

4.8 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré of St. Lawrence of the Chief Minister regarding the terms of reference for the Dame Heather Steel investigation into the Korris Review:

Further to his answer of 4th June 2013 when he stated he had requested the Bishop to make public the terms of reference to the Dame Heather Steel investigation into the Korris Review, would the Chief Minister advise whether he has received an update relating to this matter, given that a visitation connected to the investigation has just commenced for which the terms of reference are available?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

I have again requested that the terms of reference are made public and I have also confirmed that there are no objections to their publication from a Jersey perspective. I understand that this matter is being considered by the Bishop in consultation with Dame Heather Steel and hope that the terms of reference will be made public in due course.

4.8.1 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:

A question that does spring to mind is that given that the Steel review is apparently considering areas surrounding the validity of the Korris Report while the visitations are currently predicated on ... or already assumes the validity or reliability of the findings of the full Korris review, what is the Chief Minister's opinion on having ... the Gladwin visitations start, I believe, today, before the Steel Review is reported. In addition, what possible justification could there be in keeping the terms of reference of the Steel Review secret?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Perhaps if I take the last item first, I can see no possible reason for not publishing Dame Heather Steel's review. With regard to the opening question, the Deputy makes a very good point. I would expect that the Steel review would be completed in advance of the visitation and would then feed in and help in the visitation process.

4.8.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Is the Chief Minister answering this as a private member of the Church of England or as Chief Minister and if it is the latter, can he explain what responsibility he has as Chief Minister with regard to this area?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Not being a private member of the Church of England, I could not answer in that capacity. It seems that on the one hand, Members want me to answer on every given question that they might have and on the other, we are now suggesting that I should not be answering such a question. Of course, the relationship with the Church and State in Jersey is a very important one. The church is intertwined almost indivisibly from our parochial system and therefore I would expect that Members would expect me to have an interest in this matter, being Chief Minister.

4.8.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Could I ask, then, where does the Chief Minister stand on the separation of Church and State?

The Bailiff:

That does not arise out of this question, Deputy.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

But I would like to answer it.

4.8.4 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

You certainly should separate the Church and the State. However, could I ask the Chief Minister, given the concerns expressed by many within the church, but to use the words quoted

on the media: “This issue has been hijacked by crackpots”, will the Chief Minister be stressing to the Bishop that we must, in the interests of refocusing on the actual abused young woman here, that all political interference is kept from any investigation?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

The Deputy is right. There should be absolutely no political interference. I met in a courtesy call yesterday with the Bishop John and the visitation team and they seem already to be understanding the great and what will be a timely task ahead of them. There needs to be a healing process but at the same time, they need to focus squarely on safeguarding and ensuring that there are appropriate safeguarding processes in place and that the interaction of those processes in the church interacts smoothly with those that we have in regard to the State’s processes.

4.8.5 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Could I just add that I entirely endorse the comment that there should not be any political interference in the investigation side at all and also just make the comment that obviously the Chief Minister’s predecessor did obviously lodge the Canons of the Church of the England in this Assembly and also has responsibility for international relations and the Bishop of Winchester is a Member of the House of Lords. So I think, putting all that into the mix, the question I would like to ask is does the Chief Minister have a view as to whether there is presently an increased risk of the relationship between Jersey and the Diocese of Winchester being permanently and irrevocably damaged?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

As I have said on a number of occasions in this Assembly, I personally, and I believe that this Assembly is saddened that an individual suffered while they were in Jersey and we must not forget that and we must make sure that appropriate processes and procedures are in place to deal with the vulnerable and those with very complex needs and that is the first thing I should say. Having said that, it is quite apparent to me that the way that some of the issues have been handled and where we have arrived at today have caused great distress also to the church in Jersey and members of that church and I am hopeful that the visitation recognise that and they see that part of their role is to act as a healing process between the Jersey Deanery and the Diocese of Winchester. For some people, they may not be able to go on that journey and it may be too much for them because, as you know, Jersey is proud of its history. It has changed dioceses in the past and for some people, that is more recent in their minds and therefore they have perhaps looked at that as an option on this occasion again.