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Date:18.09.2020

Dear *NAME WITHHELD*,

The Board acknowledges receipt of your, *NAME WITHHELD* and *NAME WITHHELD*'s joint letter dated the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 and I, as Chairperson of the Board, am replying on its behalf. I am therefore sending the same letter as this to each of you separately.

At the outset, the Board wishes to thank you all once again for taking the time to meet with us and for sharing your concerns.

While we understand each of you, as former Chief Scouts, have concerns and we appreciate your desire for further information on certain issues, as we are sure you appreciate, due to the very sensitive nature of those matters, we cannot provide all of the information you have requested for various reason including our not wishing to prejudice ongoing processes, legal obligations, data protection and confidentiality.

Bearing this in mind, I will address the issues in your letter your letter in so far as I can.

### **Learning Review & Cronyism**

To question the validity of the Learning Review in the face of the evidence is disappointing not just for the Board but also to the victims, our members, their parents, the volunteers and the public who have been hurt by the abuse of young people in scouting and, with respect, to refer to Mr Elliott's conclusions as "suppositions and assumptions" is simply not acceptable.

Mr Elliott is an internationally recognized expert and has spent three years working with Scouting Ireland. During this time, Mr Elliott has submitted various reports and all reports have been accepted in their entirety.

Based on Mr Elliott's work, the Board is aware as to how this situation came about. Whilst the Board would also like to identify those who have caused our young people harm, either directly or indirectly, due process must be followed and it is crucial that those who perpetrated the abuse are held fully to account and we do not want to interfere with any criminal investigation and prosecution of the perpetrators.

The important focus for Scouting Ireland is that all of the events referred to in Mr Elliott's reports happened and destroyed young people's lives. We are reassured that you agree that we must ensure the environment that permitted this to prevail is never permitted in scouting again. That is why it is ever so important that our new structural and governance changes are lived and upheld to ensure the separation of duties and that oversight is present along with strong checks and balances.

As publicly stated, Scouting Ireland is committed to engage in a programme of learning and engagement specific to the Learning Review. This is in the work plan of the Executive and it is of the utmost importance that these learnings are embedded within scouting. The Board are fully

committed to this as stated in Scouting Irelands Response to the Learning Review which is available on the website.

The problem of cronyism is addressed in Mr Elliott's Learning Review and in Scouting Irelands Response to the Learning Review. Cronyism in scouting led to the unacceptable turning of a blind eye to the abuse of young people in scouting and in some cases facilitated it and its continuation.

The following is an extract from Scouting Ireland Response to the Learning Review (2020, p. 5).

*Mr Elliot describes cronyism as a negative culture focused on self-interest. Scouting in its historic legacy organisations evolved into contrasting, overlapping worlds. One was Scouting at its best. It was supported by the genuine commitment of thousands of volunteers. They worked for the benefit of tens of thousands of young people. In parallel, another world existed. Sexual predators used the movement to abuse young people and destroy lives. Where cronyism is present it permits unscrupulous behaviours to go unchecked such as child sexual abuse. Habits developed of turning a blind eye. Organisational reputation and what passed for personal respectability was put before the welfare of young people. These young people are the very reason Scouting exists. These young people were failed the most.*

The Board stand by this statement and will continue to do everything in its power to prevent such behaviour from happening again.

Given Mr Elliott's recognized expertise, it is not open to us to question how he carried out his investigations and to do so would undermine his independence and the integrity of the report.

### **Authority of the Board**

The National Management Committee is progressing the wind down of the Association.

The Board accepts that the wind down is taking longer than anticipated but the governance changes have proceeded, and the Board is now the governing body of scouting.

While the Board notes the comments of the former Chief Scouts, it is not in the best interests of Scouting Ireland, our members, nor, and most importantly, those who have been hurt while scouting, to simply close the Association until all outstanding issues have been addressed.

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### **Lorna Lynch Report**

The NMC is dealing with the disciplinary matters arising out of the Lynch Report and, as such, it is not appropriate for the Board to make any comment or to interfere in that process.

However, I can assure you all that the NMC has the full support of the Board.

In conclusion

I respond to your points as follows:

1. This is well under way.
2. This has been addressed above,
3. This has been addressed above.
4. This has been addressed above.

I can assure you that the Board has done its utmost to ensure the survival of Scouting Ireland in the face of the historical child sex abuse revelations and their cover-up by some within the former

scouting bodies and strives to embed good governance structures to ensure not only compliance with legislation but to further ensure a separation of duties and responsibilities so that the necessary checks and balances are in place. Transparency is of the utmost importance to this board.

We would like to assure you that the Board's primary focus is to ensure the delivery of positive safe scouting to our youth members whilst acknowledging and addressing the failings of the past.

There is no place in Scouting for anyone who by design or by omission harms a child.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Tennant', written in a cursive style.

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Adrian Tennant  
Chairperson  
Scouting Ireland