**Debate on Safeguarding 12th February General Synod**

**Bishop of London**

Safeguarding from abuse and responding well to it is grounded in the fundamental themes of Christian theology and thereby it should be woven into the church. Churches should be places where all are welcomed into open and secure communities that make known Christ’s reconciling peace. I lament that in the past we have failed to do this.

Over the last few years I believe that we have begun to see significant changes. Better resourcing, new policies and procedures, better designed training, audits of all the Diocese in the Church of England undertaken by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and a change in culture. But I continue to hear the voices of survivors and victims of abuse who say we have not moved quickly enough, and I am sorry if I have been part of their frustration. But as I think IICAS reflected on the day I attended no one person can do this alone – I cannot do this on my own, the House of Bishops can’t do this on their own.

We are all involved in culture change. Culture is about ‘the way we do things around here.’ Culture change does not happen and the ‘way we do things around here’ does not change unless it is owned by those that are part of the culture. Anything less would turn what are behaviours at the heart of the gospel into something which is seen as a bureaucratic check list.

Culture change is way more successful when it is led by the leaders and when behaviours are reinforced by training, communication, mentoring and audit. But most importantly if we understand what good looks like, we can only understand what good looks like if work with survivors and victims.

The involvement of survivors and victims’ needs to be properly resourced – not just with money but also those with skills. We can’t vote for amendment c) (which I will do) unless we will commit to properly funding the involvement of survivors and victims.

I would want to support the Bishop of Burnley’s comments about power. We do need to reflect on our responsibilities and accountabilities as clergy and maybe we do need to review common tenure and freehold going forward.

Finally, a comment on our struggle with synodical amendments. The voices of survivors and victims may never be ‘in order’ and maybe we should be glad for that. But we must hear them and listen to them and this means that we – Synod and the Church of England - needs to change and not ability of survivors and victims to navigate synodical processes and The Church of England.

We together are involved in a transformation which has begun and which I long to see and my prayer is that we will see changes of heart and of ‘the way we do things around here’ to which I continue to commit too.