

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**Harry HARRINGTON**

Support persons present: Yes

Others present: Blair Johnstone (Clyde & Co)

1. My full name is Harry John Harrington. I used to have a religious name of Francis, however, I don't think anyone referred to me by that name. My date of birth is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 1950. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Summary of education and working life with the Christian Brothers**

2. I went to what was called a juniorate at age thirteen and a half in 1963. It was like a little boarding school and was the first stage of my religious training. I took my O-Levels there when I was about fifteen.
3. After about two years there I was moved on to do my Novitiate training which was in Toddington in Gloucestershire. The Christian Brothers had a big gothic looking mansion there, it's now owned by Damien Hirst.
4. That would have been in August 1965 and in the November of that year there was a massive fire and we were all evacuated. About seven of us were then moved out to a student house in Cambridge that the Christian Brothers owned.
5. We were there for six or eight months before the repairs and building works at Toddington were completed. We were then moved back to Toddington, where I stayed for another two years. That was mainly for my A-Level studies.

6. After I had completed my A Levels I was asked to go and teach in a preparatory grammar school in Orrell near Wigan and I worked there for two years. I was teaching unqualified and worked mainly with seven year olds.
7. I then went to university in Liverpool from 1970 to 1973 and I did a combined honours degree in English and History. After that in 1973, I went to St. Mary's Teacher Training College at Strawberry Hill, where I completed a one year postgraduate certificate in education.
8. Although my main degree was in English and History, the Christian Brothers then asked me if I would take Religious Studies as my main subject for the post graduate. The college weren't too happy about that, but I then did Religious Studies.
9. I actually first went to St. Ninian's for about a month when I was doing that teacher training. That would have been in 1973. I was asked to help out, it's a theme that comes up because St. Ninian's were quite under staffed. I have very little recollection from that month.
10. I was then asked by the Brothers to go and teach in Birkenhead at St. Anselm's College which was a Roman Catholic Grammar School. I was there for two years, until 1976, when I was asked to go to St. Ninian's in Falkland, and I was there for four years.
11. I was then asked to go down to Plymouth and teach at St. Boniface's College which was evolving into a comprehensive school at that stage. I was then in Plymouth from about 1982 until about 1991 when I was asked to get involved in an inner city project in Liverpool.
12. Nothing really emerged for me at Liverpool and I was then asked to go to Croatia and Bosnia during the civil war. That was to see if there were any missionary needs in that area or anything the Christian Brothers might want to get involved in.

13. I was only there for about three or four months and spent much of my time working in refugee and displace camps.
14. I came back to Liverpool and I was then asked by the congregation leader if I would be prepared to go and teach in the Sudan. I went there and I was in Port Sudan for about a year. That would have been about 1995.
15. I was then asked, again by the congregation leader if I would transfer to Sierra Leone to replace a Christian Brother who had been killed in a rebel ambush. I went there and the country was in the middle of a rebel war at that time. That situation was very difficult. I was sent to help with the training of young west Africans who were interested in joining the Christian Brothers.
16. I was in Africa until 2005. When I returned to England I made the decision to leave the Christian Brothers. After about eighteen months I was asked if I would become the west African region leader which meant travelling all over Africa as part of the African leadership team. My main responsibility was towards work in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Gambia and Ghana.
17. I subsequently got married and settled down in Cornwall. I did do some part time work in further education in an agricultural college and then I retired in 2015.

### **St. Ninian's, Falkland, Fife**

#### *One month teacher training - 1973*

18. As I have mentioned I did go to St. Ninian's for about a month, in 1973, when I was at the teacher training college.
19. As I recall they were understaffed at St. Ninian's and they were feeling pretty worn out, as it was towards the end of the year. So I was only there to help out with some general supervision and things like that.

20. I do remember they were quite pre-occupied with the raising of the school leaving age and they were planning what to do if they were going to be having the children for another year. So they were raising the age from fifteen to sixteen for leavers.
21. Brother [REDACTED] LNA was [REDACTED] when I was there for the month's training. There was a Brother [REDACTED] MHJ involved as well, he may have been the [REDACTED]
22. There was also an elderly brother, Brother [REDACTED] LHC I think he died soon after I went back there in 1976, and I remember a Brother [REDACTED] MCY and Brother [REDACTED] LMZ
23. I had arrived fresh from college all enthusiastic and the Brothers were pretty worn out. When I went back to the teacher training college, after that month, I wrote to the provincial at St. Ninian's about my reflections on being there.
24. I mentioned them being overworked and understaffed and I don't remember getting any reply at the time but two years later I did get a reply saying they noted my interest and enthusiasm and that I was being transferred to St. Ninian's.

*Official posting – 1976 to 1980*

*General*

25. I was officially at St. Ninian's, in a teaching capacity, from September 1976 until the August of 1980. Brother [REDACTED] LNA was [REDACTED] Not a lot had changed in the running of the school and the routine was pretty much the same, from when I had been there in 1973.
26. I had been teaching at secondary school up to A-Level and suddenly I was involved in remedial teaching so I was totally unprepared in the sense of training.

27. In relation to first impressions I would say St. Ninian's was in a beautiful setting in lovely countryside. I was kind of attracted to the work and I felt it was the kind of work the brothers should be involved in.
28. I had little knowledge of the nature of the establishment. I was aware that it is was somewhere between an orphanage and a List D school. I was also made aware that the children came through the Children's Panel system rather than through the juvenile courts, as in England.
29. It was certainly impressed on me many times, in Scotland, that the way they ran things was more enlightened than in England. There was a sense of children being treated as children and being cared for.
30. I was aware that the children had come from difficult circumstances and were being placed there for their care and education.

*Layout at St. Ninian's*

31. St. Ninian's was like two rectangles, with a main entrance. There was a main hall, which was quite imposing, and a big stair case on the right. There were a number of large rooms and stairways that went up to another section of the building, where there were a number of classrooms and rooms for brothers.
32. In another section, which was through a corridor on the right, there was a linen room and the dining room for the Brothers. It was directly above the kitchen and they had one of those dumb waiter lifts, that went up and down with all the food.
33. There was also a community chapel in that section and the dormitories or bedrooms for the children. The showers and toilets were all along there as well. Below that there was a craft room, changing rooms, access to the kitchen, and, I presume, the laundry or something like that.

34. Outside there was a courtyard where they used to park the school bus and a grassy area. Down below there was some designated playing fields and on the other side of the building towards the East Lomond Hills there was a garden area and a little stream or burn that ran down the side of the building.

*Staffing*

35. Brother LNA was [REDACTED] I think he also looked after the junior end of the dormitories. I think Brother MHJ was the religious leader of the community [REDACTED]. He didn't keep good health.
36. There was also a Brother LMZ or LMZ, who looked after the senior end of the dormitory, then there was myself and Brother LHC who died not long after I started my posting in 1976. I think that was about it as far as the brothers go.
37. There was also some lay staff. BHB had been there for a long time. BHB was a local, from the village, and took a lot of [REDACTED] classes and that sort of thing. I don't know what his qualifications were, but he was also a lay preacher with the Church of Scotland, in the village.
38. There was also a MIK who joined during my time there. He taught [REDACTED], that sort of thing.
39. During my time, there was also two [REDACTED] at St. Ninian's, MBV and a Brian, I don't remember his surname. I don't know if they were both there at the same time or not.
40. I do think that it was during my time at St. Ninian's that [REDACTED] was first appointed to work there. I know MBV had been in the Christian Brothers and had worked with LNA in Gibraltar. So they knew each other and he was [REDACTED]

41. I think he took on a lot of work like attending Children's Panels, which would have been something [REDACTED] LNA [REDACTED] did, so that relieved a bit of pressure there. I don't remember much about Brian, in fact that may not even be his correct first name.
42. There were a number of people helping around the place, and I can't remember all of them. I do remember a cook, called Lizzie, I don't remember her surname.
43. Then there was a woman, Margaret, who was appointed as a special remedial teacher, I don't remember her surname either. She was from Glasgow and she related quite well with a lot of the kids.
44. There was another elderly lady, I think she was Margaret too, and she did some cleaning in the chapel and the community room. She lived down in the village as well.
45. There was a woman who looked after the linen and the laundry and clothing. I think she was called Stella Scott, or something like that. Then there was Morris Kilbain, who was employed by the estate, and was a groundsman or something like that.
46. I remember Brother Paul Kelly and Brother John Farrell who were at St. Ninian's towards the end of my time there. Paul took over the senior end and John Farrell [REDACTED] LNA [REDACTED]
47. That's all the names I can remember from my time at St. Ninian's, although I'm sure there would have been a few more.

*Pupils at St. Ninian's*

48. The age range was from about twelve up to sixteen, that had changed from fifteen, from my month in 1973.

49. There was about 40 plus boys staying at the school. I have a feeling 44 was the limit but I can't remember exactly. As far as I know the boys were placed there by Children's Panels
50. I have little knowledge of the administration side of things but I would have presumed it was the local authorities that were meeting the costs for the boys.
51. My impression was that most of the boys came and stayed from the age of about twelve right through until leaving aged about sixteen. Some did come and go but most would have stayed there for most of that time.

*Role at St. Ninian's*

52. My primary role was to teach. When I came up to Scotland, having been teaching A-Levels in England, I was told by the Scottish Teaching Council that my qualification wasn't acceptable for teaching in a Scottish secondary school. This was because my PCGE main subject was different from my degree main subjects.
53. I then had to spend three months travelling into Edinburgh, to Craiglockhart College. I was told that if I completed a course there then I would be qualified to teach in a Scottish secondary school.
54. I drove there and back for three months, usually driving back in time to get involved with the evening activities at St. Ninian's. I then got my certificate and I was qualified to teach.
55. I have memories of teaching English and a bit of maths but I was involved in a range of subjects. My other primary responsibility was to organise the sporting activity, which was a big thing in the place. There was almost something every day. They would play football, rugby, cross country running, cricket and athletics.



56. They also had general games most afternoons and every so often they would have, what they called, a house match. All the boys were all divided into two separate houses, the Ramsay's and the MacDonald's.
57. They were red and blue and the house matches were extremely competitive. They would also take on other schools. Apart from that there was other organised activities which I would be involved with. I would always be involved helping out until lights out or whatever.
58. LNA also taught me to drive the school bus. The idea at St. Ninian's was that every second week or so everybody that could go home for a break would, so I would drive the boys over to Buchanan Street bus station and drop them off. I would then pick them up on the Sunday.
59. There was a side to St. Ninian's that appealed to me in the sense that it was a bit off beat and you didn't know what was going to happen next. It was an alternate to working steadily in a grammar school for exam results.
60. I did enjoy that side of it and I enjoyed driving the school bus and taking the boys to the beach at St. Andrew's or away skiing with the army in Glenshee. There was a couple of holidays in Wales as well.
61. My room was in the main part of the building, near the classrooms. I only have a very vague memory of the actual room. I remember my window looked down on the driveway towards the village.
62. I didn't have any responsibilities in relation to the running of the dorms.

*Training at St. Ninian's*

63. I remember being generally shown around and told what was going on. A kind of walk round with people responsible for supervision. There was no formal training whatsoever, it was all just picked up as I went along.
64. I was accountable to [REDACTED] LNA [REDACTED] but there was a sense, within the community, that we were quite a collaborative team that worked together. It wasn't strongly hierarchical in that sense. It didn't operate with a clear line management as they do nowadays, but I believe [REDACTED] LNA [REDACTED]
65. I had no training in remedial teaching or remedial education and I had no previous training in the kind of work that was being done there. I don't even know what sort of training was available in those days. Certainly nothing like what is available nowadays.
66. I did make the connection, when I was thinking about it, that the routine in St. Ninian's, Falkland, in 1976, was almost identical to the routine at the juniorate I was in at the junior teaching place.
67. It was kind of like a little boarding school with all the ethos of a 19<sup>th</sup> century boarding school. Lots of exercise, fresh air, good food, education and all that kind of thing.

### **Routine and life at St. Ninian's**

#### *Admissions*

68. I can't remember anything in particular for new boys starting. I do remember one particular social worker, Pauline, who used to come up with the children from Glasgow. She was very pro St. Ninian's and she would very often try to get the children she was working with placed there.

69. I'm sure the children would have been shown around but I don't remember what kind of induction they would have had. I'm sure the boys that were already there would have been very interested and would have been around the new boys and chatting to them.
70. I do remember the social workers did write very thorough and detailed reports which were kept in the office. I remember sometimes having occasion to read them and they were very detailed and thorough. I do remember that.

*Siblings*

71. If siblings came in together to St. Ninian's they would have been assigned to a dormitory according to age. They certainly weren't kept as a family. There were a fair number of groups of siblings and it was run like a boarding school so they would go to the appropriate age group.
72. They wouldn't be segregated, they would spend time together during free time or recreation, but they wouldn't be kept together as a group.

*Mornings, bedtime and washing*

73. I imagine the boys would have got up about 7 o'clock but I have no real memory. My memory is that the community had a morning prayer every day in the chapel and mass was nearly every day.
74. I didn't have involvement in supervising them getting washed and dressed. That would have been [REDACTED] LNA during most of the time I was there. I don't think they needed to be heavily supervised or anything like that.
75. The boys were in fairly small rooms. There would have been about five or six to a room. The rooms went around the courtyard, where the school bus was kept. There were showers and toilets at the far end.

76. The boys were separated by age, with junior rooms at one end and senior rooms at the other. It was a very communal style of living with no real private space. The boys had very few personal possessions.
77. The bedtime routine was that juniors went to bed slightly earlier. I seem to remember that once all the lights were out there was some piped music played. I think that was to help the boys get to sleep.
78. I'm not sure about showers and bathing. If the boys were coming in from sports activities they must have showered at that time but I do remember them having showers in the evening as well. I don't know if they would have had two showers in a day though.
79. The Brothers did not stay awake all night to supervise, there was nothing like that. There were two rooms in the dormitory area that were assigned to Brothers, who would sleep there. [REDACTED] LNA looked after the junior end and I know that, latterly, Paul Kelly looked after the senior end, but I can't remember who looked after it before him. I think it must have been [REDACTED] LMZ

### *Food*

80. I think the standard of food was quite good. The lady, Lizzie, that lived in the village, was the cook and I think she was a pretty good cook. She always made extra things like cakes and scones and that kind of thing.
81. The boys were pretty well fed, it was part of the ethos of the whole place. They were well fed and they had plenty exercise.
82. All the food came from the same kitchen so I assume whatever the Brothers were having was the same as the boys. I just don't know though, perhaps the Brothers had some things that were a bit more elaborate.

83. As far as I remember I did very little meal supervision. I know Brother **MHJ** did some of it, but I don't have any strong memories of the meals. They had a breakfast and a lunch, then around tea time they had bread and jam and a cup of tea before they went out for games. They then had their evening meal.
84. The boys sat at circular tables with maybe five or six to a table. That's about as much as I can remember.
85. I can't say I remember any problems with any boys not eating their food. I do remember **LNA** in an attempt to be a bit more civilised, stopped the bread and jam at tea time. He arranged for sandwiches and cakes to be put on the tables and the boys were then encouraged to be pass them around. That actually worked and I was impressed with that, as many of us thought he had no chance.

#### *Clothes*

86. As far as I remember there wasn't any uniform. I have no memory of how they were clothed but I'm fairly sure the boys all had their own clothes. I do have one memory of **LNA** trying to introduce having the boys look smart when they went home at weekends.
87. They would go off home all smart and well-dressed but when they came back, some member of the family would have taken all the nice clothes and they would be missing.
88. I can't picture anything to do with the laundry. I know there was a big linen room but all I can picture is bed linen. I don't think the boys had anything to do with laundering their own clothes though.

*Work*

89. I have no memory of any of the boys working outside of St. Ninian's. I don't have any memory of them cleaning or doing any particular work or chores about the house either.
90. I remember there was a Brother Coffey who was there for a few months. He has passed away now. He did say he was keen to get the boys involved in gardening activities. That seemed to work very well and I remember seeing the boys working away very enthusiastically.
91. Brother Coffey used to go out with the boys and he would wear his big black religious habit. Eventually we realised it was full of bars of chocolate so I think that was just a fun activity.
92. I don't have any memory of any work experience for boys leaving St. Ninian's.

*Leisure time*

93. Inside there was television and table tennis and, I think, pool games. Some of them also played outside and there would have been Brothers on that supervision, but I can't remember very much about that.
94. There would always be two or perhaps three Brothers on supervision for leisure time and we were constantly just going around checking on the boys. We would keep a general look out, perhaps if there was anybody we hadn't seen for a while or something like that.
95. I can't picture a library but there must have been books available. Many of them wouldn't have been into books, I don't think there was a great interest there.
96. I imagine there would have been board games. I don't remember much in the way of toys other than footballs but I have been thinking about what the boys did when it

was cold and wet outside. One thing I do remember was a game they played called crab football. They played that sitting down.

97. There was also an indoor hockey game, so they did have games and activities but not any indoor sports rooms or anything like that.
98. As far as I remember, the boys didn't leave St. Ninian's for activities, or for clubs or the scouts or anything like that.

*Trips home to see relatives*

99. From memory all the boys went home every other weekend. The bulk of them would go to Glasgow and then disperse from Buchanan Street bus station. We did drop some off at the edge of Blackhill and places like that. I don't know how the ones from Dundee or Edinburgh got home. I can't remember that.
100. I don't think there was much contact outside the visits home. I don't think there was any letter writing and there weren't any phone calls.
101. Families did used to send sweets and presents. I have a memory of a pile of magazines arriving which had come via the Falkland Islands from Glasgow, so I don't know what address had been put on that.

*Holidays and trips*

102. On a Sunday there was a mass at Falkland Palace that we would all go to. I don't think the boys were otherwise allowed to go down to the village, not without supervision anyway.
103. Any trips out would have been supervised. I remember we went to the Hibs ground to see Aberdeen win the premiership. I remember watching it that night on Match of the Day and when a young Alex Ferguson ran onto the pitch he was surrounded by kids from St. Ninian's.

104. There was also regular trips to St. Andrew's during the summer, when we would go to the beach.
105. We also had regular ski trips that we went on with the army and there were two trips to Wales as well. I think [REDACTED] LNA [REDACTED] was involved in those but I don't know how they came about.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

106. I don't remember any boys being at St. Ninian's over the Christmas period in my first two years.
107. I think at one point though there were a few that did stay. That was for one Christmas and I can't remember much about that.
108. I can't remember much in terms of Christmas celebrations. Brother [REDACTED] LMZ [REDACTED] did put on a Christmas concert for the village and people came to see that. He did *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* one year and the boys were all involved in that. I remember the boys were getting stage fright and were quite panicky so it was a big relief when that was all over. It was done in a fun and light hearted way.
109. I can't picture any birthday celebrations but they must have had a cake or something. I do remember that whenever the boys got any presents or gifts of sweets, they were always sharing them out. It was a communal way of living and I think they developed skills in that kind of a way.

*Personal possession*

110. I have no recollection of there being any conflict over personal possessions. The boys had nothing really. If somebody had something special it wouldn't have lasted very long. There was almost a sense of maintaining the commonality, rather than the



individuality, of the child. If they got sweets, they were very generous in sharing them with everybody, staff as well, that was the atmosphere of the place. It wasn't uncommon to be offered sweets by the boys.

111. I don't remember any pocket money but I'm not sure about that. They may have had some access to money for sweets.
112. We did go to St. Andrew's and [REDACTED] LNA [REDACTED] was keen on golf. He said to the boys that if they were around the edges of the golf course and found any lost golf balls to take them to him and he would give them something for them. He had to stop that because the boys started running onto the fairways to get balls.

### *Schooling*

113. All the boys at St. Ninian's were of secondary school age and some did need some remedial work. They were all schooled at St. Ninian's. I don't remember any of the boys going to any outside schools.
114. There was definitely classes in the morning and I'm sure there may have been some in the afternoons as well. There were about four rooms upstairs in the main building that were classrooms.
115. I can visualise occasional English lessons and a lot of that was remedial work. We used these reading labs and there were boxes of cards which were graded.
116. I also remember thinking we should have some idea of current affairs so I got copies of newspapers and cut out little articles. I asked questions but my memory is that they wouldn't answer a question until they knew they had the right answer. So the boys would then ask me questions about the subject until they had the answer then everyone ended up with full marks. In a sense that just showed me how little training I had in remedial education.

117. I don't have strong memories of the schooling and I can't remember much about all the other subjects. Given there was so few of us teaching we must have taught a fair range of subjects.
118. I don't remember going in and out of classrooms, I can only visualise one classroom, so maybe it was more like a primary school. I don't know.
119. I do know, with some of the senior lads, there was an effort to try and prepare them for the world of work. I remember taking some of them out on visits. We went to a bakery and a brick works, things like that.
120. As I have said, I had to get my Scottish teaching qualification to teach at St. Ninian's but I don't think all the teachers were qualified. I don't think [REDACTED] BHB [REDACTED] would have been qualified. He was very good with all the craft activities but I don't think he was a qualified teacher.
121. The Christian Brother teachers would have been qualified, I'm sure Margaret the remedial teacher certainly was.
122. I don't remember the boys doing any certificates for examination or anything like that. I think an effort was made to make the education good and remedial and to help the boys progress in maths and that kind of thing.
123. I don't want to say the schooling wasn't a priority but, in a sense, there were other things that were seen as more important. Things like the boys' general well-being, their socialisation and that kind of thing.
124. I think they did some creative activities and some things that might prepare them for the world of work. [REDACTED] MIK [REDACTED] would have done that kind of thing, and perhaps they did some cooking, but I can't remember. I don't think they were taught about life skills, other than some of the visits they had to various work places.

125. I can't remember if there were any inspections like an Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education).
126. The boys didn't sit any formal examinations and I can't remember there being any final certificate from the school, or anything like that.

### *Bed-wetting*

127. I know that at the junior end bedwetting was quite a problem. Then at the senior end it kind of sorted itself. I used to wonder if the sound of the running water from the small river right next to the junior dorm was a possible connection.
128. It was certainly an issue but there was never any fuss made over it. I don't think the boys were made to feel bad or in fact, felt bad about it, in any way.
129. From memory I think the boys that wet the bed were just asked to take their sheets down to the laundry area. I'm not sure if they were to rinse them out first but they certainly took responsibility for taking them down to the laundry area.
130. I have a vague memory of a new boy coming to me really upset about it. For the boys who had been there any length of time, it wasn't something they were bothered about. They weren't made to feel bad about it or bullied or made fun off.

### *Healthcare*

131. I can't even think if there was a matron or someone who came in for health checks or any medical needs. I don't remember anything about that. I have no memory of visits to dentists or doctors or hospitals, nothing like that. There was obviously some provision but I really can't picture that at all.

### *Deaths*

132. There weren't any deaths amongst the boys during my time at St. Ninian's.

*Religious instruction*

133. I have no visual memory or any specifics in relation to the teaching of religion. It would have been one of the lessons and I would have had responsibility for one of the classes. It would have been part of the curriculum but I just can't picture myself teaching an RE lesson.
134. There was the attendance of the mass every Sunday. We all marched down and marched back again. Some of them may occasionally have come to the morning mass as well. I couldn't be sure if any of the boys were involved in being altar boys.
135. I imagine there would have been a grace before meals but I have no memory of that and I don't think there was an expectancy for the boys to pray at night.

*Running away*

136. Absconding varied, it kind of came in fits and starts. You could go for long periods when the atmosphere in the place was very relaxed and pleasant. Then a tension could build up, perhaps when boys were there for the first time and they would start running away.
137. When we were supervising, boys running away was always something that was on your mind. You were always checking no one was missing and you were always on the lookout for it. The place was completely open so it wasn't difficult for the boys to run away and you wouldn't know where to look to find them.
138. I remember one incident in the middle of winter when we were having a cross country run and three or four boys ran away during the run. Eventually they got freezing cold and huddled together in a telephone box. They phoned the local police and got them to pick them up and take them back.

139. There were also one or two occasions when the boys didn't come back from weekend leave. I would be waiting for them at the bus station and they wouldn't be there so I'd have to head back and report it.
140. I do remember, I think, towards the end of [REDACTED] LNA [REDACTED] time there, he was feeling the strain of the responsibility and there were a few instances of boys running away. I think [REDACTED] LNA [REDACTED] may have thought he might be losing his grip or control.

*Visits from friends and family*

141. I've no memories of any family or parents, or any people coming up to St. Ninian's to visit the boys. The only contact I would have had was if they were needing picked up at the bus station, I would have done that in the school bus.

*Visits from social workers*

142. There was the odd visit from the social workers. I don't remember that being frequent but I do remember a few social workers coming up, particularly if they were bringing a child in for the first time.
143. I do remember this one woman social worker from Glasgow who had a number of boys there and she would come from time to time. I don't remember her name.
144. I can't remember if social workers came and took boys away for hearings or anything like that. I've talked to friends, involved in fostering, and I know it's very constant now, all that kind of thing, with social work visits, but I don't think visits were very frequent at all.

*Access to children*

145. There were occasions when people would visit and, because of the way everything was mixed in, there would have been some kind of contact with the boys.

146. Other than the staff I've mentioned I can't think of anyone else. People may have been invited in for presentations. The police was one I remember. They came in and did a thing with the boys. They came roaring up with their sirens going and they would bring in a dog handler. They would just chat with the boys, that's all I can remember.

### **Inspections**

147. I don't remember any visits from any inspection boards, no Ofsted inspections or local authority visits or inspections.
148. There was always an annual visitation within the Christian Brothers, when somebody would come from the provincial council and stay a few days. They would speak to all the Brothers.
149. I don't think they would have spoken to the boys. They didn't address them or interview them, but perhaps they would have chatted to them informally.
150. I can't remember seeing any written feedback from any Christian Brothers visitation but the emphasis would have been on the Brothers rather than the boys and the educational side. They wouldn't have been there to inspect the schooling side of things, it would mainly have been Brothers and Brothers issues.

### **Review of care / a child's progress / records**

151. I don't ever remember doing any written report for any of the boys. Given the size of the place, the small numbers of staff and that there was a social worker employed, it would probably have been done through some kind of conversation. I was never involved in any report writing that I am aware of.

152. I am not aware of any follow up contact with any boys who were at St. Ninian's. I don't think the whole area of record keeping was very advanced. There wasn't much in relation to details and logs books and reports on kids who had left. Not much about any of that at all.

### **Discipline and punishment**

#### *Roles and responsibilities when it came to disciplining the boys*

153. I remember when I went to St. Ninian's in 1976 [REDACTED] LNA had [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I think his strength of character, in a sense, tended to ensure that.
154. I can't remember administering corporal punishment but I don't think it would be unlikely, it wouldn't have been a no go area for me. The option would have been there and I think normally I would have tried to talk things through with [REDACTED] LNA .
155. I would have seen corporal punishment being administered by [REDACTED] LNA and by other members of staff but never anything excessive.

#### *Corporal punishment*

156. One punishment that jumps into my mind immediately was children being sent to the main hall to stand there and wait. At some point they would then be spoken to.
157. There was the use of the strap. It was a leather strap and the use of it was traditional within the Christian Brothers, or something like that. There was one kept in the office but who used that and how often, I don't know.
158. I have no memory of any excessive or inappropriate corporal punishment and I can't visualise any particular incidents.

159. There was no formal training or instruction on how you would administer any punishment. That applied to all sorts of things, like how to restrain a kid, or what to do if any of them were fighting. There was no training or anything like that.
160. There was no written code of conduct at St. Ninian's but there was a sort of guideline that had existed for decades within the Christian Brothers. Something like not administering more than two straps, one on each hand and not strapping a child within the first hour or half hour of them coming to school in case their hands were cold. There were those kind of traditional things within the Christian Brothers.
161. If the boys were fighting, that would probably result in some form of corporal punishment.
162. If the boys ran away, that was different, that was beyond corporal punishment and they wouldn't be physically punished. There was a sense that you weren't going to solve much with corporal punishment.
163. I do remember an incident on the football field when I first went there to teach. I don't remember what the actual incident was about but one of the kids started screaming and shouting at me and then ran off. I was absolutely shaken by that and I spoke to [REDACTED] LNA about it.
164. [REDACTED] LNA dealt with it by talking to the boy and calming everything down. I was thinking it might have been dealt with more seriously than that but then I came to see that that approach was good.
165. I doubt if any record of discipline or punishments would have been logged, I don't have any recollection of anything like that. I don't recall any kind of log book for recording any kind of daily incidents.
166. I remember, early on in my time there, a social worker was based at St. Ninian's and I don't know how much they recorded, but I think they would have done such paperwork.



167. My memory of [REDACTED] LNA [REDACTED] was that he wasn't big into administration and bureaucracy. He was a very practical, down to earth, kind of person.

### **Abuse in St. Ninian's**

168. I'd have to say I never saw any form of abuse. I can't remember anything that would have occurred to me at the time and even looking back I can't picture anything ever happening that I would have thought was abusive or that I thought, just wasn't on or wasn't acceptable.

169. To my knowledge, no boys ever spoke to me or raised any concerns to me about abuse or bullying. If there had been I imagine I would have spoken to [REDACTED] LNA [REDACTED]

170. I don't believe there were any set guidelines. I don't think set guidelines were a feature of the place at all. There was a lot of informal contact and incidents were talked about everyday by the community Brothers.

171. We had meals together and would sit together in the evening, watching television and the like, so anything that happened during the day would come up in conversation. Pretty much everything that happened was discussed or mentioned or referred to.

172. I think it would have struck me, if something was completely out of line and that would have been something I'd have remembered, I'm sure.

### *Bullying*

173. I don't remember kids being systematically bullied by their peers or that kind of thing. There would be arguments and disagreements but I don't remember any child being bullied.

## Reports

174. I was never the subject of any police complaints or civil claims during my time at St. Ninian's. I have never been asked to provide any statements.

## Knowledge of Brothers subject to abuse allegations

Brother [REDACTED] LMZ

175. I knew Brother [REDACTED] LMZ [REDACTED] He was in his 30's, he was kind of heavy and he smoked quite a bit. I can't quite remember his role but his qualification was to do with [REDACTED] He was quite a mercurial character and wasn't in great health. I don't think he lived that long after he left St. Ninian's.
176. He was very committed and enthusiastic. I would describe him as being very unconventional and having a very bantering kind of relationship with the kids. He wanted to be friendly and jokey on one side but also had to slip into being in charge on the other side.
177. I think he wanted to have a friendly easy going relationship with the boys. He was a good entertainer, a bit of a comic and got on well with the boys. He had a nickname which was not used offensively or as a joke, it was in more of an acceptable way, in a polite manner.
178. The boys had nicknames for members of staff. They weren't meant offensively and you would be addressed quite politely by those names. I have never experienced that in any other institution where I have worked.
179. I believe I would have been present when punishments were administered by Brother [REDACTED] LMZ [REDACTED] but I can't say for a definite incident. It would never have been in a manner that would have raised any concerns with me and never anything abusive.

180. I can't remember any boy making any complaint to me about Brother [LMZ] and I don't think the passage of time has affected my recollections.

*Brother [BHD]*

181. I remember the name Brother [BHD] but I don't remember him ever being at St. Ninian's while I was there. I've never heard of any complaint relating to that brother.

*Brother John B Mark Farrell*

182. I can't remember exactly when he came to St. Ninian's but I think [REDACTED] [LNA] It might have been during my last year. He was originally from Ireland, but had been in the South Africa Province for quite a while before being posted to St. Ninian's.

183. The intention was that he was [REDACTED] [LNA] [REDACTED] at St. Ninian's. He was quite enthusiastic about that role and was very committed to the work being done at St. Ninian's. I remember he was quite aggrieved when the place was eventually closed down.

184. He was in his mid to late 30's. He was quite different to [LNA] in that he was very business-like, smart, self-conscious and decisive. He seemed genuinely interested and concerned in the boys, and the boys got on well with him. He had a fair bit of warmth about his personality.

185. Brother Farrell would have been the principal person in relation to administering discipline and punishment to the boys. I can't visualise any particular incident of him punishing a boy but I would have seen him disciplining boys.

186. It wouldn't have been anything other than was in the guidelines of how the Brothers administered discipline. I didn't see him do anything that I would consider to be

abusive, not then, or now thinking back and I've never heard any of the boys make any complaint about him.

187. I don't think the passage of time has affected any of my recollections in relation to Brother Farrell. I feel [REDACTED] LNA [REDACTED] was tiring and finding the work a bit of a strain, so the arrival of Brother Farrell was almost like a breath of fresh air.

Brother [REDACTED] MBS [REDACTED]

188. I do remember Brother [REDACTED] MBS [REDACTED] but only for a short period of time. I don't know for how long or what his involvement was. He was known as [REDACTED] MBS [REDACTED]

189. I think he was in his 60's. I would say I knew him reasonably well as I had met him in other communities. I don't have any recollection of his interactions with the boys and I can't think of ever being involved in any discipline or punishment with the boys.

190. I was aware he had some kind of an alcohol problem but I'm not aware of anything in relation to abuse or any complaints with any of the boys.

Brother [REDACTED] LHC [REDACTED]

191. I remember he was kind of elderly and he passed away, not long after I went there in 1976. I only have a vague memory of Brother [REDACTED] LHC [REDACTED] I remember visiting him in hospital and attending his funeral.

192. I have no memory of any interactions he had with the boys. I don't think he was in that particular role. He didn't do any teaching or anything like that. He was like a benign elderly grandfather type figure.

Brother [REDACTED] MHJ [REDACTED]

193. I remember Brother **MHJ** he didn't have particularly good health either. He was in a semi-retired role and from memory he took responsibility for the finances and was perhaps a religious community leader.
194. I do remember him doing some general supervision and possibly some teaching. He was quite a companion of **LNA** they were more of an age, and would play golf together of an afternoon.
195. I can't picture him interacting with the boys but he did do a fair bit of supervision so he would interact with them and talk with them, that kind of thing.
196. I can't remember him being involved in any discipline and I didn't hear any complaints about him.

*Brother* **MCX**

197. I know a Brother **MCX** but I don't remember him being at St. Ninian's. There were a number of Brothers who came for a short period of time so perhaps he was one of them.
198. He would have been in his 50's but I can't actually picture him being there. I have no recollection of his role or of his interaction with the boys and no memory of him being involved in any discipline.

*Brother Paul Vincent Kelly*

199. Brother Kelly came to St. Ninian's towards the end of my time there, maybe my final year. He was very fit and enthusiastic, very involved with sports and teaching. He was responsible for the senior end of the dormitory.
200. I taught him to drive the school bus so he could carry on with those activities. He interacted well with the boys but I can't picture any particular incidents. I have no

memory of him being involved with any discipline and I have no recollection of him being abusive in any way.

201. I was aware that boys sometimes spent the night in Paul Kelly's room. Allowing boys to sleep over in his room wasn't a common practice or anything like that, it was an exception.
202. I think, in the case of Paul Kelly, they would have been more senior boys, and he mentioned this to me in conversation, not detailed or specific, that he was trying to create a more relaxed, homely, family type atmosphere. That might have been at weekends when some of the boys were away, so there were occasions when Paul Kelly would allow some boys to spend the night in his room.
203. At the time, boys sleeping over in the same room as Paul Kelly didn't strike me, in any way, as being related to any abusive sort of situation.
204. That might seem naïve with time, but no boy said anything and nothing gave me cause to be anxious. Looking back now you would regard that as a red flag sort of issue. I know having talked to people involved in childcare that there are now so many specific and clear guidelines as to what's appropriate and what's not appropriate but, at the time, it didn't strike me as inappropriate.
205. I don't think anyone there at that time discussed the overnight stays. I don't remember any formal meeting to discuss whether or not overnight stays should take place. I suppose looking back that was quite naïve, but, I think, the whole sense of what involves child abuse now, is so in the public domain, that you see things. I don't think seeing the overnight stays as possible child abuse is something that would spring to mind or that you would expect or consider as unusual. It never did occur to me at the time.
206. Even with the benefit of hindsight, apart from it not being appropriate, there was still nothing I could then link to me thinking there was obvious abuse. It didn't connect to

things children or other people were saying, there was nothing else indicating an abusive situation was going on there.

Brother [REDACTED] LNA

207. Brother [REDACTED] LNA was very committed to St. Ninian's and had a strong presence. He was respected by the children although I do feel he began to feel the strain towards the end because he was taking on such a level of responsibility.
208. He was very genuinely caring towards the kids and treated them with respect to enhance their dignity.
209. I did see him discipline boys but never anything I would describe as abusive. I don't think his inclination was to go directly to corporal punishment, he was very big on talking things through with the boys.
210. I have no concerns over [REDACTED] LNA behaviour with the boys and I didn't receive any complaints from any of the boys about [REDACTED] LNA I don't think the passage of time has affected my recollection. My feeling is that the boys had a lot of respect for [REDACTED] LNA and that he was a strong stable influence on the place.

[REDACTED] MBV

211. [REDACTED] MBV was a former Christian Brother. He had left the Brotherhood by the time I was at St. Ninian's. He returned as [REDACTED] and was employed as [REDACTED] at St. Ninian's. He did not reside at St Ninian's but stayed with his family elsewhere. I remember we all thought this was a step forward.
212. [REDACTED] MBV was very committed and enthusiastic and I think he took a lot of responsibility off [REDACTED] LNA He was involved with the Children's Panels and helped with a lot of the office work which [REDACTED] LNA wasn't very keen on anyway.

213. I don't think he would have done very much in the way of supervision. He took children off to the Children's Panels but I've no great memory of his interaction with the children. I've no memory of him being involved in any discipline or punishment. That wouldn't have been his role.

MCG

214. I don't remember a MCG at all.

Mr BHB

215. Mr BHB was a very warm, homely, garrulous grandfather figure. He was a lay and was a very good, caring spiritual man. He related very well with the children from what I can remember.

216. He was very enthusiastic about what they were doing, I think it was he taught. I can't think of him being involved in any discipline or any inappropriate behaviour.

### Reporting of Abuse

217. Boys at St Ninian's were free to speak to any of the staff about matters which caused them concern, such as abuse or bullying. However, I am not aware of any code of practice enabling them to make a formal complaint and detailing how such a complaint should be processed. No boys ever spoke to me about anything like that.

218. If I'd had any concerns I would have spoken to Brother LNA or Brother Farrell, when he but that never happened. There wasn't a formal report for such concerns. Issues came up every day and they would be discussed every day. I don't remember there being any formal procedures.



219. Looking back I don't think there was ever anything I saw that should have been reported and I'm not aware of any reports being made to the police.

### **Record Keeping**

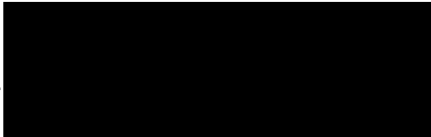
220. I can't remember any record keeping whatsoever. We may well have done, but in terms of teaching, we may have kept things like marks and results and that kind of thing but I've no memory of any award ceremonies or certificates or anything like that.
221. I've certainly not kept any records of anything to do with St. Ninian's since. I've no photographs or anything else.
222. There were the detailed social work records or files that I have mentioned which were kept securely in an office. They were considered confidential, but with relevant information being shared with members of staff.
223. If a new child was coming in, you would read them to get as good as possible an understanding of the child and their circumstances. I remember sitting in the office reading those reports.
224. I can't remember being asked to provide reports on the children. So much of that was conveyed in informal conversations and that kind of thing. I suppose I would make whoever was writing the reports aware but I can't remember formal meetings or anything like that.
225. I don't have much recollection of anything to do with completing records. I think it would have been the in-house social worker and the head teacher that would be responsible for records.

### **Closing Comments**

226. I am aware that allegations have been made, by a number ex-pupils from St. Ninian's, of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. I really don't know why that would be and I don't want to comment on anything I have no recollection about.
227. My sense was that a lot of good was done at St. Ninian's and every time a child came there they probably didn't want to be there. They were probably brought out of a difficult situation, and to come from Glasgow to the middle of Fife must have been quite a shock to the system for them.
228. I have to accept that it's possible there was abuse, and impact from abuse, on boys who were at St. Ninian's, but that I was just not aware of it at the time.
229. For any child to be taken from a broken home situation and placed in St. Ninian's, for their safety and nurture, and to then be abused and traumatised, in the home, is shocking and totally unacceptable. Every effort must be made to ensure such things never happen again.
230. I am not denying the occurrence of abusive treatment of children but in the interests of creating a balance, it must be pointed out that many good and idealistic people worked at St. Ninian's. This was under difficult circumstances and often with a lack of appropriate training but with the intention of giving the children the best possible nurturing and care. I genuinely believe that.
231. There are many lessons to be learned from the experiences of child care at St. Ninian's. Child care is a very challenging task and appropriate training, monitoring and evaluation are essential and the voices of those in care must be heard.
232. I presume that most lessons have been learned given that this was forty years ago and so much has happened in child care. I assume that the main focus of the Inquiry is to listen attentively, with compassion, to all those who have experienced trauma and abuse.

233. I think things like training, greater supervision, monitoring, evaluation, record keeping, guidelines and then appropriate counselling and support for people working in those situations are the lessons to be learned for how to run it.

234. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..........

Dated..... *THURSDAY 2 MAY 2019,*.....