

Statement re false allegations from Esther Baker

September 05, 2017

Statement by John Hemming

I am pleased that the Police have now made it clear that there has been a concerted effort to promote false criminal allegations against me and that the allegations had no substance whatsoever.

I would like to thank Emily Cox, my children, Ayaz Iqbal (my Solicitor), my local lib dem team and many others who supported me through this dreadful experience. There are many worse things that happen to people, but this was a really bad experience.

It is bad enough to have false allegations made about yourself to the police, but to have a concerted campaign involving your political opponents and many others in public creates an environment in which it is reasonable to be concerned about ill founded vigilante attacks on your family and yourself. Luckily there was a more substantial lobby to the contrary as well, which included many people who

were themselves real survivors of abuse, which has helped.

I am normally someone who helps other people fight injustice. Being subject to an unjust campaign of vilification is something I do not wish to repeat.

The police themselves have handled the allegations well. However, although it was obvious from the start that the allegations were nonsense, it has taken two and a half years for this to be resolved. Identifying why that is will take time, but I believe that the system is too tolerant of false allegations. The current CPS guidelines on handling false allegations are in my view too tolerant of malicious allegations and need review. The unnecessary delay of around 2 years in resolving the issue I believe arises from procedures that are being used being flawed.

It has been in the public domain for 2 years that the complainant changed her allegations in early 2015 from those she had made publicly previously and that she had stated publicly that she had never met a politician.

It is worth people more generally learning a little about criminal procedure particularly that when someone is not arrested they are most likely to be innocent – even an arrest does not imply guilt. The police asked me not to put key information in my defence into the public domain, I agreed to keep that out of the public domain. That obviously made the public campaign against me harder to handle.

This sort of situation is inevitably an attack on my family not just myself. I am still in discussion with the police about some of the criminal incidents involving

my family and myself during this process. Therefore I do not wish to make further comment on those at the moment.

It should be noted that the newspapers generally have handled the issue reasonably well. Exaro and Exaro's funder have behaved dreadfully. Sky should recognise that not only was their broadcast of the original allegations in May 2015 a complete nonsense, but also had it been based upon truthful allegations that it would have undermined a criminal investigation. The attempts to drum up additional false complainants through the use of publicity highlights a difficulty with publicising cases whilst a police investigation is going on. There are people who will make false allegations merely because someone suggests that they are looking for such allegations.

Some members of the Labour Party, including my opponent in the last two General Elections, have invested considerable time in promoting these allegations. The promotion of the complainant as an expert in this subject area as a consequence of these allegations has caused additional difficulties for my family.

I am not myself aware of another situation where members and supporters of a political party have promoted such allegations in such a public manner – essentially arming the villagers with torches and pitchforks and setting off on a lynching. There were public attempts to prevent me from standing as a candidate because of allegations made maliciously by a Labour Party member backed by other members of the Labour Party. Many Labour members will find this unacceptable and it is an issue that needs consideration by the Labour leadership.

I have asked the police to investigate this attempt to pervert the course of justice and await their response. There are, of course, many procedural options that are open to me to obtain justice for my family. I will consider those over the near future.

ENDS