



## News release

5 May 2022

### **Formby School Under Scrutiny in Historic Sexual Abuse Case**

**A teacher at Formby High School was able to continue abusing pupils until his death in 1992, despite being charged with inciting young boys to commit acts of gross indecency 12 years earlier, it has emerged.**

According to newspaper reports at the time, Ian Farquharson, who worked at the school between the mid-1970s and 1992, was prosecuted in February 1980 after allegedly plying pupils with bottles of lemonade after school hours while they sorted out stamps for the Blue Peter children's television programme and encouraging them to carry out the acts.

The prosecution in the case also alleged the lower school headmaster arranged the sorting to take place in front of a classroom store and then spied on the boys – who were under 14 – through the store keyhole.

Mr Farquharson was found not guilty and returned to the school, where he continued teaching until his death from carbon monoxide poisoning in May 1992. It's believed he killed himself hours after a further complaint of sexual abuse was made against him by the parent of a child at the school.

The evidence of the earlier prosecution was uncovered by [Andrew Grove and Company Solicitors](#) in Cambridge which is preparing a case against Sefton Council on behalf of a group of former pupils who say they suffered years of horrific abuse at the hands of Mr Farquharson between approximately 1975 and 1992.

Initially six survivors came forward in March this year after they saw a video on Facebook by child abuse survivor and well known UK body builder Aarron Lambo. That number has since increased to 30.

Andrew Grove and Company Solicitor Katherine Yates says Formby High School and Sefton Council have a lot to answer for.

“I cannot help but think that the tremendous psychological and psychiatric damage suffered by my clients could have been avoided if the school had taken the allegations seriously when they first came to light,” said Katherine.

“Mr Farquharson was prosecuted in 1980 and six boys gave evidence against him. We do not know exactly why he was cleared but he told the court that these boys were just trying to get him into trouble.

“It appears he went back to teach at Formby High School as if nothing had happened and he carried on abusing boys for another 12 years until his death in 1992. It seems that the school did not carry out its own internal investigation and failed to keep an eye on Mr Farquharson after these criminal proceedings took place.

“After his death, rather than offering counselling and support to the child victims, a memorial plaque was placed in the school grounds which was unveiled with much ceremony and caused considerable further upset to the children concerned.

“School staff referred to Mr Farquharson’s death as being tragic whereas the suffering he caused among the children he abused was the real tragedy in this sad case. Investigations are now taking place to ascertain what else the school and the local authority knew and subsequently failed to act upon.”

Despite 30 people already having come forward Katherine believes there could be many more former students who are entitled to compensation.

“If anyone was abused at Formby High School, regardless of whether they have previously made a complaint, I would really like to hear from them,” said Katherine.

“Understandably lots of people feel anxious about coming forward but we can offer a sympathetic ear and help them seek recompense for what happened to them. Also, all claims are being funded on a no win, no fee basis so there’s no cost involved.”

Solicitors with conduct are Katherine Yates and Charlotte Denley and both can be contacted for further information on 01223 367133 or by email at [katherine@andrewgroveandco.com](mailto:katherine@andrewgroveandco.com) or [charlotte@andrewgroveandco.com](mailto:charlotte@andrewgroveandco.com)

**Ends**

**Notes to editors:**

- Andrew Grove & Company Solicitors specialises in investigating and claiming compensation for adult victims of childhood abuse. Since 1996 the firm has obtained millions of pounds in compensation for victims of abuse nationwide.
- Andrew Grove & Co is currently acting for 30 former pupils of Formby High School who were sexually abused and is planning legal proceedings in the civil court against Sefton Council.

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