

IN THE DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL OF THE CHURCH IN WALES

AND IN THE MATTER OF A REFERRAL IN RESPECT OF THE REVEREND ANDREW ROBINSON

JUDGMENT

1. By Reference dated 15th August 2025, the Bishop of Swansea and Brecon referred to the Disciplinary Tribunal of the Church in Wales the Reverend Andrew Robinson (the 'Respondent'), a Clerk in Holy Orders, the grounds of the referral being that the Respondent engaged in conduct giving just cause for scandal or offence contrary to Chapter IX, Paragraph 9(c) of the Constitution of the Church in Wales ('the Constitution').

THE FACTS

2. The grounds for the referral were that on 17th April 2025 the Respondent appeared before the Justices sitting at Merthyr Tydfil and upon his plea of guilty was sentenced to 12 weeks imprisonment suspended for 2 years together with ancillary orders and was placed on the Sex Offenders Register for 7 years.
3. The convictions relate to the downloading by the Respondent between 11th June 2017 and 10th February 2024 of indecent photographs of children, namely 13 Category A images, 20 Category B images 196 Category C images and the possession on 9th February 2024 of 337 prohibited images of children.
4. The Reference from the Bishop enclosed the relevant certification of conviction from the civil authorities. In accordance with Section 11 (4) of Chapter IX of the Constitution the preliminary stage of the Tribunal Proceedings was dispensed with and the matter set down for full hearing on 3 November 2025.
5. The Respondent did not appear before us, stating that his wife's ill health prevented it, and declined to send a legal or other representative to the Hearing. He pointed out that he had retired from licensed ministry in 2014. He provided us with no explanation for his actions, nor did he invite us to consider any mitigating circumstances.
6. Despite Mr Robinson's retirement in 2014, the Tribunal retains jurisdiction over him under Section 9 of Chapter IX of the Constitution, because he held a

permission to officiate in his retirement, including during the time of the conduct giving rise to the complaint.

THE LAW

- 7.** The Proctor, Ms Helen Randall of Counsel, brings the case and the burden rests on her to prove the case upon the balance of probabilities. However, in accordance with Rule 31 of the Tribunal's Rules, a certificate of conviction for a criminal offence from a secular court is treated as conclusive proof that the acts therein specified were committed by the person named in the certificate. The burden on the Proctor is therefore to prove that the conduct set out in the certificate gives just cause for scandal or offence.
- 8.** In deciding the issue before us we follow the decision of the Provincial Court of the Church in Wales in the matter of the Reverend Clifford Smith Williams, with judgment being handed down on 1st November 1997.
- 9.** The Provincial Court decided that for an offence alleging just cause for scandal or offence to be proved, the Tribunal must be satisfied of three matters. First, we have to be satisfied that there was a course of conduct knowingly entered upon by the Respondent. Secondly, we have to be satisfied that the course of conduct must, in the eyes of the Church, be judged to be inherently wrong. Thirdly, we have to be satisfied that the course of conduct must bring such discredit upon the Respondent and the Church that, in the eyes of a person of reasonably robust persuasion, such a person would describe it as scandalous or offensive.
- 10.** Given the facts that prompted this Referral we do not need to trouble ourselves with a detailed consideration of precisely what scandalous or offensive mean. We accept the meanings ascribed to them by common usage.

OUR DECISION

- 11.** We have no doubt that the facts which led to the convictions were scandalous and would, in the eyes of a person of reasonably robust persuasion, be regarded as both scandalous and offensive. The information before us shows that Mr Robinson knowingly entered into a course of conduct by downloading the images and that the conduct, in the eyes of both the Church and wider society, is inherently wrong. We thus find the charge proved.

THE PENALTY

- 12.** Chapter IX of the Constitution of the Church in Wales sets out at Paragraph 18 the powers of sentence open to the Disciplinary Tribunal. They range from the most minor, an absolute discharge, to the most serious, the deposition from Holy Orders and expulsion from the office of a Cleric in the Church in Wales.
- 13.** The Panel was unanimous that only the most serious sanctions available to the Tribunal would be appropriate in a case of this nature. We considered whether disqualification from holding a position in the Church in Wales without limitation of time was appropriate, but the gravity of the offending, in direct opposition to the extensive work that the Church in Wales has conducted to make safeguarding a priority and the level of outrage that right minded people would justifiably feel were he to continue to be able to hold himself out as a Priest persuade us that the only appropriate sanction that is consonant with the gravity of his offending is to order the Bishop of Swansea & Brecon to depose Mr Robinson from Holy Orders and to expel him from the office of Cleric in the Church in Wales.
- 14.** In accordance with Section 19 of Chapter IX of the Constitution, Mr Robinson has 28 days to lodge an appeal to this decision with the Registrar of the Provincial Court. If no appeal is lodged, this order shall become definitive.

17th November 2025

Mark Powell KC, President of the Disciplinary Tribunal
The Venerable Matthew Hill, Archdeacon of Carmarthen
Dr. Delyth Hurley