

Blackstone
CHAMBERS



**REVIEW INTO NON-RECENT CHILD SEXUAL
ABUSE ASSOCIATED WITH MANCHESTER CITY
F.C.**

DATED 16 MARCH 2021

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FOREWORD

The Club and the Review Team are extremely grateful and extend their sincere thanks to all of the witnesses who have agreed to be part of the review. Many of the witnesses are survivors or family members of survivors. A high proportion of them have spoken about their experiences for the first time in decades. The Club and the Review Team recognise the difficult nature of the subject matter about which they have been asked. The bravery shown by them is immeasurable.

Further, the Club and the Review Team thank all of their expert partners who have contributed to the operation of the review, and in particular those at LimeCulture, Intersol, Survivors Manchester, RASA Merseyside and RASASC Cheshire. Their expertise, commitment, support and advice has been of the highest standard and has enabled the Review Team to follow a survivor led approach that remains at the heart of the review.

Finally, the Club and Review Team extend thanks to Cheshire Police, Greater Manchester Police and The FA Review for their collaboration and co-operation with the Review Team's work.

Section A

Introduction and Scope

1. DEFINITIONS

Manchester City Football Club Limited	MCFC/the club
City Football Group Limited	CFG
The Football Association	The FA
The Premier League	The PL
Greater Manchester Police	GMP
FA's Independent Review into Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse in Football	The FA Review
NSPCC hotline for footballers suffering abuse	The NSPCC Hotline
Jane Mulcahy QC and Pinsent Masons LLP	The Review Team

2. INTRODUCTION AND ROLE

- 2.1 In November 2016, a number of former footballers gave interviews to press outlets revealing that they had suffered sexual abuse whilst playing at a junior level. Several of these named a former youth coach, Barry Bennell, as their abuser. Barry Bennell was active in junior football in the North West during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s and, for part of this time, was asserted to have had some form of association with MCFC.
- 2.2 Pinsent Masons¹ was instructed before these articles, based on a litigation claim from one former youth footballer, sent to MCFC in March 2016. Shortly afterwards, Jane Mulcahy QC was also instructed by MCFC. The Review Team has been instructed by MCFC and CFG to understand and establish:
- 2.2.1 The structure of youth coaching and scouting used by, associated with or connected to, MCFC prior to the establishment of the Premier League Academy system in 1998;
- 2.2.2 The parameters of Bennell's relationship with MCFC, and any other individuals suspected of involvement with similar child sexual abuse or anomalous behaviours; and
- 2.2.3 The extent of any knowledge, actions (or inactions) or complicity of MCFC and its personnel in relation to anything known or suspected about Bennell or others.
- 2.3 The Review Team was further instructed to:
- 2.3.1 Advise MCFC and CFG on the outcomes of the review of the issues detailed in 2.2.1 to 2.2.3 above; and
- 2.3.2 Review current safeguarding practices across CFG to ensure they are at the highest possible standard and make recommendations to minimise any risk.
- 2.4 This report deals with the issues detailed in 2.2.1 to 2.2.3 above ("**Stage 1**"). The review of current safeguarding practices (2.3.2 - "**Stage 2**"), which includes a review and assessment of current practices by independent safeguarding experts, LimeCulture, (see 2.7.2 below), has been concluded and the Club continue to monitor the effectiveness of their safeguarding response through a number of workstreams and continue to meet "all the Premier League safeguarding standards, most to a very high level".
- 2.5 Leading the Review Team are:
- 2.5.1 **Jane Mulcahy QC** – Queen's Counsel of 25 years' call, with expertise in sports and employment law, including child safeguarding in sport. Jane provided overall supervision and advice on the review; and
- 2.5.2 **Julian Diaz-Rainey, Partner, Pinsent Masons** - Julian is a forensic litigator who worked on the Shipman Public Inquiry, the Baha Mousa Inquiry and the Al-Sweady Inquiry. He has worked on disputes and regulatory matters involving the sports sector for over 20 years. He has also acted for sporting clubs and bodies in internal inquiries on sensitive legal issues. He has led the operational side of the review.
- 2.6 The Review Team's role has principally involved:

¹ Pinsent Masons LLP, whose registered office is 30 Crown Place, London EC2A 4ES

- 2.6.1 Seeking out and considering all available contemporaneous documentation either through the club, witnesses or other sources such as press articles;
 - 2.6.2 Identifying and interviewing as many witnesses as possible who may have relevant information on the issues being advised upon;
 - 2.6.3 Crystallising all interviews into either statements or file notes to ensure the capture of the best possible evidence from each witness;
 - 2.6.4 Ensuring full and proper safeguards are in place for the interview of any vulnerable witnesses via the use of expert interviewers and the provision of support before, during and after the interview;
 - 2.6.5 Attending at the criminal trials of Barry Bennell and Bill Toner; and
 - 2.6.6 Advising MCFC throughout on its potential liability and litigation risk based on the Review Team's work².
- 2.7 The Review Team has engaged the following experts to assist in the execution of its role:
- 2.7.1 **LimeCulture** – LimeCulture is the UK's leading training and consultancy company specialising in responses to sexual violence. LimeCulture has provided expert advice to the Review Team on best practice when conducting its review, most particularly in respect of contacting, interviewing and supporting vulnerable witnesses. The organisation was also instrumental in developing the interview process and introducing the other expert partners referred to below. As detailed later in this report, LimeCulture has also worked directly with MCFC in respect of Stage 2.
 - 2.7.2 **Intersol** – Intersol is a leading training and consultancy company specialising in interview techniques and practice. The team at Intersol includes former police officers with extensive experience in the interview of survivors of sexual violence and other vulnerable individuals. Intersol leads all interviews with witnesses considered potentially vulnerable.
 - 2.7.3 **Survivors Manchester, RASA Merseyside and RASASC Cheshire** – three leading support service organisations with specialisms in assisting survivors of sexual violence. Support from one of these organisations is offered to potentially vulnerable witnesses at all times from first contact - before, during and after any interview and even if an interview does not take place.
- 2.8 At all stages the Review Team has liaised with the police to ensure that no criminal investigations are or were compromised by the Review Team's work.
- 2.9 MCFC, CFG and the Review Team are acutely aware that reporting on matters such as this can, at times inappropriately, place the offenders at its centre and create an infamy or notoriety around them. This report out of necessity has to divide its content up by offender in order to fulfil its terms of reference. Whilst aware that this is, to an extent, unavoidable, MCFC and CFG have stressed to the Review Team throughout the need for a holistic response to the issue which places the interests of survivors and their families at its centre. The Review Team has always sought to do this when conducting its work.

² The Review Team's advice to MCFC and CFG, save as set out in the Recommendations below, and all documentation obtained during or created during the Review, remains privileged

3. SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THIS REPORT

- 3.1 This report details the Review Team's opinions on the factual issues and the recommendations made by the Review Team to MCFC/CFG. It does not contain any form of analysis as to MCFC's or CFG's legal position regarding matters contained within this report. As footnoted above, the Review Team's advice to MCFC and CFG, save as set out in the Recommendations below, and all documentation obtained during or created during the Review, remains privileged.
- 3.2 The Review Team's clear instructions from MCFC and CFG when conducting this review were to 'leave no stone unturned'. The instructions have evidenced a clear desire to take full responsibility for issues raised in this report where the Club's previous actions (or inactions) have contributed to or facilitated the sexual abuse of young players within the club's youth system.
- 3.3 Whilst reporting regularly to MCFC and CFG and advising them on their potential litigation and liability risk, the Review Team has acted completely independently when conducting its enquiries. As an example of this, the identities of survivors are not disclosed to MCFC or CFG unless the survivor agrees to this and are, instead, ciphered. This ensures that an individual's anonymity is not compromised.
- 3.4 This report does not contain details of either (i) suspected offenders who are currently subject to ongoing Court proceedings, or (ii) any persons investigated where allegations have been found to be (or are as yet) unsubstantiated.
- 3.5 The Review Team has sought, subject to ongoing criminal investigations, to reach out to all self-disclosed survivors of child sexual abuse potentially linked in some way to MCFC to allow them the opportunity to tell their story and feed into the review. This has included making contact with a survivor directly (or through a survivor's solicitors) where a survivor has disclosed abuse, or through the police (on a 'no-names' basis) where a survivor has to date maintained his right to anonymity.
- 3.6 The Review Team has made a policy decision not to make unsolicited approaches to individuals who are suspected survivors of child sexual abuse but who have not self-identified. It is for a survivor to decide whether he wishes his story to be heard.
- 3.7 All witnesses that the Review Team has spoken to have been assured that the evidence given is provided on a confidential basis. For that reason, no witnesses are specifically named in this report except where they have given, or are responding to, accounts which are already in the public domain.
- 3.8 Equally, where the Review Team has received accounts from survivors of child sexual abuse that may not have come from an interview under this project, the survivors are not named to protect their anonymity and right to privacy.
- 3.9 Other, non-witness sources are cited where possible.
- 3.10 The Review Team has largely received wholehearted co-operation from the witnesses to which it has spoken. It has, however, been hindered by the fact that, given the passage of time, many individuals whose evidence the Review Team considers would be important are now dead or were unavailable to the Review Team due to serious illness. This includes all of the former chief scouts from the relevant periods, the ex-Chairman, the director who had responsibility for youth development, and numerous former managers, youth coaches and scouts.
- 3.11 Further, certain integral figures from the relevant times have been reluctant, or have refused to date, to speak to the Review Team. Clearly, the subject matter of this project is extremely sensitive. The Review Team cannot compel any individual to take part – participation is purely voluntary – and, accordingly, none of the individuals who

have declined to take part are named in this report. The Review Team has afforded all identifiable key witnesses the ability to participate where possible.

4. CONTEXT

- 4.1 The Review Team is acutely aware that sensitivity to safeguarding, regulation within football and social attitudes have progressed significantly since the relevant periods detailed within this report.
- 4.2 In particular, virtually no safeguarding regulations or guidelines existed during the relevant times, either within The FA or local league rules. It was only at the advent of the academy system in the mid-2000s that such regulations and guidelines were introduced.
- 4.3 The Review of Non-Recent Child Sex Abuse at Chelsea Football Club, written by Charles Geekie QC³, comprehensively sets out a history of the development of child protection legislation and safeguarding at 'Section 2 – Historical Context'. The Review Team does not propose to repeat that excellent summary but recommends that it is considered in tandem with this report.
- 4.4 The Review Team does feel it appropriate, however, to comment on the numerous references to the social context that witnesses to the project have mentioned.
- 4.5 Many witnesses have stated to the Review Team that child sexual abuse simply was not talked about in society during the time periods the Review Team has been considering. Public knowledge of the issue was significantly under-developed and safeguarding as a concept barely existed. It was generally not conceived of that community figures, in all walks of life, could be child sex offenders.
- 4.6 As a consequence, a large number of survivors spoke of a fear of reporting their abuse and having no knowledge of how they would even go about doing so. As with many forms of non-recent abuse, there was a genuine fear of how adults – be they family members, teachers, other coaches or the police – would react. Many survivors felt they would not be believed and told to not 'tell tales'.
- 4.7 The lack of understanding was particularly prevalent within football. Many of the senior figures at clubs, including MFCFC, were almost exclusively older men with an inadequate awareness – and certainly no formal training – of safeguarding issues generally, or of how to identify them and how to respond to them.
- 4.8 Equally, many non-survivor witnesses pointed out the lack of policy and procedure regarding safeguarding issues at the time. As an example, the Review Team had a request from The FA Review to ask former MFCFC employees whether they would have reported inappropriate behaviour to The FA at the time. A common response to that enquiry was that there was no process for doing so.
- 4.9 Put simply, there was virtually no framework within football for either learning about or reporting safeguarding and child protection issues at the relevant times. The reporting of safeguarding issues was not provided for, encouraged or enforced by The FA, and failure to do so was not sanctioned in any way. It is, therefore, difficult to make criticisms of the club or its officials for failure to report any such issues to The FA.
- 4.10 The Review Team has accordingly sought to bear in mind the context of the time and the higher standards that exist now when determining its views and making any criticisms in this report.

³ This can be found at <https://www.chelseafc.com/en/about-chelsea/safeguarding-review>

Section B

Barry Bennell

5. BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Barry Bennell is a convicted child sexual abuser who was first arrested for child sexual abuse offences in the USA in 1994 and has numerous subsequent convictions in the UK.
- 5.2 Following his first conviction in the USA, he was one of the subjects of a television documentary in the UK as part of Channel 4's Dispatches series, entitled 'Soccer's Foul Play' ("**Dispatches**"). This dealt with three instances of child sexual abuse in football. Dispatches was filmed in late 1996 and aired in early 1997⁴.
- 5.3 In its section on Bennell, Dispatches stated, among other things, that:
- 5.3.1 Bennell had been associated with MCFC for seven years in the late 1970s/early 1980s as a coach for feeder clubs connected to MCFC;
 - 5.3.2 Bennell was "never on staff" for MCFC but received expenses and the use of the club's training facilities; and
 - 5.3.3 MCFC received a letter of complaint that boys had stayed late in Bennell's bedroom during a visit to a holiday camp.
- 5.4 Two senior MCFC employees, Ken Barnes (former Chief Scout) and Chris Muir (former Director) were interviewed on Dispatches. The impression created by Dispatches is that MCFC had suspicions about Bennell but looked the other way due to the high calibre of players he was able to provide to the club.
- 5.5 For reasons unknown to the Review Team, Dispatches did not, at least at the time of its first airing, have a significant public impact.
- 5.6 Bennell next came into the public eye in 2012 when newspaper articles linked him to suicides of his former players⁵. At that time, MCFC issued the following statement in response to enquiries about this:
- "Barry Bennell was not an employee of Manchester City although the club was connected to him in his capacity as a 'scout' in youth football at the time in question. The club ceased to deal with Mr Bennell as soon as complaints regarding his alleged inappropriate behaviour emerged."*
- 5.7 Again, however, there was no prolonged press coverage at this stage.
- 5.8 Following his arrest in 1994, Bennell was convicted of the following child sexual abuse offences:
- 5.8.1 A conviction in Florida, USA in 1995, for which he served two years of a four-year prison sentence, for the abuse of a 13-year-old British boy while on a football tour there;
 - 5.8.2 Convictions upon his return to the UK in 1998 for 23 counts of sexual offences against six boys aged from 9 to 15 years old, for which he was sentenced to nine years in prison;
 - 5.8.3 A further conviction in 2015 for an offence against a 12-year-old boy in 1980, for which he was given a two-year sentence.

⁴ Full programme available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fB7mbQwhn2k>

⁵ 'The World At His Feet', The Sunday Times, 13 May 2012

- 5.9 In November 2016, following an interview given by the former professional footballer, Andy Woodward, to The Guardian newspaper, numerous former players came forward stating that they were also abused by Bennell when they were young footballers. Bennell was out of prison on licence at the time but was arrested shortly afterwards and charged with further offences.
- 5.10 In February 2018, Bennell was convicted in relation to further criminal proceedings relating to 55 counts of child sexual abuse against twelve complainants. After a trial in January and February 2018, he was found guilty of 50 counts and sentenced to 31 years in prison, plus a year on licence.
- 5.11 In June 2020, Bennell was charged with nine further counts of child sexual abuse against two further complainants. He subsequently pleaded guilty to those offences and was sentenced on 8 October 2020 to a further four years in prison and an additional year on licence.

Bennell's involvement in the Review

- 5.12 Significant consideration was given as to whether the Review Team should seek to interview Bennell as part of the Review. The Review Team were keen to ensure that all avenues were explored when gathering evidence and acknowledged that this would include seeking to obtain the perspective of Bennell himself. On the other hand, the Review Team was at all times conscious to maintain the survivor-led approach and ensure their interests came first.
- 5.13 Having considered all those points, it was determined, in the interests of obtaining the fullest body of evidence possible, to contact Bennell and seek an account from him. However, repeated invitations to him to contribute an account were refused.
- 5.14 The Review Team has, however, seen a number of accounts given by Bennell as part of his criminal proceedings and separate civil litigation. Bennell also made some limited assertions as to his association with MCFC in correspondence in which he refused to participate in the Review. Accordingly, where this report refers to Bennell's account of matters, it has been sourced from these accounts and not through a direct interview with him.
- 5.15 The Review Team is mindful of concerns about the degree of reliability of any account given by Bennell, particularly in circumstances where the Review Team has been unable to test it with him directly. Accordingly, the Review Team has sought to verify any statements made by him with other witnesses, where it is possible to do so, rather than relying on his statements in isolation.

6. BENNELL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH MCFC

Bennell's background

- 6.1 Barry Bennell is originally from Hulme in Manchester. He had a reputation in the area as a thief and was also rumoured to have unhealthy interests in children – both young girls and boys. He ran a disco night at a local youth club and, on one occasion, was stabbed by a local gangster due to rumours of his 'messaging about with kids'⁶. He also had a string of convictions for small-scale theft and other minor offences⁷.
- 6.2 Bennell was also a talented footballer, however. He claimed to have an association with Chelsea as a youth player but told people that an injury – reported variously as a broken leg or ankle – meant he did not turn professional. He became involved in coaching youth football at a young age, in or around 1970⁸.
- 6.3 Bennell began running junior football teams in the North West in the early 1970s. The first of these was a club named Senrab (which was not associated with MCFC) which Bennell began running at the age of 18. The Review Team believes that Senrab's first season was 1971/72⁹.
- 6.4 Virtually all witnesses have stated that Bennell was an excellent coach with very modern techniques for the time.

Bennell's teams

- 6.5 According to multiple sources, the Manchester-based Senrab was initially thought to be linked to Chelsea FC. Numerous witnesses, including several former Senrab players, said that they were told by Bennell that this was the case. The Review Team notes, however, that Chelsea's own review found no evidence of any link between Bennell, his teams and Chelsea.
- 6.6 In approximately 1975, Bennell became associated with MCFC. Accounts as to how this occurred are mixed. Bennell states he was introduced to Ken Barnes through first team players who shopped at the market stall he worked at and learned about his successful Senrab side. Len Davies, who was a scout for MCFC throughout the relevant time periods, gives a slightly different account, stating that Bennell approached Ken Barnes to 'undertake the coaching and creating [of] junior sides'¹⁰. The accounts seem to agree, however, that it was the success of Senrab which led to Bennell's association with MCFC.
- 6.7 Based on the evidence of various witnesses, the Review Team believes that Bennell had a form of association with MCFC in two distinct time periods. The circumstances surrounding this are discussed in more detail below. Exact dates are almost impossible to establish but in summary:
- 6.7.1 **Period 1** - between summer 1975 (as above) and late 1979; and
- 6.7.2 **Period 2** - between late 1981 and spring/summer 1984.
- 6.8 Senrab was renamed 'Whitehill' for the 1975/76 season with Bennell in charge¹¹. Whitehill had traditionally been the name of MCFC's feeder side and the name was

⁶ Witness evidence of P094, who knew Bennell before his football career, and LTE 016

⁷ Bennell's criminal record, as disclosed in the proceedings against him in Florida

⁸ 'When I started talking to Barry Bennell's victims, I had no idea how deep abuse ran in football', Daniel Taylor, The Observer, 26 November 2016, quoting an interview with Bennell in the Crewe Alexandra programme in 1989.

⁹ Manchester FA Handbook 1971/72 and 'Ex-youth footballer tells ITV News of abuse by Barry Bennell in early 1970s' – ITV News, 28 November 2016

¹⁰ 'I'm A Football Scout' - Len Davies, page 65

¹¹ Manchester FA Handbook 1975/76

well known in the local area. Bennell decided to re-name his Senrab team as 'Whitehill' to take advantage of that widespread local knowledge¹².

6.9 Bennell appears to have run or been involved in the coaching of two 'tiers' of teams during his association with MCFC:

6.9.1 Teams which were widely regarded, at least within the local community, as feeder teams associated with MCFC – notably:

(a) In Period 1, Whitehill. Bennell was the lead figure with Whitehill, coaching and managing the side; and

(b) In Period 2, Bluestar (which was also at various times/different age groups named Pegasus, Xerxes, Midas and Adswold Amateurs). Bennell, initially, had a more limited role with this side - he coached/trained the teams, although they were managed by other individuals – but Bennell later managed one of the younger age groups himself.

6.9.2 Other teams which he founded and ran from scratch. These were in existence from around 1980, were largely based in Derbyshire (where Bennell lived from late 1979 onwards) and included teams named White Knowl, Palace, New Mills Juniors and Glossop Juniors. These teams had a much looser association with MCFC, and Bennell denies that they had any association at all.

6.10 He was also involved in school football, notably coaching North West Derbyshire Schools and possibly other county teams such as North Staffordshire and South Cheshire¹³. His coaching in school football had no connection to MCFC and was organised directly with local schools.

Bennell's relationship with MCFC - Period 1

6.11 During Period 1, Bennell ran and coached a feeder team associated with MCFC known as Whitehill. He was the principal figure for the side¹⁴, even though he involved others in the administration of the team and other age groups were run by other individuals¹⁵.

6.12 The Review Team has seen no evidence that Bennell was ever an MCFC employee. At the time he had a full-time job, working for a clothes store, Just-In Fashions, in the underground market in Manchester city centre.

6.13 Notwithstanding this, Bennell and his teams, especially the established feeder teams, had a close association with MCFC. Of all such teams, Whitehill was the most closely associated. It was, in effect, an unofficial junior team.

6.14 The FA rules at the time precluded clubs from having formal arrangements with youth players under the age of 14, in order not to interfere with school football, which was given priority. As such, any teams below Under 14 level could not be formal MCFC youth teams and their coaches would not be employees.

6.15 As a result, clubs formed links with junior sides which operated as 'feeder' sides under a different banner. These clubs were notionally independent, were registered with local FAs and fell under the jurisdiction and rules of The FA at the time. There

¹² P047, who played for Broome's Whitehill, stated to the team that Bennell 'stole' the name, and Bennell confirms this in his own accounts

¹³ Witness evidence of P048 and P113

¹⁴ Witness evidence of P030 and P051

¹⁵ For example, P018

appears, however, to have been minimal supervision of junior football at The FA level. As a result, despite the arrangements being, on the face of it, contrary to the intention of The FA's rules, there does not seem to have been any action taken to stop the practice, which was widespread amongst professional clubs.

- 6.16 Evidence of association which has been brought to the Review Team's attention includes the following matters, which are each evaluated in turn. These are not intended to be an exhaustive list, but represent the most common matters cited by witnesses:
- 6.16.1 Bennell reported on the progress of his teams/players to Ken Barnes, former professional player and long-time Chief Scout of MCFC. Several witnesses give accounts of Bennell's interaction with Barnes, with some stating that he would be in Barnes' office at Maine Road discussing junior football, at times for several hours¹⁶, and Bennell has been described by former MCFC employees as one of Barnes' network of part-time scouts¹⁷. Bennell, and other individuals in similar roles, had virtually complete autonomy on how they ran their teams, however¹⁸. Some of the more established feeder teams had committees made up of parents of boys in the team and a secretary who managed their finances¹⁹;
- 6.16.2 Bennell had a 'scout's pass' identifying him as representing MCFC²⁰. The Review Team has not seen this pass, but is aware that some part-time scouts were given one as proof of their association with MCFC;
- 6.16.3 Several witnesses state, and it has been reported in the press, that Bennell also had business cards which described him as MCFC's 'North West Representative'. The Review Team has seen two versions of such business cards and investigated as to whether these were issued by MCFC. The Review Team understands that Bennell acknowledges that they were not MCFC sanctioned and that he had them printed privately. This is, to an extent, supported by witnesses who worked in off-field roles at MCFC during Period 1 and who do not recall anyone having business cards. Further, club stationery was not in the style of the one attributed to Bennell²¹. Accordingly, the business cards are not afforded significant evidential weight by the Review Team;
- 6.16.4 It is alleged in Dispatches that Bennell was paid expenses to assist with the running and/or coaching of junior teams and scouting activities. Witnesses have stated that he may have also been paid if one of his scouted players made the MCFC first team²². No payroll records survive which would assist in determining whether either of these assertions are correct. The Review Team has established that there was not a consistent, homogenous approach to the payment of part-time scouts. Some were undoubtedly given contributions to their expenses²³; whereas others, despite long-term associations with MCFC, received nothing at all²⁴. From speaking to other individuals involved with Whitehill²⁵ (whether Bennell's age group or others), the Review Team's view is that coaches/teams were certainly not funded in their entirety – having to secure their own sponsorship and holding their own fundraisers and events²⁶ -

¹⁶ Witness evidence of P013

¹⁷ Witness evidence of LTE019, CE003, CE001

¹⁸ Witness evidence of P056

¹⁹ Witness evidence of P045

²⁰ Witness evidence of P045, P001, P110

²¹ Witness evidence of LTE038

²² Witness evidence of P018, P045, CE001, LTE038

²³ Witness evidence of CE001 and LTE038

²⁴ Witness evidence of LTE002

²⁵ Witness evidence of P045, P056, P018

²⁶ Witness evidence of P018 and P067

but did receive contributions from MCFC, whether that was equipment, the free use of pitches or old kits;

- 6.16.5 Bennell would use the training facilities at both Maine Road and MCFC's training grounds (Park Road, Cheadle and then Platt Lane – though the latter could be booked privately as it was jointly owned with, and run by, Manchester City Council) to train teams and for matches. Several witnesses have described Bennell as being well known around these sites and having a key to Maine Road, which allowed him to use the gym facilities and equipment cupboards there²⁷. Players from the established feeder sides – such as Whitehill and Bluestar - were also treated by MCFC's physiotherapy team if they suffered injury²⁸;
- 6.16.6 Both Bennell and the teams he was connected to would wear MCFC kit – whether training gear or match kit – during some of their matches²⁹. The Review Team has been provided with several photographs from the time showing both Bennell and the Whitehill team in such kit. Bennell states that he purchased the kit privately, from local wholesalers, and not through MCFC. Witnesses have stressed to the Review Team, however, that it was very difficult to buy replica kit in that period and some of Bennell's own personal clothing could not be bought in shops. One witness describes Bennell as having a hoodie that was issued by MCFC to all the managers/coaches of feeder teams³⁰ and the Review Team has again seen photographs of Bennell (and other feeder team coaches) wearing that hoodie. The Review Team considers it likely that Bennell got at least some of his kit from MCFC;
- 6.16.7 Players for teams connected to Bennell would receive free match tickets for MCFC games. Witnesses have described Bennell picking up tickets from Maine Road's reception, where he was well known, and passing them out³¹; and
- 6.16.8 The universal perception was that Whitehill was part of MCFC – both among those who played for them and those who played against them. As one witness put it, *"Whitehill was City and he was Whitehill – there was a direct line between them"*³². Another said that Bennell *"was not just a guy that could put a word in for you – he was in the system"*³³.
- 6.17 During school holidays, the boys playing in feeder sides were invited to more formal trial games at MCFC's training ground where they would be observed by MCFC staff. The Review Team understands that such trials, which did not interfere with school football, were permitted by The FA rules at the time. Various witnesses have mentioned such games during both periods.
- 6.18 In 1979, consideration was given to Bennell becoming an MCFC employee, as Youth Development Officer. However, the then Youth Team Coach, Steve Fleet, refused to work with him³⁴. This role was eventually given to another scout and the circumstances around it are dealt with later in this report. This employment rejection led to Bennell's 'break' from being associated with MCFC; instead he went to work at Taxal Edge children's care home.
- 6.19 During his 'break' from association with MCFC, Bennell also ran teams based in the Derbyshire area. Again these went by a number of names – with some teams

²⁷ Witness evidence of P018, P030, P045, P067, P046, P001, P136, P131, P089

²⁸ Witness evidence of P051

²⁹ Witness evidence of P030, P018, P045, P067, P046, P023, P013, P136, P135, P131, P089, P100

³⁰ Witness evidence of P006

³¹ Witness evidence of P018, P045, P046, P023

³² Witness evidence of P030

³³ Witness evidence of P051

³⁴ See paragraph 7.15 below

changing names to enter as many competitions as possible – but during this period teams known as, for example, White Knowl, New Mills Juniors and Palace were active. These teams were established by Bennell alone and compiled by him through scouting of local schools. As a result, they were more localised and based out of one community - in contrast to the established sides such as Whitehill and Bluestar, which brought in the best players from all over Manchester and the North West.

- 6.20 As mentioned above, the Derbyshire-based teams appear to have been much more loosely associated with MCFC than teams such as Whitehill, if any association existed at all³⁵. It appears that the best players from these teams had to attend trials with the established feeder sides, such as Whitehill and Bluestar, in order to get into them³⁶, but only if successful interchanged between the Derbyshire sides and the more established teams. Furthermore, another coach, who assisted with one of these teams, states that they were not funded by MCFC at all and were instead funded by the players paying subs³⁷.
- 6.21 Despite this, accounts from survivors of abuse and from witnesses show that Bennell clearly assured players that these teams were feeder teams and the players experienced some of the same benefits such as MCFC kit, free tickets, visits to Maine Road and Ken Barnes' office and use of training grounds. As stated above, the more established feeder teams occasionally took players from these loosely connected teams into their more established feeder system.
- 6.22 Bennell began working for a children's home, Taxal Edge, during his break from association with MCFC. He worked there from November 1979 to July/August 1981. When applying for this job, Bennell did not cite MCFC as an employer, nor did he mention any association with MCFC on his CV or application to Taxal Edge. Bennell included several references relating to his work in junior football, though none from MCFC personnel³⁸.

Bennell's relationship with MCFC - Period 2

- 6.23 In mid-late 1981, Bennell resumed a form of association with MCFC. He was allegedly asked by Ken Barnes to assist with the coaching of the established feeder teams run by part-time scouts (known as Bluestar and subsequently - and possibly interchangeably - as Xerxes, Pegasus, Midas and Adswold Amateurs)³⁹, rather than running the teams himself. Later in Period 2, he took on a further role, running a single age group of one of the feeder teams⁴⁰.
- 6.24 Bennell denies any direct association with MCFC during Period 2⁴¹. The Review Team does not accept this assertion. Whilst it appears that the association was not at the same level as it was during Period 1, the Review Team has received evidence of some form of association. Most notably:
- 6.24.1 A number of survivors have spoken of being taken to Maine Road during Period 2 and either (i) being taken to meet MCFC personnel by Bennell or (ii) waiting while Bennell spoke at length to MCFC personnel⁴²;
- 6.24.2 The Review Team has been provided, via The FA Review, with video footage showing one of the summer training sessions referred to in paragraph 6.17 above. From the age of the players and the MCFC kits worn, the Review Team dates this to Period 2 - around 1982 or 1983. Bennell is shown, during

³⁵ Bennell denies that any of his Derbyshire based sides were associated with MCFC

³⁶ Witness evidence of P082, a former Palace player who had trials with Bluestar

³⁷ Witness evidence of P032

³⁸ Bennell's HR file for his work at Taxal Edge formed part of the evidence for his 2018 trial

³⁹ Witness evidence of P045

⁴⁰ Witness evidence of P013 and P136

⁴¹ Letter sent by Bennell to the Review team and received on 20 August 2020

⁴² Witness evidence of P013 and P136

- the footage, coaching one of the teams and talking about players' strengths. The match is being observed by MCFC personnel;
- 6.24.3 Players from the established feeder sides during this period have again spoken of playing in MCFC kit regularly, access to MCFC physios and training at MCFC facilities such as Platt Lane⁴³; and
- 6.24.4 The Review Team has heard evidence of Bennell attending when players from his age group signed Schoolboy Forms for MCFC⁴⁴.
- 6.25 With that said, there were certain matters which indicated that Bennell's association in Period 2 was looser than it was in Period 1:
- 6.25.1 Bennell did not have a Scout's Pass during this period;
- 6.25.2 Other adults involved in the administration of the team Bennell ultimately ran have stated that there was no funding from MCFC – the team was funded through player subs and fundraisers⁴⁵; and
- 6.25.3 Witnesses were far more split on the closeness between Bennell and MCFC than during Period 1 when he managed Whitehill. Whilst former players have been consistent in their view that the team they were playing for was a MCFC feeder team⁴⁶, parents from the time have cast more doubt, stating that they did not believe or see evidence of Bennell being as close to MCFC as he represented himself to be⁴⁷.
- 6.26 The Review Team's view is that Bennell did have an association with MCFC in Period 2 in respect of his coaching of one age group team, variously known as Bluestar/Pegasus/Adswood Amateurs. This association was more distant, however, and not of the level he previously had during Period 1.
- 6.27 During this time, Bennell also set up and ran Glossop Juniors, the latest incarnation of his own Derbyshire based sides. As before, Glossop Juniors sat a tier below the established feeder sides, though the Review Team has received evidence that this team played in MCFC kit and again were told by Bennell they were a feeder team for MCFC. Bennell also appears to have occasionally interchanged players between them and his more established team⁴⁸.
- 6.28 Again, however, players from Glossop Juniors would need to attend trials to get into the established feeder sides such as Bluestar, Pegasus or Adswood Amateurs on a full-time basis. Players from those established sides have referred to Glossop Juniors as a 'B-team' and they have stated that, in their view, Glossop Juniors' association with MCFC was not as close, and expressed doubt as to whether MCFC knew about them at all⁴⁹.
- 6.29 Glossop Juniors continued after the end of Bennell's association with MCFC and subsequently became linked to Crewe Alexandra⁵⁰.
- 6.30 During Period 2, Bennell's full time job was in video hire, running a shop called 'Bridge Videos' in Furness Vale, Derbyshire, and selling sports merchandise.

⁴³ Witness evidence of P013, P046, P089, P136

⁴⁴ Witness evidence of P013

⁴⁵ Witness evidence of P140

⁴⁶ Witness evidence of P013, P023, P046, P089, P136

⁴⁷ Witness evidence of P111 and P140

⁴⁸ Witness evidence of P046 and P100

⁴⁹ Witness evidence of P013 and P136

⁵⁰ Witness evidence of P089

- 6.31 Bennell's association with MCFC ceased again in summer 1984⁵¹. He began a role at Crewe Alexandra FC for the 1984/85 season which became a full-time contract on 1 January 1985.
- 6.32 There is a suggestion that, on this occasion, Bennell's disassociation with MCFC was linked to complaints or allegations of inappropriate behaviour, though Bennell's own version of the story is more benign, claiming that he was offered a job at Crewe Alexandra after his Glossop Juniors side played against, and heavily defeated, Crewe Alexandra's own youth side⁵². This is dealt with further below.
- 6.33 There have been some reports that Bennell was also seen around Platt Lane in the late 1980s. Whilst the Review Team has given full consideration to these reports, it is believed that this was either part of his duties for Crewe Alexandra (whose youth teams sometimes played at Platt Lane) or because Platt Lane, as a Council run facility, was open to the public and could be booked privately. On current evidence, the Review Team does not believe that Bennell was associated with MCFC at any time after summer 1984.

Bennell's relationship with MCFC – Butlins and other courses

- 6.34 Several survivors allege abuse by Bennell whilst at a Butlins holiday camp, and some claim that the football courses he ran there were in some way sponsored by MCFC. In support of this, they state that MCFC players came to observe training sessions and to present trophies after such courses, and some courses were named after MCFC players.
- 6.35 Further, Bennell sported MCFC kit and was recorded in a Butlins newsletter as MCFC's "scout and nursery coach".
- 6.36 The Review Team has received credible evidence that a fellow junior football coach told Bennell about the coaching courses at Butlins, and Bennell subsequently applied and obtained a paid job there⁵³. Other witnesses have described Bennell as a 'Redcoat' or as the employed coach at the camp, though the Review Team does not know what the employment relationship between Bennell and Butlins was, if there was one at all.
- 6.37 Survivors who met Bennell at Butlins have described the structure of the football course he ran. It was part of a nationwide Butlins 'Boy of the Year' competition, where each Butlins camp throughout the country would run football courses and select several 'Boy of the Week' winners, who then won a free week back at Butlins for the 'Boy of the Year' finals. It was run in conjunction with the Daily Express and Bennell was just one of a number of coaches engaged in some way to work at Butlins camps for a summer season⁵⁴.
- 6.38 The Review Team has evidence that players and personalities from several clubs – including MCFC, and also Leeds United FC, Manchester United FC and Liverpool FC – would attend the camps on various weeks as a 'special guest' to coach or present trophies to the boys. Further, the Review Team has heard evidence of Boy of the Week winners visiting Sheffield Wednesday FC, and has obtained a copy of an article which shows similar winners at Nottingham Forest FC as part of their course. This article describes Bennell as working with MCFC "in the winter months".
- 6.39 The Review Team has received credible evidence from the MCFC players who did attend as guests that such visits were not in any way on the instruction of MCFC or part of their employment by MCFC. They were independent from the club and the

⁵¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2016/nov/22/steve-walters-andy-woodward-crewe-alexandra>

⁵² Taken from interviews with Bennell and Dario Gradi by Cheshire Police

⁵³ Witness evidence of P045, who states that he told Bennell about the job

⁵⁴ Witness evidence of P066

visits were largely borne out of personal relationships with Butlins management or the chance to earn some extra money⁵⁵. Remuneration, if the players were paid, which was not always the case, did not come from MCFC.

- 6.40 Finally, in the employment history contained within his application to Taxal Edge, Bennell listed Butlins as an employer, stating that he was paid £65 per week for two summers as a football coach. In an interview he stated that this was related to the Daily Express, see above. There was no mention of the engagement being in any way connected to MCFC. In more recent accounts, Bennell has again stated that he was employed by Butlins and there was no connection between that employment and any professional clubs.
- 6.41 Accordingly, it is the firm view of the Review Team that Bennell's work at Butlins was not controlled by, or part of his relationship with, MCFC. If he was paid and instructed in this work, such instructions and payment did not come from MCFC.

⁵⁵ For example, LTE 039 was good friends with one of the senior management figures at Butlins Pwllheli and LTE 005's sister worked there in the entertainment team

7. BENNELL'S ABUSE OF YOUNG PLAYERS

- 7.1 It is beyond doubt that Bennell is a prolific child sex offender and that he abused boys while associated with MCFC. Some of these boys officially became MCFC youth players and first team players.
- 7.2 Cheshire Police has informed the Review Team that they are aware of at least 110 individuals who they believe were abused by Bennell. Of these, they consider 39 to relate to the time period when Bennell was associated with MCFC. The Review Team has reached out to all of these individuals, whether directly or through Cheshire Police. The Review Team has spoken to 34 Bennell survivors, plus 18 further former players, to date.
- 7.3 The Review Team suspects that there will be, in addition, many more survivors who have not reported their abuse to the police.

The abuse

- 7.4 The details of Bennell's abuse are truly horrific. The accounts are harrowing and difficult to read or to hear. The Review Team is advised that some instances were among the most serious cases of child sexual abuse.
- 7.5 The abuse inflicted on young footballers by Bennell included unprotected rape, forced oral sex and forced masturbation. Survivors that the Review Team has met have spoken of suffering abuse over a number of years.
- 7.6 Bennell would seek to protect himself from discovery by providing the boys with gifts – such as sports kit, which he notoriously used to give out from his car boot, and free tickets to MCFC games. He also set his houses up to be full of attractive things for children – such as fruit machines, video games, junk food and exotic pets – to encourage his team to want to stay there.
- 7.7 Allied with this, Bennell would use (often subtly) threatening behaviour to scare children in his teams. These threats principally concerned their football careers: a player had to stay on his good side to progress. He would also intimidate boys by taking them to scary places, such as a 'haunted house' in North Wales, or local country parks late at night, showing them horror, pornographic and 'snuff' movies, demonstrating how he could use weapons like nunchucks or frightening them with his dogs. Witnesses have also highlighted that Bennell seemed to isolate boys who appeared more vulnerable – quieter, smaller than their peers or from more challenging domestic backgrounds, for example – as potential targets for abuse.
- 7.8 Bennell was also extremely effective at grooming parents and those adults close to the boys to alleviate suspicions and make them comfortable with boys staying with him. The Review Team has heard examples of Bennell employing parents⁵⁶ or involving them in coaching⁵⁷.
- 7.9 Bennell's abuse would largely take place at his home. The Review Team is aware of various addresses for Bennell during the relevant period, including in Hulme, Fallowfield, Northenden and West Gorton in Manchester; then, after he moved to Derbyshire, a flat at Taxal Edge, a flat above a video shop known as 'Bridge Videos' at Furness Vale, a terraced house in Chapel-en-le-Frith and a larger house in Doveholes.
- 7.10 Bennell would invite boys to sleep at his house purportedly in preparation for a match or training the next day. There would often be several boys staying at the same time

⁵⁶ For example two of the parents of the 2018 criminal trial complainants

⁵⁷ For example P032, a parent of a survivor involved in Bennell's Derbyshire sides

and some boys report staying every weekend and during school holidays over a period of years. His grooming of parents, referred to above, was key in allowing him to do this, effectively isolating the child from their parents.

- 7.11 Bennell also abused boys on trips away, including to Snowdonia (to an isolated cottage known as 'the Haunted House'), the Isle of Wight, Majorca and Lloret de Mar. He also regularly took teams to the Butlins in Pwllheli, North Wales, where he worked during the summer months. The Review Team is also aware of two allegations that Bennell abused boys at Maine Road, on the side of the pitch, in summer when the stadium was virtually deserted⁵⁸.
- 7.12 It is clear that those abused by Bennell have suffered enormously. Some boys were abused almost daily for years, usually between the ages of around 11 to 14 or 15 years old. Certain individuals affected have suffered severe and ongoing psychiatric issues caused by the abuse as well as physical injury.
- 7.13 The Review Team is also aware of reports of players from Bennell's teams committing suicide in later life. Where appropriate, MCFC and the Review Team have liaised with their respective family members, but the Review Team has taken the decision not to name those players in this report to respect their privacy and the privacy of their families.
- 7.14 The Review Team is also aware of allegations that Bennell operated in collusion with other child sexual abusers⁵⁹. Bennell undoubtedly knew some other abusers who have been named in the media – for example, several witnesses spoke of him having an acquaintance/rivalry with Frank Roper, who also ran junior teams in Manchester – but the team has not been able to substantiate any allegations of collusion or joint offending.

What did MCFC know?

Period 1

- 7.15 In 1978/79, it appears that Bennell was being considered for the role of Youth Development Officer until the then Youth Team Coach, Steve Fleet, refused to work with him⁶⁰, complaining to Ken Barnes, Tony Book (the then First Team Manager) and Chris Muir (then Director) that Bennell was a 'weirdo' and an 'oddball'. Fleet also cited concerns about Bennell's closeness with boys and his habits of having things such as exotic pets and jukeboxes at his house to attract boys to his teams.
- 7.16 Fleet did not, however, directly or explicitly accuse Bennell of being a paedophile or of abusing boys.
- 7.17 The Review Team received evidence that another member of staff, LTE 016, also reported rumours to Ken Barnes about Bennell being a child abuser, though again with no direct allegations made. Associates of both LTE 016 and Bennell described them as rivals from junior football; claims made by LTE 016 were considered less credible as a result.
- 7.18 LTE 016 also claims that MCFC did receive a complaint about Bennell's behaviour prior to 1981, but he has provided no details of the content or severity of that complaint. His evidence was that board members were made aware of this, but this was contradicted by directors from the time, who stated that no complaint about

⁵⁸ See for example <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2018/feb/15/barry-bennell-gary-cliffe-manchester-city>

⁵⁹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/police-inquiry-into-paedophile-network-among-football-abusers-7m557zq3f>

⁶⁰ This would put the timing before November 1980, when Steve Fleet left MCFC for a spell

Bennell was ever raised with the board⁶¹. Accordingly, it has not been possible to verify whether any complaint was indeed made.

- 7.19 Evidence concerning rumours about Bennell within the local football community during Period 1 was mixed. Many witnesses reported rumours about Bennell during this time which they considered to be relatively widespread. Steve Fleet has stated (publicly and to the Review Team) that such rumours were discussed at FA coaches' meetings at the time - principally that Bennell's manner with boys was wrong and his house was full of treats for children, which caused suspicion.
- 7.20 Equally, however, numerous reports from others, including players in his teams and, perhaps most notably, other scouts and coaches who were involved with the same junior teams for years, said the contrary – that they heard no rumours at all and had no suspicions⁶².
- 7.21 It is the Review Team's belief that it is likely MCFC heard rumours about Bennell during Period 1. These rumours, however, were likely not to have been explicit in their content, and during that time there is no evidence of any direct allegations of child sexual abuse being made to MCFC. Accordingly, it is the team's view that the end of Bennell's first association with MCFC did not relate to a complaint from a parent or an allegation of child sexual abuse.

Period 2

- 7.22 During Period 2, the rumours about Bennell appear to have been more widespread.
- 7.23 Witnesses from Period 2 remain split on whether they believe MCFC (and particularly Ken Barnes and Chris Muir) had heard rumours or knew of Bennell's child sexual abuse. There are some who state that they are sure Barnes 'knew what Bennell was'⁶³, but equally several stated that they believe that Barnes would have done something had he known of the severity and scale of matters⁶⁴.
- 7.24 As stated above, however, the rumours appear to have become more common as time went on. In contrast to Period 1, there is evidence that other adults involved in the feeder teams and involved in local football were aware of the rumours.
- 7.25 It seems to have been particularly well known – at least by other scouts and parents of players – that Bennell had boys stay at his house before matches. This was referred to by several of the other scouts and parents in their interviews with the Review Team⁶⁵.
- 7.26 Further, The FA Review provided the team with a memorandum sent to The FA at the time of Bennell's arrest in 1994 and written by LTE 030, who at the time was a local FA official. That memorandum refers to Bennell having a 'strange dismissal' from MCFC, that there were 'many rumours' surrounding this and that 'quite a number [of boys] stayed at his house'. When spoken to by the Review Team, LTE 030 stressed that he had no evidence of any wrongdoing against Bennell - something which several witnesses have stated – and that by 'strange' he meant 'quick' but his memorandum makes clear that rumours about Bennell were there within the football community.
- 7.27 The Review Team has considered whether the overnight stays were arranged through MCFC, as is said to have been the case during his employment with Crewe Alexandra⁶⁶. The team has found no evidence of this. On the contrary, witnesses who

⁶¹ Witness evidence of CE 004 and LTE 046

⁶² Witness evidence of P030 and P018 respectively

⁶³ Witness evidence of P013, for example

⁶⁴ Witness evidence of P001, for example

⁶⁵ For example, P032, P045, P049, P111

⁶⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/mar/20/barry-bennell-expenses-claim-crewe-legal-defence-boys-stay>

stayed at Bennell's house during this period have consistently stated to the Review Team that the arrangements were made privately between Bennell and their parents, with no involvement from MCFC⁶⁷. There is equally no evidence of him being paid expenses for such stays.

- 7.28 In addition, several witnesses have stated to the Review Team that, in the early 1980s, the players who were coached by Bennell would suffer verbal abuse about their links with him – principally by other coaches and opposition players.
- 7.29 Further, a witness who was one of the complainants in the January 2018 criminal trial, P013, expressly stated (both at trial and to the Review Team) that he believed one specific coach associated with MCFC, LTE 055 (who again was not an MCFC employee but involved in the feeder teams, similar to Bennell), knew of Bennell's child sexual abuse as he would call the players coached by Bennell names such as 'Bennell's bum boys'.
- 7.30 Despite several attempts to engage with him, including through The FA Review, LTE 055 either rejected or ignored invitations to participate in an interview with the Review Team. When briefly spoken to by telephone, LTE 055 denied the allegations against him. The Review Team understands that he has similarly denied the allegations to The FA Review. The account given by P013 was, however, supported by other witnesses who recall the same sort of verbal abuse⁶⁸.
- 7.31 The rumours appeared to more widespread in the area of Derbyshire where Bennell formed his own teams such as White Knowl and Palace. This was largely because these teams were more local and community-based, as set out above. Several players from the Derbyshire teams have reported talking to team-mates at school about child sexual abuse by Bennell, teasing of boys who stayed at his house and derogatory nicknames for Bennell, such as 'Bummer Barry'⁶⁹.
- 7.32 The Review Team considers that MCFC, at the very least towards the end of Bennell's time associated with the club, was told of inappropriate behaviour by Bennell:
- 7.32.1 Dispatches alleged that a letter of complaint regarding an incident on a tour to a holiday camp was sent to MCFC. This alleged that Bennell had boys staying late in his chalet. The Review Team has not been able to fully establish the circumstances surrounding this letter. The letter was acknowledged by Ken Barnes in Dispatches. DH 011, a witness who was involved in Dispatches, stated that Barnes proactively told the programme about the letter and that it had been sent directly to the then Chairman, Peter Swales. He did not, however, disclose (or did not remember) the name of the family who complained. DH 011's recollection is that the holiday camp could have been Butlins. A similar (or, likely, the same) incident was also referred to by a senior MCFC figure from the time, CE 001, in his evidence to the Review Team. CE 001 described the matter as a 'comment' rather than a formal complaint and his view was that it was a telephone call to him, rather than a letter, and that it related to a tour to the Isle of Wight which happened annually at Easter time. Again, the subject matter was Bennell keeping boys up late in his chalet, similar to the conduct Barnes describes in Dispatches, with no allegations of child sexual abuse; again (according to CE 001 himself) it was reported to Peter Swales. The Review Team has spoken to former young players who corroborate this and remember Bennell showing horror films in his chalet on an Isle of Wight tour. Based on their age, the Review Team considers that this took place in either spring 1983 or spring 1984; and

⁶⁷ Evidence of, for example, P013, P097, P082 and P121

⁶⁸ For example, witness evidence of P046

⁶⁹ Witness evidence of P135, P113, P138

- 7.32.2 One witness⁷⁰ stated that he had heard, albeit second or third hand, that Ken Barnes was asked by two sets of parents about rumours about Bennell's relationships with boys in their sons' teams. The witness would not name the parents in question to the Review Team and stated that they did not wish to speak to the Review Team. Accordingly, the Review Team is not able to verify this report.
- 7.33 The Review Team is also aware through witness evidence that, following a tournament in Great Yarmouth known as the 'Canary Cup', some of the parents of one of Bennell's junior teams – Glossop Juniors – became aware of Bennell's abuse of their sons and confronted him. It was apparently agreed between the parents that Bennell could continue to coach the team but there would be no more sleepovers at his house. The Review Team has spoken to several witnesses who recall this. None of the witnesses the Review Team has spoken to believe that any of the parents reported the incident to MCFC⁷¹. The Review Team has subsequently been able to determine that this incident took place in March 1985, after Bennell's association with MCFC had ended and while he was full-time at Crewe Alexandra⁷².
- 7.34 The Review Team is also aware, through The FA Review, that a survivor who played for White Knowl has given a similar account of a group of parents confronting Bennell about his conduct. The Review Team understands this is a second-hand account relating to other boys' parents rather than his own. The Review Team is unable to confirm whether this is the same incident as the 'Canary Cup', referred to above, as the survivor in question has declined, through his solicitor, to participate in the Review. The FA Review has stated to the Review Team that they have seen no evidence of this confrontation being reported to MCFC.
- 7.35 In Dispatches, both Ken Barnes and Chris Muir denied any knowledge of Bennell's child sexual abuse or that any complaints of such abuse were made, but did hint at some form of suspicion concerning him:
- 7.35.1 In response to a question relating to Crewe Alexandra asking about rumours concerning Bennell, Barnes stated that he told the Crewe chairman, Norman Rowlinson, that he had heard "*bits and pieces*" but that he had "*no evidence whatsoever*"; and
- 7.35.2 Muir stated: "*In the world of football he was looked upon as a fellow that wasn't right, but there was no firm complaints, so... football is a macho game and suspicions were thrown at him that he might have been 'the other way', which is very, very rare that you ever hear of this in football*".
- 7.36 The Review Team asked DH 011 about how Ken Barnes and Chris Muir appeared on Dispatches and how credible their accounts appeared. DH 011's view was that both were very honest and open with the programme but were stunned by the revelations against Bennell, the scale of what had been uncovered and naïve as to the impact it had.
- 7.37 DH 011's view was that Ken Barnes and Chris Muir were both aware of some form of rumours about Bennell with a sexual connotation – one acknowledged hearing the nickname 'Bent Barry' about him – but they did not appreciate the severity of what those rumours meant. DH 011 said Barnes in particular was astonished at the extent of Bennell's crimes, and that "*the idea of a man raping a little boy was so far out of his comprehension that he couldn't process it properly*".
- 7.38 It is the Review Team's view that Peter Swales was also likely to have been made aware of rumours about Bennell or inappropriate behaviour by him. Swales at the time

⁷⁰ Witness evidence of P045

⁷¹ Witness evidence of P046, P100 and P136, who were boys who played in that tournament

⁷² Witness evidence of P046 and P136

was the figurehead and decision maker at MCFC. MCFC staff⁷³ stressed that Swales was aware of and involved in every major MCFC issue. If Ken Barnes and Chris Muir - a board director - had heard such rumours, it would be surprising if they did not reach the Chairman. Further, as above, CE 001 and Ken Barnes (according to DH 011) stated that Swales was aware of the comment/complaint about Bennell keeping boys up late at a holiday camp. Peter Swales died in 1996 and the Review Team does not believe he was ever interviewed about Barry Bennell.

- 7.39 All of the senior management, during both periods, that the Review Team has been able to interview deny any knowledge of specific complaints of child sexual abuse or even of rumours of such abuse. Peter Swales, Ken Barnes and Chris Muir are dead, so the Review Team has not been able to put the allegations to them.
- 7.40 It is the Review Team's view that the escalation of rumours referred to above coincided with Bennell beginning an association with Crewe Alexandra. The Review Team have seen photographs of Bennell with Dario Gradi at soccer schools during late 1983/early 1984 and witness accounts place the disassociation with MCFC and stronger association with Crewe as beginning in 1984⁷⁴. The Review Team considers it likely that this combination of factors led to MCFC simply allowing Bennell to leave rather than investigating the rumours further.

MCFC's Knowledge - Conclusions

- 7.41 The Review Team has received no direct evidence of anyone making a specific report of child sexual abuse by Bennell to anyone at MCFC. Though survivors are split on their views of what MCFC (and particularly Ken Barnes) knew, a common factor of all survivor accounts is that there is no evidence of such a report. The Review Team does not, therefore, believe that Ken Barnes or anyone else at MCFC were told explicitly about child sexual abuse by Bennell or had any direct evidence of such abuse prior to his association with the club ending.
- 7.42 It is the Review Team's view, however, that Ken Barnes, and likely other senior MCFC figures such as Chris Muir and Peter Swales, were told of or at least became aware of inappropriate behaviour by Bennell (such as keeping boys up late on trips and boys staying overnight at his house) and were aware of rumours about Bennell with a sexual connotation, and of his relationships with boys being inappropriate.
- 7.43 The Review Team believes that the accumulation of these rumours, together with Bennell being offered a paid position by Crewe Alexandra FC towards the end of the 1983/84 season, contributed to the end of Bennell being associated with MCFC. MCFC's response to this is evaluated below.

MCFC's response to allegations/suspicious

- 7.44 There is conflicting evidence as to whether any MCFC concerns were reported in any way.
- 7.45 The Review Team has received evidence from a witness who was a youth coach at another football league club at the time, MIS 08. He states that Barnes told him, at a tournament in France in the mid-1980s, that (i) he had been hearing disturbing rumours about Bennell (which MIS 08 assumed related to child sexual abuse, though Barnes did not confirm this explicitly), and (ii) that Barnes had reported those rumours to The FA. Barnes did not tell the witness how or to whom said report was made.

⁷³ For example, the witness evidence of LTE 027

⁷⁴ P123, P046 and P136, for example

- 7.46 MIS 08 further states that, in the late 1980s when Bennell left Crewe, Ken Barnes phoned him again to warn him that Bennell was looking for a job and should not be hired.
- 7.47 The Review Team has been able to:
- 7.47.1 Verify the tournament where MIS 08 met with Barnes as taking place in April 1985, approximately a year after Bennell left MCFC and shortly after the 'Canary Cup' incident referred to in paragraph 7.33 of this report. The Review Team considers it possible that the rumours Barnes referred to related to the Canary Cup;
 - 7.47.2 Verify the timeline for the later follow-up call, and
 - 7.47.3 Speak to another witness, MIS 10, who was told about the conversation by MIS 08 contemporaneously, in the mid 1980s.
- 7.48 The Review Team is therefore confident that a conversation took place between MIS 08 and Ken Barnes in April 1985 about Bennell, and does not doubt MIS 08's evidence that Barnes told him that he had made a report (or intended to make a report) to The FA.
- 7.49 The Review Team, however, acknowledges that, if a report was made, it is unusual that Ken Barnes did not tell the police this in 1994, or mention it in Dispatches, when interviewed in 1997. In Dispatches, Barnes was asked explicitly about whether he reported any rumours about Bennell to Crewe Alexandra. Barnes' response was that when he was asked by the Chairman of Crewe Alexandra, Norman Rowlinson, about Bennell, he told him he had 'no evidence' of any issues, though he knew what was being implied. DH 011 told the Review Team that, when speaking to both Rowlinson and Barnes during the making of Dispatches, both confirmed this conversation happened and it was clear that both understood they were speaking about allegations of child sexual abuse.
- 7.50 It is reasonable to expect, therefore, that, had Ken Barnes reported Bennell to The FA, he would have both told Rowlinson and mentioned this in response to the question in Dispatches – though the Review Team acknowledges he was not asked specifically about whether he made a report to The FA. DH 011 stated that the idea of a report to The FA was '*hard to believe*' given that it didn't come up in the making of Dispatches when discussing Barnes' knowledge of Bennell's crimes, of which Bennell had by then been convicted.
- 7.51 Though, as above, the Review Team is comfortable that Ken Barnes told MIS 08 he had made a report to The FA, without an account from Barnes himself the Review Team is unable to verify whether he actually did make such a report or not. The Review Team has liaised with The FA Review and understands that The FA has no record of any such report, and that records from that time are scant. As stated above, there was no FA process or dedicated contact for reporting safeguarding concerns at the time. As such, the Review Team considers it very unlikely that such a record would have survived in any event.
- 7.52 Accordingly, the Review Team is unable to confirm with any certainty whether a report to The FA was made by Ken Barnes, but acknowledges that (i) it is unlikely that he made one in any formal manner, and (ii) it is unlikely that it was followed up on in any way.
- 7.53 It is worth noting that Peter Swales, in addition to his role as MCFC Chairman, was a member of The FA Council at the relevant time. As above, whilst the Review Team believes Swales was made aware of inappropriate behaviour by Bennell (or at least rumours of the same), Swales has never, to the Review Team's knowledge, been

interviewed about Bennell. As such the Review Team does not know whether Peter Swales ever made an internal report to The FA about such matters.

- 7.54 The Review Team has also received a suggestion that Stone Dominoes, another club later connected to Bennell which fed into Stoke City, contacted MCFC for a reference. The Review Team sought disclosure of documents relating to this from Stone Dominoes' then legal team but was refused copies on the basis of client confidentiality. It has also reached out to individuals who were involved with Stone Dominoes, but none have participated in the Review. The papers obtained from the Florida based criminal proceedings against Bennell imply that only Crewe Alexandra were asked for a reference⁷⁵. Accordingly, the Review Team has not seen any evidence to support this suggestion.
- 7.55 It can be stated with reasonably certainty, however, that the rumours or concerns that MCFC were aware of were not at any stage reported to the police. There is likewise no evidence or suggestion that MCFC investigated them with any great depth with a view to such a report. As stated above, the rumours appear to have accumulated around the same time as Bennell was offered a paid position at Crewe Alexandra. It appears likely that, rather than MCFC having to look into the issues further, Bennell was simply left to take up that role.
- 7.56 This hypothesis is supported by the recollections of police officers from the time, who told the Review Team that MCFC was very reluctant to contribute to the police investigation in the 1990s. That view is supported by their contemporaneous witness evidence to the US Courts in Bennell's criminal 1994 proceedings. MCFC representatives are described as 'evasive' and 'cagey' in that evidence⁷⁶, and though they acknowledged hearing 'rumours' about Bennell, they would not repeat them as they could not substantiate anything. When asked about the end of Bennell's association with MCFC, unspecified 'irregularities' were cited.
- 7.57 In light of the above, and given that it is the Review Team's view that MCFC senior management were made aware of rumours and concerns about Bennell's conduct on at least two separate occasions, with the rumours about him appearing to escalate during Period 2, it is the Review Team's view that MCFC's response to the reports it received was inadequate, even given the lack of knowledge around child safeguarding at the time.
- 7.58 Whilst it is possible, as above, that such rumours were reported to The FA and possibly other clubs in the North West/Midlands areas, the content of them was likely of sufficient severity that they should have been, as a minimum, investigated further by the club to determine whether police involvement was necessary, and reported accordingly. The failure to do this constituted a failure to take full responsibility for the issues, even if the club at that stage did not have full knowledge of their severity.
- 7.59 The Review Team has sought to understand why such an investigation was not commenced and a police report not made. Whilst the Review Team has not been able to interview the individuals who likely would have been the key decision makers – most notably the then Chairman, Peter Swales, Chris Muir and Ken Barnes – the Review Team asked others involved in the management of MCFC (and other football clubs) at the time (i) why they thought there was no investigation or report and (ii) whether they would have made a report to the police.
- 7.60 Several of those individuals emphasised the lack of direct evidence against Bennell, a point which, as set out above, was also referred to in evidence by the police officers who spoke to MCFC representatives in the 1990s. It seems to the Review Team that far too much weight was given to the potential consequences of making a false

⁷⁵ Testimony of Bob Bowers, the principal of Stone Dominoes, refers only to Crewe

⁷⁶ In the interest of balance, DH 011 made clear this was not a view shared by those involved with Dispatches, who found both Barnes and Muir amenable, honest and open

allegation or report without such direct evidence – including (i) the possibility of losing the young players that Bennell brought to the club and (ii) the damage that would be caused to the club's reputation. This was, clearly, wrong. The potential consequences for the club should have been, by some distance, secondary to the potential consequences for the boys involved.

- 7.61 As mentioned earlier in this report, the Review Team further believes that the lack of understanding of and framework around reporting child sexual abuse (and safeguarding issues generally) within football and the wider society contributed significantly to the failure to report. This is particularly the case when faced with an offender like Bennell who was extremely cunning and deceptive in his approach.
- 7.62 There does not seem to have been any knowledge within the club - or in football generally - of how a concern would have been reported or to whom. No structure was in place, internally or externally, for doing so. There was no encouragement, guidance or training from authorities, such as The FA, and no point of contact with which to share concerns.
- 7.63 The lack of reporting structure, however, is a mitigating circumstance and not something which absolves MCFC of responsibility. As set out above, the failure to investigate more fully or involve the police was an inadequate response to the rumours and reports of which the club was aware. This inadequate response was a contributing factor to a combination of circumstances which allowed Bennell to continue his involvement in football and his abuse of young players.

Section C

John Broome

8. BACKGROUND

- 8.1 As part of its instruction, the Review Team was asked to investigate any other individuals who may have been suspected of child sexual abuse and/or other related inappropriate behaviour whilst associated with MCFC/CFG.
- 8.2 In addition to Bennell, the Review Team has identified a further individual where multiple allegations of child sexual abuse have been made that the Review Team considers substantiated. The individual is John Broome.
- 8.3 The Review Team's knowledge of Broome comes principally from the following sources:
 - 8.3.1 Accounts from survivors of child sexual abuse;
 - 8.3.2 Other witness recollections;
 - 8.3.3 Newspaper archives;
 - 8.3.4 Manchester FA Handbooks;
 - 8.3.5 Information provided by GMP and the courts; and
 - 8.3.6 Posts on internet MCFC forums.
- 8.4 It was initially difficult to obtain background information on Broome. Many of the relevant MCFC staff around the time are either deceased (for example, Harry Godwin, the then Chief Scout) or in ill health which prevented the Review Team from approaching or speaking to them.
- 8.5 The Review Team's knowledge, accordingly, has come in the main from the testimony of those affected by Broome's abuse. The Review Team sent invitations to speak to survivors through GMP and received a very strong response, with the majority of those who had reported to the police being willing to speak. The Review Team also received responses from numerous survivors when the Club took the decision to name Broome in the press as someone that was being investigated.
- 8.6 The Review Team has spoken to 34 survivors together with other players from Broome's teams who were not abused.

9. BROOME'S RELATIONSHIP WITH MCFC

Broome - Background

- 9.1 Broome was from Levenshulme in Manchester. He was born on 20 April 1936 and died in October 2010 in Stepping Hill Hospital, Stockport. During the relevant time he was resident in Levenshulme.

Broome and MCFC

- 9.2 Broome was a coach and team manager for Whitehill Boys⁷⁷ in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Despite using the same name, the Review Team's view is that Whitehill Boys was not the same team as the "Whitehill" which Barry Bennell subsequently ran from 1976 onwards.
- 9.3 The Review Team has been able to establish that Broome was involved in the running of Whitehill Boys, in some form or another, between at least the 1962/63⁷⁸ and 1975/76⁷⁹ seasons. The team(s) he ran did not have association with MCFC for this entire period, however. Broome appears to have been involved in local junior football from at least 1957 onwards⁸⁰.
- 9.4 Broome's association with MCFC began in 1964 when Whitehill Boys were invited to play in trial games at MCFC's training ground (then Shawe View in Urmston). The team subsequently became well known as a feeder side for MCFC. Broome's association with MCFC ended in early 1971, following a conviction for child sex offences against boys in his team.
- 9.5 Whitehill Boys had significant links with MCFC during the relevant period:
- 9.5.1 They played at MCFC's training facilities at Shawe View (see above) and subsequently Park Road, Cheadle;
 - 9.5.2 They wore MCFC kit;
 - 9.5.3 They were watched by MCFC staff;
 - 9.5.4 Players from Whitehill Boys were occasionally taken to Maine Road for matches or to assist the groundsmen there; and
 - 9.5.5 Whitehill Boys were well known, and indeed (see below) officially acknowledged, as the MCFC 'nursery' side.
- 9.6 The status of Whitehill Boys as a 'nursery' side for MCFC was referred to in documentation from the time. Three match programmes from 1968⁸¹ state this explicitly and adverts for players placed in the Manchester Evening News in summer 1970 describe Whitehill Boys as 'officially associated to a local professional club'. Broome was also described as a 'scout' for MCFC in a programme from 1967⁸². There is no doubt the two were associated.

⁷⁷ The team was variously known as Whitehill Boys, Whitehill and Whitehill Juniors. For differentiation purposes, it is referred to as Whitehill Boys in this report

⁷⁸ Witness evidence of P093

⁷⁹ Witness evidence of P071 and Manchester FA Handbook 1975/76

⁸⁰ Ashton Youth FC v Whitehill Youth FC, 18 December 1974, refers to Broome having been involved in local football for 17 years

⁸¹ MCFC v West Ham United programme, 13/04/68, MCFC v Sheffield Wednesday programme, 25/04/68. MCFC v Leeds United programme, 28/09/68

⁸² MCFC v West Bromwich Albion programme, 30/12/67

- 9.7 It appears that, once Whitehill Boys became associated with MCFC, they ran age groups at two-year intervals – for example either Under 13s and Under 15s or Under 14s and Under 16s, depending on the year. Though reports slightly conflict on the level of Broome's involvement in the teams, it appears that he had some involvement in each age group.
- 9.8 Broome is described by several witnesses as being 'in charge' of Whitehill Boys, certainly during the MCFC association – he had keys to the grounds where they played, he arranged kit, picked the team and tactics and conducted trials for new players. MCFC themselves referred to Whitehill Boys as being 'run by' Broome in their match programmes.
- 9.9 No employment records from the time remain. Given how youth football was organised at the time, it is very likely that Broome was not an employee of MCFC. The Review Team is aware that Broome had full time jobs at the time, as a Rent Collector⁸³ and then as a Finance Officer at a local education establishment⁸⁴.
- 9.10 Broome's work history, as contained in Court documents relating to his criminal conviction, does not refer to any employment by MCFC. His involvement in football is described in his probation report as an interest in his leisure hours. It is stated in that report that he has 'acted as a talent scout for Manchester City', but again there is no suggestion of payment or employment in this role⁸⁵.

Broome – After MCFC

- 9.11 The Review Team has received several accounts of how Broome left MCFC:
- 9.11.1 In the initial round of interviews with Broome related witnesses, several stated that Broome was abruptly 'not there' or removed as manager of Whitehill Boys. Based on numerous accounts, the Review Team were able to date this as sometime in either the 1970/71 season or the 1971/72 season;
- 9.11.2 Several witness in this group also stated that parents were notified by MCFC officials that Broome would no longer be involved and either (i) the team would be disbanded and neither Broome nor the team associated with MCFC any more⁸⁶ (believed to be the story told to the younger age group) or (ii) they needed parents to get involved in Broome's absence (older age group);
- 9.11.3 One former MCFC employee (who joined the club after the event) stated that Harry Godwin had received complaints from parents and so 'had to get rid of him'⁸⁷.
- 9.11.4 The Review Team has, as its review has progressed, been able to speak to individuals who were due to be witnesses in Broome's criminal trial in early 1971. Those witnesses confirmed that, following Broome's conviction (which is dealt with in more detail later in this report), MCFC terminated its association with him⁸⁸.
- 9.12 Several witness accounts stated that Whitehill Boys 'disbanded' or 'folded' shortly after Broome's involvement ceased. The Review Team's view is that MCFC, as part of the process of terminating its association with Broome, folded the younger age group.

⁸³ Taken from Criminal Record Office form CRO74, provided by Greater Manchester Police

⁸⁴ Witness evidence of P071

⁸⁵ Taken from Criminal Record Office form CRO74, provided by Greater Manchester Police

⁸⁶ Witness evidence of P071

⁸⁷ Witness evidence of LTE 016

⁸⁸ Witness evidence of P115 and P119

- 9.13 Broome, however, continued to be involved with that younger age group at the request of parents, in order to keep the team going. Broome ran this team (a single age group), without MCFC connection, until 1975/76⁸⁹. The team kept the Whitehill name in some fashion - records from the time indicate the name was subtly changed each year⁹⁰ - and the kit they had previously used (at least for the rest of that season), but were told that they were no longer affiliated with MCFC. The team ceased playing at Cheadle and instead played at local playing fields such as Turn Moss and Hough End. The abuse continued during this 'non-MCFC' period.
- 9.14 There have been suggestions that Broome may have gone abroad at some stage after his departure from Whitehill Boys and his conviction. The Review Team has received second hand reports that he either (i) was convicted of child sexual abuse in Spain (an instance apparently reported in the Manchester Evening News) or (ii) moved to Canada. Neither report has been substantiated to date.
- 9.15 We are aware from witness accounts and contemporaneous documents that, in the mid 1970s, Broome was a referee in the Greater Manchester area. He was also (in at least 1976 and 1977) secretary of the referees to the Reddish League and, in the early 1980s, was seen in and around the Manchester FA. During this period, the Review Team is aware that Broome continued to commit child sexual abuse, including the abuse of young referees.

⁸⁹ Witness evidence of P071 and Manchester FA Handbooks from period

⁹⁰ Manchester FA Handbooks 1971/72 and 1972/73 (Whitehill Juniors), 1973/74 (Whitehill Lads) and 1974/75 (Whitehill Under 17)

10. BROOME'S ABUSE OF YOUNG PLAYERS

Abuse by Broome

- 10.1 The Review Team has heard evidence that Broome regularly abused boys playing for Whitehill Boys at the time by sexually touching the boys while rubbing liniment on their legs before matches, and sexually touching and attempting to masturbate them whilst performing 'massages' for injuries. In isolated instances, he also committed rape and attempted rape.
- 10.2 Abuse would take place both at the training grounds at Shawe View, Urmston and Park Road, Cheadle and at Broome's home (the liniment rubs and massages referred to above), in many cases when other players were present and preparing for matches. In the more serious instances Broome would seek to isolate boys, either at his home or at football facilities (including the training grounds) when no-one else was there.
- 10.3 Allegations of football-related child sexual abuse by Broome of which the Review Team is aware range from 1962 to 1979.
- 10.4 Broome was arrested (and subsequently convicted) for child sex offences in 1971 and again in 1999. In summary:
 - 10.4.1 The 1971 conviction relates to an arrest in November 1970. Broome pleaded guilty to two counts of indecent assault against a boy at MCFC's training ground in Park Road, Cheadle, in the dressing rooms. This conviction, which falls within Broome's period of association with MCFC, is dealt with in detail below.
 - 10.4.2 The 1999 convictions relate to boys visiting his house and suffering child sexual abuse. Broome was convicted when a former player learned of the visits after his wife had to attend the house as part of her job and Broome talked about his previous involvement in junior football. Broome was convicted of 4 counts of indecent assault and received 15 months imprisonment⁹¹.

Broome's 1971 Conviction

- 10.5 The Review Team has been able to review documentation relating to the prosecution and subsequent conviction of Broome in 1971. This includes a statement from Broome at the time of his arrest, redacted statements from the complainants and their families, a probation report relating to Broome and the Criminal Record Office form CRO74, which officially records Broome's arrest and conviction.
- 10.6 Broome ultimately did not stand trial as, having initially denied the charges against him, he changed his plea to guilty on the day of the trial. The Review Team has also been able to speak to two people who were due to be witnesses in the trial relating to that conviction.
- 10.7 The details of Broome's 1971 conviction are as follows:
 - 10.7.1 His arrest was as a result of a complaint made by a Whitehill Boys player to his mother about sexual abuse by Broome during a rub-down in November 1970. The player's mother subsequently called the police;
 - 10.7.2 Cheshire Police subsequently interviewed, and obtained corroborating statements from, other boys in the team. Broome was charged with four counts of indecent assault. The CRO74 form relating to the offence states:

⁹¹ Witness evidence of P084

"Football manager puts his hand down underpants of young boy and touches his private parts";

- 10.7.3 Broome initially denied the charges and claimed he had only touched the boys during 'groin massages'. He acknowledged touching their 'private parts' in a witness statement taken upon his arrest;
 - 10.7.4 Broome changed his plea on the day of the trial. A deal appears to have been done whereby he pleaded guilty to two out of four charges, with no evidence offered in the other two. Broome was fined £50 (the equivalent of around £760 today) and ordered to pay £50 costs;
 - 10.7.5 The Review Team has also heard evidence that part of Broome's conviction involved some form of medical treatment, though this is not officially recorded in the documents the Review Team has seen.
- 10.8 The Review Team's view is that the termination of Broome's association with MCFC is directly linked to his conviction for offences in 1971. Several witnesses who were involved in, or aware of, the trial informed the Review Team that the conviction led to MCFC terminating its association with Broome.

What did MCFC know?

- 10.9 In addition to the events surrounding Broome's conviction in 1971, the Review Team is aware of an attempt to inform MCFC of Broome's child sexual abuse in around 1966.

1966

- 10.10 In around 1966, a witness who spoke to the Review Team, P117, told his father that Broome had made sexual advances towards him, though without any detail. P117 was 16 at the time.
- 10.11 P117's father said he was going to tell MCFC about Broome and telephoned the club shortly afterwards. He subsequently told P117 that 'it was a waste of time, they didn't want to know' and that he had been 'fobbed off'. P117 does not know who his father spoke to, whether he got through to anyone of seniority or any of the detail of the conversation.
- 10.12 Virtually all of the MCFC staff who may have taken the telephone call are now deceased. The Review Team has spoken to one ex-director from the time, but he had no recollection of Broome or knowledge of complaints about him. Accordingly the Review Team is unable to determine who received the phone call, if a complaint was ultimately made and, if so, what level of complaint.

1971

- 10.13 The offences relating to Broome's 1971 conviction took place at MCFC's then training ground, Park Road in Cheadle, and the abuse took place on boys within the Whitehill Boys team. Whilst the Review Team has not received any direct evidence from a MCFC employee that the club was aware of the arrest, the Review Team considers it almost certain that MCFC was made aware of both the arrest and the nature of the allegations against Broome at the time he was arrested.
- 10.14 There is much supporting evidence for this:

- 10.14.1 Witnesses reported the police attending Park Road and boys being asked if Broome had 'done something to them'. Broome apparently told parents there was a 'misunderstanding'⁹²;
- 10.14.2 One witness told the Review Team that his father was told by another parent about Broome's child sexual abuse and subsequently reported it to the Whitehill Boys Club Secretary (though the witness did not recall the name of the secretary)⁹³. This incident took place around 1971 and the Review Team believes it relates to the same circumstances that led to Broome's arrest;
- 10.14.3 Another account from a witness spoke of staff around Cheadle Town (particularly a caretaker) appearing to keep a close eye on Broome in and around that time⁹⁴; and
- 10.14.4 Broome's probation report implies that MCFC was aware of the charges and that Broome was aware that conviction would lead to his involvement in football being 'finished'.
- 10.15 It appears that while Broome continued to deny the charges both MCFC and, as noted in the probation report, many parents were content to allow him to continue in his role running Whitehill Boys. When he subsequently confessed, MCFC terminated his association with the club.
- 10.16 The Review Team has received evidence from witnesses that, in subsequent years, MCFC youth staff were aware of Broome's child sexual abuse and spoke about him in derogatory terms.

MCFC's Response to allegations/suspicious

- 10.17 Whilst the Review Team has sought to analyse MCFC's response to Broome's arrest in the context of the time, it is the Review Team's view that the club's action fell below the required standard for a number of reasons:
- 10.17.1 Broome admitted, at the time of his arrest, touching boys' genitals. Even though he denied it was intentional or for sexual gratification, this should have caused significant alarm at MCFC. The Review Team notes that MCFC may not have been aware of the contents of Broome's statement, but would find it surprising if MCFC wasn't aware of at least the nature of his purported defence;
- 10.17.2 MCFC should have taken this opportunity to stand Broome down from working with Whitehill Boys pending the conclusion of the criminal case. Broome actually stated, in a statement taken on his arrest, that he would 'welcome a break' from the pressure of his life at the time (though again the Review Team does not know whether MCFC was aware of this);
- 10.17.3 Broome instead was allowed to continue coaching the team during the four months between his arrest and conviction. The Review Team understands that Broome continued to commit child sexual abuse during this period; and
- 10.17.4 Even after his conviction, MCFC did not notify the players within Whitehill Boys who were not aware of the trial, nor their parents, why he was no longer involved with the team. This, in an era when media and news were far less instant, allowed Broome to remain active in junior football for at least eight more years.

⁹² Witness evidence of P061 and P035

⁹³ Witness evidence of P060

⁹⁴ Witness evidence of P061

- 10.18 There is no evidence that MCFC undertook any form of internal investigation at the time into Broome's conduct. Whilst this would be expected in today's environment, the Review Team does not believe it would have been expected of MCFC in 1971 in circumstances where a police investigation was ongoing.
- 10.19 Equally, there is no evidence relating to whether MCFC reported Broome to The FA or not. Again this would be expected now, but the Review Team notes that, in 1971, there was no framework for such reports. Accordingly, the Review Team considers it unlikely that any report was made.
- 10.20 Broome continued refereeing in the local area after the end of his MCFC association and became a senior figure in local refereeing. The Review Team has received evidence that Broome continued to abuse whilst acting as a referee. The Review Team has passed this information on to The FA Review for their investigation and appropriate FA and Premier League referrals were made at the time this information was brought to light. The Review Team does not have any evidence as to whether The FA or the Manchester FA knew of Broome's child sexual abuse at the time of the offences.
- 10.21 Whilst the Review Team notes the context of the time and lack of public awareness of child sexual abuse and safeguarding issues, it considers that MCFC's response to Broome's arrest to be wholly inadequate. As a minimum, MCFC should have (i) sought to ensure Broome had no involvement in Whitehill Boys pending the conclusion of proceedings against him and (ii) informed the parents of the Whitehill Boys players of the reason for his departure once he was convicted.

Section D

Bill Toner

11. BACKGROUND

- 11.1 Bill Toner came to the Review Team's attention when an individual stating that he had been sexually abused by him, P016, contacted MCFC direct through its 'Contact Us' webpage, following the press revelations about Barry Bennell in November 2016. P016's message stated:

"I am trying track down information on one of your scouts William 'Bill' Toner, he was my goalkeeper coach 1992/93 to 1995 he abused me and I need to see if he was in fact on your books, whether you have any information on him and whether anyone else has come forward about it."

- 11.2 The safeguarding team at MCFC, immediately and correctly, referred P016 to the NSPCC Hotline and to GMP. Appropriate FA and Premier League referrals were also made.
- 11.3 GMP subsequently investigated and charged Toner with multiple offences relating to P016. This investigation meant that the Review Team could not speak to P016 or other witnesses involved in the investigation for almost two years. The Review Team did keep in regular contact with P016, however, and asked other witnesses from the time, who were not involved in the criminal proceedings, about Toner.
- 11.4 Toner eventually pleaded guilty to four (out of six) counts of indecent assault involving (repeated) sexual touching and forced masturbation. In July 2018, he was sentenced to three years and two months in prison.
- 11.5 The Review Team is not aware of any other survivors of abuse by Toner who are connected to junior football and/or MCFC.

12. TONER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH MCFC

Initial Knowledge

- 12.1 The Review Team initially found two witnesses who remembered Toner:
- 12.1.1 C006, a former MCFC youth coach in the 1990s, said that MCFC's then Youth Development Officer, LTE015, gave Toner a short trial with the club in about 1995, for the under 12s or 13s. C006 says that Toner lasted only one or two games and he never saw him again after that; and
 - 12.1.2 P046 (a former MCFC associated schoolboy) remembers Toner as a scout for MCFC in the early 1990s, again when LTE015 was Youth Development Officer. He recalls that scouts used to have meetings on a Monday with the youth coaches and Toner came to a couple of those meetings. P046's view was that Toner was in all likelihood an informal, unpaid scout who watched local school leagues for MCFC. He would likely have received expenses and possibly match day tickets.
- 12.2 The Review Team spoke to several of the more senior youth coaching team at the time, including, on several occasions, LTE015. None remembered Toner specifically.
- 12.3 Before Toner's trial, GMP informed the Review Team that the allegations against Toner did not relate to his doing any sort of duties for MCFC. The Review Team was told by GMP in August 2017 that:
- 12.3.1 Any link that Toner had to MCFC 'was not relevant to [the GMP] investigation'; and
 - 12.3.2 It 'just so happened that Toner claimed to be a MCFC scout (as a hobby or otherwise) at the same time he was abusing P016'.

Post-conviction Interviews

- 12.4 Following the conclusion of the criminal proceedings, the Review Team was able to speak to P016, one of his parents (P109) and a former MCFC player who remembered Toner (P108). This significantly enhanced the Review Team's knowledge of Toner.
- 12.5 In interview with the Review Team, P016 stated that:
- 12.5.1 Toner purported to be a scout and 'goalkeeper trainer' for MCFC. He regularly wore MCFC kit – such as training tops and tracksuits with the MCFC logo – and had a scout's badge that, allegedly, had his picture on it along with his role for the club. The badge was hung on a lanyard around his neck;
 - 12.5.2 Everyone who played for P016's junior team (including the manager) were of the impression that Toner was associated with MCFC;
 - 12.5.3 P016 and his parents were told by Toner that he was 'going to guide [P016] on a path to get him on the City system';
 - 12.5.4 Toner ran goalkeeping camps (with multiple children attending) in various locations in Greater Manchester along with other people wearing MCFC kit. The Review Team has not, however, found any evidence that these were authorised by MCFC;
 - 12.5.5 On one occasion, P016 and Toner went to Maine Road and Toner gave P016 some goalkeeping gloves belonging to MCFC's first-team goalkeeper; and

- 12.5.6 On another occasion, Toner gave P016 some goalkeeping gloves belonging to MCFC's reserve team goalkeeper.
- 12.6 P109's evidence to the Review Team was that:
- 12.6.1 Toner had introduced himself as a coach for MCFC who trained goalkeepers;
- 12.6.2 Toner had a black leather lanyard around his neck that held a scouting pass in a transparent pouch, with the MCFC logo. P109 questioned Toner as to why he had said he was a coach when the pass said 'scout'. Toner backtracked and said he was a scout, that he didn't coach at MCFC, but could offer goalkeeper training on the side;
- 12.6.3 P109 called MCFC to check Toner's credentials and was told 'he's not a coach for us, he's just a scout, but he helps us with our feeder teams';
- 12.6.4 P109 received a business card from Toner that said something along the lines of 'Manchester City Scout North West';
- 12.6.5 P016 did receive goalkeeper gloves belonging to MCFC players. P109 also stated that P016 had trained with MCFC's reserve-team goalkeeper, who seemed to know Toner well; and
- 12.6.6 Toner's coaching of P016 was privately paid for and took place at local parks or at P016's house.
- 12.7 Following the interviews with P016 and P109, the Review Team was able to locate P108, who was the reserve team goalkeeper both had mentioned. P108's evidence was that:
- 12.7.1 Toner had scouted him from his school team in Norfolk and introduced himself as a MCFC scout, though without any formal identification;
- 12.7.2 Toner would always wear MCFC sportswear;
- 12.7.3 Toner would train P108 in local parks to improve his goalkeeping skills;
- 12.7.4 Toner arranged a trial for P108 at Platt Lane, MCFC's then training ground, after which he was signed on Schoolboy Forms;
- 12.7.5 Toner would attend P108's reserve/first team games and sometimes training at Platt Lane to check on his progress. Toner would speak to other MCFC officials at that time, but would not do any coaching; and
- 12.7.6 Toner asked P108 to attend training sessions with local children from the area where P016 lived, and also asked for 'hand-me-down' gloves from MCFC's first team goalkeepers to give to the local kids.
- 12.8 P108 stated that he did not know of Toner ever introducing another player to MCFC, but was clear in his mind that he was a MCFC scout as Toner had facilitated the whole relationship between him and the club. The Review Team believes that Toner 'discovered' P108 while Toner lived in the Cambridge area, but referred him to MCFC in around 1994, after Toner moved to Manchester in 1992/93.
- 12.9 P108 was clear that there was no inappropriate behaviour towards him by Toner.

Conclusions

- 12.10 The Review Team considers it likely that Toner was not an employee and was an informal, unpaid scout who was given match tickets or expenses for any work he did.
- 12.11 No employment records from this time have been retained by MCFC, but the Review Team considers it unlikely that Toner would appear on those records in any event. There is no evidence of payments to Toner from payroll records.
- 12.12 On further enquiry with GMP, the Review Team was told that Toner himself, in interview, did not claim to have been employed by MCFC. He claimed to have had involvement in local amateur teams from 1992 to 1998 and stated that he did some 'casual coaching' and would 'find local players and point them in the direction of MCFC' in the early nineties.
- 12.13 The Review Team considers that Toner's association with MCFC was limited and short-lived, sparked by his discovery and referral of P108. His role was as an unpaid, part time scout. The Review Team believes that he exaggerated his links with MCFC to P016, his family and the local football community in order to gain credibility.

13. TONER'S ABUSE OF YOUNG PLAYERS

- 13.1 The child sexual abuse P016 suffered was serious and prolonged. The offences to which Toner entered a guilty plea spanned four years and ranged from the touching of buttocks to masturbation. P016 told the Review Team that the abuse happened in some form after every meeting with Toner - i.e. two or three times a week. The effects on P016 have likewise been very serious, and P016 reports that his physical and mental health have both suffered significantly as a result.

What did MCFC know?

- 13.2 The Review Team is aware that Toner had previous convictions for sexual offences from 1983 (against an adult) and 1992 (against a child). These offences took place in Cambridge, where Toner lived at the time. At that time there was no sex offenders register and knowledge of previous offences depended solely on either local knowledge (which is irrelevant in this case) or the offender declaring his offences (usually when employment commenced – as above, the Review Team does not consider Toner was ever employed by MCFC). Accordingly, the Review Team considers it unlikely that MCFC were told of Toner's previous offences before its association with him and MCFC could not reasonably have been expected to know about them.
- 13.3 The Review Team did not receive evidence of a direct report to MCFC relating to Toner. There were, however, witness accounts which hinted at suspicion or awareness of Toner:
- 13.3.1 C006 states that when he was introduced to Toner he was 'instantly uncomfortable' and that Toner looked 'seedy'. He told LTE015 that he did not want Toner involved with MCFC but was told to 'give him a chance and see how it goes';
- 13.3.2 LTE015 recalled an incident regarding a scout from Cambridge, whose name he could not recall. He had been approached by this scout to join the MCFC team and went to watch a local team with which the scout was involved. This local team played in the area P016 lived. During the match, one of the boys got injured and the scout ran onto the pitch to help and touched the boy inappropriately. LTE015 states that, at the end of the match, he told the scout to bring his pass in to MCFC on the Monday. On that day, LTE015 states that he told the scout he had seen what he had done and that he was no longer welcome at MCFC, tearing up his scout pass;
- 13.3.3 P016 told the Review Team of one occasion where, shortly after having testicular surgery that required stitches, P016 collided with a post during a match. He needed treatment and Toner ran over and checked / touched his testicles while he was still on the pitch; and
- 13.3.4 While LTE015 did not have a clear recollection of the scout's name or the date of the incident, the two accounts are remarkably similar and the Review Team believes that these two accounts refer to the same event. P016 dated it to around 1995.

MCFC's Response to allegations/suspicious

- 13.4 It is the Review Team's view that Toner's loose association with MCFC ceased after the incident referred to above.
- 13.5 There is no evidence that LTE015 reported the incident to anyone else at MCFC or to the police. Given that the account states that he witnessed a boy being inappropriately touched, this was not an adequate response. The incident should have been reported

internally and to the police, who would have had the ability to check on Toner's previous criminal past.

Section E

Recommendations

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 This section of the report will set out:

14.1.1 Risk Factors and Recommendations

Themes from the individuals investigated which should continue to be key risk considerations for MCFC and other clubs; and

14.1.2 Safeguarding at MCFC

A brief summary of how 'Stage 2' of the Review Team's project has progressed and of present safeguarding at the club.

15. RISK FACTORS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 As noted at the outset of this report, the landscape relating to safeguarding within football has changed dramatically and, particularly, since the inception of the Academy system in the early 2000s. Accordingly, football clubs are far better equipped to combat many of the issues that contributed to previous failings and regulatory bodies have significantly more effective regimes in place to manage and police safeguarding within the sport.

15.2 That said, significant lessons and themes remain as relevant today as they did in the periods considered by this report. Clubs cannot fall into the trap of complacency and, as set out below, the Review Team has noted that MCFC is now very alive to this.

15.3 Some of the key risk factors the Review Team identified from its work are set out below. This is not an exhaustive list by any means, but represents some of the regular themes that emerged as part of the Review Team's work:

15.3.1 **Grooming of players and parents** – The Review Team observed that Bennell in particular was adept at grooming both the players who became close to him and also their parents or families. He would ingratiate himself with the entire family, often leading to the boys thinking that they would not be believed if they reported him, such was the closeness of relationships;

15.3.2 **Contact outside official events/duties** – A common theme with all those investigated by the Review Team was that they sought contact with young players outside of official training, trials or other duties. Bennell regularly had players staying at his house or going away with him on trips. Broome asked players to visit his house. Toner offered private tuition. The lack of any club control or supervision of these activities exacerbates the risk to child welfare;

15.3.3 **Targeting of potential victims** –The abusers investigated often sought to exploit boys who had some form of perceived vulnerability – those who were quieter, whose parents had challenges in supporting their child's development in football (for example financial or emotional pressures), who were geographically far from home or had transport issues or were physically smaller than their peers;

15.3.4 **Gifts and inducements** – Bennell and Broome both regularly gave young players gifts to try to gain their trust, or used their connection with MCFC as an inducement to seek to ensure compliance or silence;

15.3.5 **Fear** – Equally, Bennell in particular regularly used threatening behaviour to attempt to dissuade young players from crossing him; and

15.3.6 **(Lack of) Safeguarding education** – One of the key contributing factors to the failure to adequately respond to these issues was the lack of knowledge

and education on safeguarding matters at the relevant times. This led to a complete lack of awareness of how such matters should be properly dealt with or reported.

- 15.4 As can be seen below, MCFC's safeguarding department now operates at a very high standard and has voluntarily subjected itself to private, independent audits in addition to the regular Premier League audits. It has performed highly in these audits.
- 15.5 The Review Team, however, makes the following observational recommendations based on the work it has undertaken:
- 15.5.1 **Training and Education** are absolutely paramount in ensuring an effective safeguarding culture. A robust and engaging training programme on all relevant issues, risk factors and reporting procedures is essential in any modern sporting organisation;
- 15.5.2 **A Culture of Safeguarding** must exist throughout the organisation. Employees of all levels of seniority must understand that they have a role to play in ensuring that a safe and secure environment exists. This also applies, where appropriate and when risks are identified, to external agents and partners of the organisation;
- 15.5.3 **Leadership** has a key role to play in the implementation of that culture. Key individuals must set an example, for others to follow, of the importance of embedding high quality safeguarding practices and ensuring that all legal and regulatory requirements are consistently met to a very high standard;
- 15.5.4 **Communication** of the organisation's safeguarding strategy and policies should be clear and easy to understand; and
- 15.5.5 **Openness** – risk factors and core issues should be discussed openly and without embarrassment or shame. No-one in the organisation should feel as if they have nowhere to turn if facing a safeguarding issue.

16. SAFEGUARDING AT MCFC

- 16.1 Running alongside the review of non-recent events, the Review Team was instructed to manage the implementation of a review of current safeguarding practices across CFG to ensure they are at the highest possible standard, and make recommendations to minimise any risk.
- 16.2 The Review Team's identified experts in safeguarding, LimeCulture, contracted directly with MCFC to conduct the review of current safeguarding practices. The Review Team understands that a summary of LimeCulture's findings will be published alongside this report.

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