

# Church News Ireland

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## Media review

### Church of England Statement on BBC File on Four programme – David Tudor

**The appalling abuse committed by former Church of England rector David Tudor, highlighted in today's BBC File on Four documentary, is a grievous breach of trust and we commend the courage of those survivors who came forward aware of the retraumatising affects this has had on their lives.**

The BBC Programme reveals a catalogue of past safeguarding decisions, that allowed someone who was considered a risk in the 1980s to return to ministry in the 1990s. This should never have happened.

David Tudor who has most recently served in the diocese of Chelmsford, was suspended by the former Bishop of Chelmsford in 2019 following new information, and was prohibited from ministry for life by a Bishops Disciplinary Tribunal in October. The prohibition followed a full admission of guilt to disclosures of serious sexual abuse that were brought as a disciplinary complaint, relating to the time when he was a priest in the Diocese of Southwark and includes serious sexual abuse involving a 15-year-old and a 16-year-old.

Safeguarding decisions and all appointments today are subject to very clear guidance issued by the House of Bishops, which was not in place at the 1990s. It is currently being strengthened further. This involves a clear process, both around safer recruitment and in assessing risk, even when no further action is taken by statutory services, to ensure the Church is a safe place for all.

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The current Bishops of Chelmsford and Southwark have apologised for the hurt and harm caused by his offences and an independent Safeguarding Practice Review will now take place to ensure lessons are learnt from this case.

**Support continues to be offered to the survivors and those affected by this case.**

[<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/statement-bbc-file-four-programme-david-tudor>]

**The Tribunal's Judgement can be read in full on the Church of England Website.**

**Statement from Diocese of Chelmsford**

[<https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/news/a-statement-from-the-diocese-of-chelmsford>]

**Statement from Diocese of Southwark**

[<https://southwark.anglican.org/safeguarding/statement-regarding-david-tudor/>]



**Bishop of Newcastle says CofE “old boys’ club” must be broken**

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**The Bishop of Newcastle Helen-Ann Hartley has given an interview to The Times, saying the next Archbishop of Canterbury must break up the “old boys’ club” protecting an institution which is “working hard to shut the story and the narrative down”.**

She spoke of systemic dysfunction in the institution and in the House of Bishops “in terms of cultures around power, privilege and entitlement that persist”. She was the only bishop to call for Justin Welby to resign, after which she said she was frozen out by other bishops. She told reporter Tim Sigsworth, that colleagues had asked if she was OK and offered a cup of tea, but no one came out publicly to agree with her. She feels so isolated that she has avoided the bishops’ robing room in the Lords. She said: “You might say that’s an overreaction, but I don’t feel confident enough to go into that room with colleagues present. So I’ve asked for my robes to be moved”. However, she said she is overwhelmed by the hundreds of messages, cards and gifts from supporters. The article says she is “something of an outsider in the Church of England”, explaining she was brought up in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, where her father, grandfather and great-grandfather were all ministers. She was ordained in 2005 and became a bishop in New Zealand nine years later, moving back to England in 2018. She said: “All that gives you a really different perspective.”

[<https://www.thetimes.com/article/a57c6811-81d6-49da-bbf0-d4ab55593a29?shareToken=7bdcbfc6623d675b80cda097bde9825>]

## **Listening to references for paedophile ex-fire chief retraumatising, says victim**

**Belfast Telegraph - A Ballymena woman who waived her right to anonymity to speak about the indecent assault she suffered from a former fire chief has said listening to references given about him during sentencing was “retraumatising”.**

Gary Thompson (56) from Newtownabbey, then aged in his 30s, met Nikella Holmes at a church youth group in early 2000s when she was in her early teens.

Last week, at Belfast Crown Court, he was sentenced to serve eight months in prison after pleading guilty to two counts of indecent assault committed in 2006 against her.

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He will also be subject to 15 months of supervision by the probation service, a five-year sexual offences prevention order, and he is prohibited from contacting his victim.

During his sentencing, the court heard how Thompson had been given four character references for consideration from various members of the community, including from a pastor and the CEO of a UK-wide charity. A character reference is a letter or statement provided in support of the accused by people who would not be willing to lie about a person's character.

## Israeli foreign minister calls Simon Harris 'antisemitic'

Israel's foreign minister has accused Taoiseach Simon Harris of antisemitism as he defended Israel's decision to close its embassy in Dublin over Ireland's policies.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/2024/1216/1486678-israeli-embassy/>

## Northern Ireland farming inheritance tax crisis: NFU chief breaks down over suicide risk from Labour plans

**News Letter - NIAC chair Tonia Antoniazzi MP took evidence from NI farmers on Monday on controversial new inheritance tax proposals. She then appeared at the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee today where she asked Tom Bradshaw, president of the National Farmers Union, if the proposals were impacting on farmers' mental health.**

Mr Bradshaw replied that “the most severe human impacts” are that farmers who see no way through “may well decide that they shouldn't be here on April 26” when the changes come into effect.

He added: “No policy should ever be published that has that unintended side effect...”. A visibly distressed Mr Bradshaw was then unable to speak properly for 17 seconds, while Ms Antoniazzi also appeared emotional.

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Jeremy Moody, secretary of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers, told MPs that NI farm land had “distinctively higher land values” than almost all GB land and that NI farms were generally owned by individuals.

This means NI would account for a disproportionate 40% of all related UK farm inheritance tax revenue as a result of the changes. The average NI farms are worth £4-6m, he said – much more than the proposed £1m threshold.

Watch the video of Mr Bradshaw giving evidence at link below

Farmers with mental health concerns can call the Rural Support Helpline on 0800 138 1678.

<https://app.newsletter.co.uk/story/4906219/content.html>

## Brothers jailed for US home repairs scam targeting the elderly

BBC NI - Two County Fermanagh brothers who scammed elderly homeowners in the United States out of hundreds of thousands of dollars have been sentenced to 18 months in a US prison and face likely deportation.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr7v4r81gdmo>

## £700m action plan to boost Magee student numbers to 10,000 unveiled

**Belfast Telegraph - Any further delays in growing Ulster University's presence in Derry will represent a “missed opportunity”, the Magee Taskforce has warned. Mark Bain Education correspondent writes.**

As it presented its final report and action plan yesterday, chairman Stephen Kelly said the onus was now on the Department of the Economy to match the ambition of the city as it seeks to increase student numbers to 10,000 by 2032.

“It is clear that any further delays in bringing forward the funding for these developments, or in delivering the plans that they support, will result in further

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missed opportunities for the economy in the north west and across Northern Ireland,” he said.

The action plan will require an injection of funding — mostly from the Executive — of £343m.

This includes £291m for new developments, property purchases, refurbished buildings and public realm works, and £52m for enabling costs on a one-off basis.

There will also be other increasing annual costs.

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## Image of the day

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## Church News Ireland

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Calls for Archbishop of York to resign over Church failings in sex abuse case

Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell is facing calls to resign over his handling of a sexual abuse case, days before he takes temporary charge of the Church of England.

As Bishop of Chelmsford, Mr Cottrell let priest David Tudor remain in post in the diocese despite knowing he had been barred by the Church from being alone with children and had paid compensation to a sexual abuse victim, a BBC investigation reveals.

A spokesperson for Mr Cottrell said he had been in an "invidious situation" and did not have the legal power to sack the priest. Tudor was only banned from ministry two months ago - after he admitted historical sex abuse allegations relating to two girls.

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However, the Bishop of Newcastle the Rt Rev Helen-Ann Hartley says Mr Cottrell could have done more and should resign as archbishop.

A BBC investigation reveals that the Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell allowed a priest to remain in post despite knowing he had been barred by the Church from being alone with children. The priest in question, David Tudor, had also paid £10,000 compensation to a sexual abuse victim. The woman who received that says Mr Cottrell's failure to act means he should quit. A spokesperson for Mr Cottrell says he did not have the legal power to sack the priest.

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwydgjev70o>](<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwydgjev70o>)

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Israel embassy closure will not deter Ireland from pursuing ICJ case over Gaza

Irish Times - Ireland will not be deterred from pursuing its case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over the Gaza conflict after the Israeli government announced on Sunday it was closing its embassy in Dublin, the Government has said.

Confirming the decision on Sunday, the Israeli ministry of foreign affairs said: "The decision to close the Israeli embassy in Dublin was made in light of the extreme anti-Israel policy of the Irish Government." Members of the Jewish and Israeli communities in Ireland describe closure as 'tragic' and 'distressing'

[<https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/2024/12/16/israel-embassy-closure-will-not-change-irish-policy-on-gaza-government-states/>](<https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/2024/12/16/israel-embassy-closure-will-not-change-irish-policy-on-gaza-government-states/>)

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Israel accuses Ireland of 'crossing every red line' as it moves to close embassy

Belfast Telegraph - Israel has said it will close its Dublin embassy, accusing Ireland of "crossing every red line".

Foreign minister Gideon Saar announced the closure in a statement due to the "extreme anti-Israel policies of the Irish Government".



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Irish premier Simon Harris said he was “deeply disappointed” by the move, with deputy premier Micheal Martin stating there are no plans to close the Irish embassy in Israel.

[<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/israel-accuses-ireland-of-crossing-every-red-line-as-it-moves-to-close-embassy/a789214657.html>](<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/israel-accuses-ireland-of-crossing-every-red-line-as-it-moves-to-close-embassy/a789214657.html>)

Black Santa charity sit-out begins, with focus also on two areas of sometimes forgotten need

Belfast Telegraph - With nine days to go until Christmas, it's that time in the year when I, as Dean of Belfast, search out the thermal layers and thick warm socks to take up my role of Belfast's 'Black Santa'.

Starting tomorrow, this will be my seventh year to stand on the steps of St Anne's Cathedral as Black Santa, carrying on a 48-year tradition which was begun in 1976 by Dean Sammy Crooks.

As always, every pound received, whether donated in coins, cash or by card, will be given away again at the start of February to each of those charities which have applied to the 2024 appeal.

Last year's appeal raised a spectacular £171,000. Can we raise £180,000 this year?

[<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/black-santa-charity-sit-out-begins-with-focus-also-on-two-areas-of-sometimes-forgotten-need/a569351671.html>](<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/black-santa-charity-sit-out-begins-with-focus-also-on-two-areas-of-sometimes-forgotten-need/a569351671.html>)

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**Link in Monday through Saturday from  
early morning**

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