



Neely abuse: Church of Ireland Bishop 'apologises' for unnamed rector - ignores Belfast-Tipperary transfer

Our client, Edward Gorman, settled his case on Friday against the Church of Ireland's Diocese of Down and Dromore and the Scouts Association arising out of historic abuse he suffered at the hands of Reverend William Neely. Rev Neely was the Minister for Mount Merrion parish in east Belfast and a local scout leader in the 1970s. Our client's claim included allegations that Rev Neely groomed and repeatedly sexually assaulted him in the early 1970s.

Neely was transferred to Tipperary in 1976. It has long been our client's belief that Neely was transferred with full knowledge that he was an abuser and yet was allowed to continue to act as a Minister.

Our solicitor, Gary Duffy, who represented Mr Gorman commented: "This is one of the first cases to resolve involving allegations of historic clerical sexual abuse within the Church of Ireland.

Eddie has been at the forefront of bringing to light the abuse that was carried out in the Mount Merrian parish in East Belfast and the actions of the Church of Ireland to protect Rev Neely. It is significant that Neely was transferred out of the East Belfast Parish in 1976 and was moved across the border to Co Tipperary. It has long been our client's belief that the Church of Ireland was aware that Neely was an abuser and that he was transferred across the border to prevent him being exposed. If that is the case then it raises serious questions as to why he was allowed to continue in his role as a Minister and if this role allowed him access to children.

I commend Eddie's tenacity in stepping forward to call out the horrific abuse he suffered when he was a child. His bravery in discussing his abuse has now led others to come forward to discuss their own at the hands of Rev Neely."

Mr Gorman, speaking on the settlement stated: "I really hope my case today will help support calls for a long overdue inquiry into clerical abuse in this country. I am but one of a number of victims of Neely. There may be many others out there who for obvious sensitive reasons will find it very difficult to come forward . Hopefully my case will give confidence to others to do just that. I myself found a voice after listening to the narratives given by other victims and survivors who were brave enough to go public with their accounts of historic abuse. It helps give me some closure but no amount of money will ever compensate for the loss and distress Neely put me through."

Proceedings were issued in 2022 and concluded last Friday just prior to Mr Gorman giving evidence. The settlement included £100,000 compensation, the costs of the legal proceedings to be covered by the Defendants and only the Scouts Association settling without a formal admission of liability. ENDS



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