves, not looking to our own interests but to the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4).

From our perspective, the Andreyevs have been reluctant and resistant to dealing with things through due process, or through Christian mediation, or by means of an independent investigation. A body (such as CS/CST) which is not the competent authority in matters of safeguarding, bullying, abuse, pastoral breakdown, and clergy discipline should not intervene behind the scenes to sort things out for their members in "the old-fashioned way" by exerting pressure outside the proper processes. At every stage we resisted that method of approach, and tried to point to the proper channels for such issues to be dealt with, while still attempting to "go the extra mile" where possible, even where that might be at considerable expense in terms of time, energy, and money. Our complaints procedure has never been used. Social media and the Press have consistently been used, rather than procedures which would allow proper scrutiny of any concerns.

We have been concerned about the welfare of Michael and Kate Andreyev, and that defending ourselves from allegations and being transparent about information that differs from their public narrative could impede their ability and willingness to move on from St Peter's. From the information we have, the narrative Mrs Andreyev has developed through her prolific online engagement over the last few years is not the full picture. The perspective of many of the congregation (and others), who experienced the Andreyevs at close quarters for many years, but whose voice has not been given equal publicity, differs from that of the Andreyevs. Their account of the Andreyevs' ministry is a deeply troubling

one (aggressive, bullying, dictatorial, volatile, and authoritarian in nature) in which they are the victims and the Andreyevs are the perpetrators. For them, it may appear that Mrs Andreyev has effectively seized a cultural moment, in the light of the John Smyth and Jonathan Fletcher cases, to present selective information and present herself and her husband as victims. Church Society may need to reflect on the wisdom of decisions we have made, such as refraining until now from fully and publicly responding to the narrative that was being presented.

Church Society's actions may need to be understood in perspective. We never sought to investigate or adjudicate on the very sad and devastating dispute between the Andreyevs and the congregation of St Peter's, Stapenhill, which has been upsetting for people on all sides. This was on the basis that it would not be appropriate for patrons, who are not trained or set up for this, to take on the mantle of investigators in cases where there are accusations of abuse or bullying. (The *IICSA report on the Church of England* does not suggest this as being appropriate.) We have nevertheless invested much time praying and trying to assist over the past 3+ years. The situation has impacted many people, including those who chose to turn the other cheek in private whilst being publicly reviled. We are aware, as the *Professional Guidelines for the Conduct of the Clergy* put it, that "Power is exercised and experienced in many ways, and the clergy should beware of the potential of using their position to bully others. Equally those who have the responsibility of caring for the clergy should be aware that bullying can be exercised both by church authorities and by parishioners" (page 21). We are also wary about diminishing other people's understanding and experience of what may constitute abuse, and that "The vicar who uses her power to coerce, manipulate or bully an individual into agreement is every bit as abusive – albeit in a different way – as the vicar who uses his status to satisfy his sexual desires. Both are exercising power to achieve their own ends" (page 28).

It was always our earnest desire and hope that the situation would be effectively and speedily dealt with by the properly constituted authorities in the Church of England. We believe in Anglican polity and do not seek to undermine it. However, we believe there has been a failure of church discipline at the diocesan/episcopal level here, leading to a prolonged crisis in St Peter's church which has been without an active Vicar for more than 3 years. This may in part be because one Bishop of Derby retired on 31st August 2018 and was not replaced until 11th February 2019, and because there is only an *acting* Archdeacon of Derby. The Bishop of Maidstone does not have responsibility in Derby Diocese for disciplinary proceedings or safeguarding.

The primary failure here may be with the system of discipline available to the Bishops of Derby, which may be inadequate to deal with the issues surrounding the Andreyevs. Legal proceedings to clarify matters either way under the Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) Measure 1977 or the *Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1963* could be extremely costly, damaging, and protracted, at a time when the diocese is already under financial pressure. Revd Andreyev retains Freehold status (part of an antiquated feudal system of clerical privileges), and its archaic system of protections for clergy restricts the ways in which concerns can be addressed. Those such as Revd Andreyev who are not on Common

Tenure are not therefore subject to the *Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009*, and associated capability procedures. If it were felt inappropriate for him to continue in the vicarage on full stipend and benefits without needing to actually perform the functions of ministry there, it seems this would require the Bishop to act. It should also be noted that Mrs Andreyev is not subject to the social media and other constraints of the *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy*, because she is not the Vicar, and is not subject to ecclesiastical discipline or censure.

The enormous frustration and distress caused by the CDM process may have contributed to the frustrations of the Andreyevs with our seeming inability to provide a solution that satisfied them (and perhaps their belief that it was our responsibility to do so). If there has been a failure in the realm of discipline and dispute resolution (an episcopal function) this appears to have had wide-ranging impacts on many others outside the original context, as the Andreyevs have sought for more effective help to get *their* desired outcomes, from others who are unable to bring these about.

The voices of those in the congregation at St Peter's, Stapenhill have not been as publicly heard as Mrs Andreyev's. Some may have assumed that her version as presented on Twitter and elsewhere was the only one and must be true. Proverbs 18:17 says, "The one who states their case first seems right, until the other comes and examines them." A more balanced approach may have raised questions of whether there was a power imbalance between the vicarage and the pew, or whether there was abuse and, if so by whom? We have sought, as a national charity, not to take sides in a fragile pastoral relationship locally, despite pressure and demands from one side to do so. The use of social media is a debatable issue, but in this case it may well have exacerbated the parishioners' pain: the Andreyevs' cause has been supported and retweeted by those with a platform, who would perhaps co-opt it for their own agendas; while the congregation have not taken to Twitter to air their grievances or push back in this way, but followed due process. We fear they may have been let down by it, and Church Society has been caught up in the impact of all this.

LEE GATISS
28th July 2021