

# ELLINDON SURVIVORS

Issue 2

**SECOND EDITION**

June 2005

## A Letter to the Survivors

**Greetings:** This is the second edition of the Ellindon Survivors Newsletter to keep you informed of the progress of the Ellindon School class action aimed at achieving compensation for former pupils who suffered severe physical and emotional abuse and in some instances sexual abuse. There are now 22 claimants in the group including 2 women. We issued proceedings in the Cambridge High Court on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2003 and since then the County Council have continued to locate and index management records stored at the John Fisher School. We hope to receive these soon. The Claimants need to gather evidence to show the County Council's neglect in managing Ellindon which allowed the abusers to flourish. We have the 1996 Ofsted Report and most recently we chipped out of Peterborough City Council a copy of the Le Fleming Report 2000, an enquiry in 1998 after the closure of the school confirming the establishment was rightly closed. You are welcome to read them. We also forced the Peterborough City Council to hand back to the Police the 99 witness statements

that the Cambridge Police gathered when they investigated Ellindon. We will need to seek special leave of the Court to allow our investigator to read the Police statements, trawling for more evidence of negligence. As a prelude to winning compensation Claimants need to establish, or the Defendants need to admit, primary organisational negligence and we say at this stage that the evidence is overwhelming that the County Council failed in running Ellindon School properly. We have now prepared 2 important documents to commence the class action; firstly the Master Claim with allegations of management negligence and a Group Litigation Order that will manage the 22 claims through to trial if the case gets that far. The Defendants solicitors Browne Jacobson are now considering their position. We will soon apply to the Cambridge High Court for a hearing. We have asked the Court to order that all hearings be held in Peterborough so that Claimants can attend if they wish. At the same time as we gather more generic evidence all Claimants are now working on preparing civil witness statements. We are accessing social care records from the Defendants; educational records from Peterborough City Council (although many of these are lost completely), medical records, and criminal records so the medical experts can get an overview of the Claimant's life history. We have been trying to over 2 years to gain access to the Ellindon School premises to take photographs but have encountered the usual bureaucratic blockages and obviously the Defendants do not want us to document the interior. There is a rumour afoot that the authorities are going to pull the place down. Does anyone have a view on this? The Peterborough Masonic Lodge occupy the old Ellindon

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offices and we are writing to them as well. A Court Order will no doubt be needed to gain access, as there seems to be a huge resistance. There will be a lot of trouble in Peterborough for some old staff members when the Claimants apply to the Court for disclosure of the disciplinary proceedings of the various members of staff accused of abuse. We believe that there were 7 of them. A lot of people have been asking why the Police did not lay any charges and some of us are furious that the perpetrators have escaped justice. Do you have any views? That's about it now. In our last Newsletter we featured the thoughts and feelings of Taz Sellafeld, a pen name for a survivor who tells his own story. Please think about making your own contributions to the *Newsletter*. A Claimant from Blackpool has discovered a hoard of photographs of his life at Ellindon which are invaluable at building a broad picture of Ellindon. Do you have any photographs of the School or of yourself when you were there? Please let us have copies.

*With best wishes,*  
**Andrew Grove**

**Stop Press Stop Press Stop Press Stop Press**

The Claimants are about to issue an application for a major case management hearing to set the class action in motion. We will try to make sure that this hearing is in Peterborough so that you can turn up to observe the Court process. You might be confused by it because a lot of the work is done on the day between Barristers on both sides with their solicitors behind closed doors, agreeing the timetable of directions and isolating issues of disagreement. The usual mode of action of the defendant is to object to many issues and we hope to have these out in the open on the day of the hearing. Judge Blomfield is the High Court Directions Judge and knows these types of cases well. We will be in touch with you all individually to progress your civil witness statements and arrange for you to see an expert who will prepare a report on the effect of the crow pecking and other forms of abuse suffered. The defendant solicitors at the moment are clarifying with us the exact dates when each claimant was in Ellindon so please try and find this information, perhaps your parents will know, and telephone or write to us. These dates should be in the school records on all children. However it would appear from our communications with the defendant that most of the Ellindon education records are lost. Please make sure that if you change your address or telephone number you advise us. We are working this case and are available for your telephone calls from Monday to Friday up until 8.00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. for a longer chat, preferably on a land line if you have one.

*"Ellindon School"*



## **Someday I'll Cry**

by Al Johnson

Right now it hurts too much to cry.  
I can't deal with my pain.  
Survival is my current goal,  
Forget "No pain, no gain."

But someday when I'm stronger  
And life is safer, too,  
I'll look inside my hurting heart  
As best as I can do.

And then the special child  
That lives inside of me  
Will face the pain, injustice,  
And the tears can be set free.

I'll cry for the special boy  
Whose childhood was lost  
in the effort to survive,  
I'll cry for what it cost.

I'll cry for others who like me  
Craved love instead of strife.  
Yes, in time, someday I'll cry,  
For tears belong to life.

## Breaking the cycle – three stages of healing

Coming to terms with the mistreatment suffered as a child -- whether physical, sexual or emotional -- is the only way to break the cycle of abuse, Miller and other psychiatrists say. "When people manage to get in touch with their own pain, they no longer want to take it out on others," says Beeman.

Therapy is the most common way to reach this crucial point, but support groups can also be very helpful. Often just being around other people who have gone through similar experiences allows survivors to work through their memories and begin to heal. "When people realise that they're not going to have to cope with a painful past by themselves, they're usually able to talk about and process what happened to them," says Beeman, who leads support groups in San Francisco, California through the Adult Survivors of Child Abuse (ASCA) organisation.

Groups like this typically define three stages of recovery for adult survivors: remembering, mourning, and healing. In the first stage, participants work through their memories of abuse and recognise that they were wronged as children. The group emphasises that the abuser was responsible for this trauma, not the child -- something that survivors often have trouble accepting on an emotional level.

In the second stage, survivors are encouraged to grieve for the childhood they lost, mourn the fact that loved ones failed them, and work on controlling their anger and finding healthy outlets for any aggressive or self-destructive feelings they may still feel. They're urged to identify how abuse has affected them as adults, and to take an inventory of the current problem areas in their lives.



According to the group, to reach the final stage of healing, survivors must learn to accept that they have a right to be happy. They work on strengthening the healthy parts of themselves, and on making the necessary changes in their own behaviour and in their relationships with friends and family. For survivors, it's all about coming to the realisation that they deserve kindness, a belief that is robbed from them by experiences of childhood abuse, says Beeman.

***Please send us your contributions to the Newsletter.  
A poem, story, letter, anything will be considered for publication.  
Please send your contributions to:***

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