FORM 3 (Rules 6 and 17)

Clergy Discipline Measure 2003

Statement in support of a Complaint, or in support of an Answer to a Complaint

Box for use only by the Registrar of Tribunals	*Statement submitted by:* *Name of maker of statement:* *Date of statement:*

In the matter of the complaint

Enter the name of the complainant.
Enter the name of the member of the clergy about whom a complaint is made.

made by The Board of Deputies of British Jews

against Rev Dr Stephen Sizer

My full name is: **Miranda Pinch**

My contact address, including postcode, is:
7 Down gate, Alresford, Hampshire. SO24 9JB

***Telephone & e-mail details are optional, but it could be helpful to the registrar and bishop to have them.*

My telephone number is: **07538999864

My e-mail address is: **miranda.pinch@gmail.com

The matters in this statement to which I refer are all within my own knowledge, except where I indicate otherwise. If anything is not within my own knowledge then I set out the source of any matters of information and belief:

1. I have known Stephen for many years through our human rights work. Over the years we have both worked with and alongside UK Jewish groups as well as Israeli Jewish human rights activists. I have never heard anything from Stephen that could be considered in any way anti-Semitic. On the contrary I know him as someone who works tirelessly for human rights and international law, and as an Anglican priest his words, written and spoken, have always been in line with Christian teachings of love and inclusivity.

2. The Board of Deputies does not represent the Jewish community in the UK. The Jewish community, like the Christian community, is very diverse with a broad range of views. There are many within the Jewish Diaspora who utterly condemn the actions of the State of Israel and are appalled by the mendacious intimidation and harassment by some parts of the Jewish community, including the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Chronicle, who are attempting to discredit those who stand up for human rights and international law for all within Israel and Palestine; Jew, Muslim and Christian alike.

My mother was a holocaust survivor herself and it has not prevented accusations of Holocaust denial against me. I have also fallen foul of publishing a perfectly acceptable article from, what was deemed by some, to be a disreputable source. Taking such accusations to their logical conclusion, given that most publications have contained views contrary to today's very sensitive perspectives, it is difficult to avoid those that could not fall foul of the Board of Deputies had they a mind to trawl through them. In fact I used that argument in my defence in an exchange with the Jewish Chronicle a few years ago and thankfully escaped with an only slightly damaging on line article about me.

3. The IHRA definition of anti-Semitism is problematic, especially given the examples accepted as part of it, which many organisations have accepted without caveats. The British Parliament's Home Affairs Select Committee attached these caveats to its own 2016 report on anti-Semitism in order to protect free speech and legitimate criticism of Israel.
"It is not anti-Semitic to criticise the Government of Israel, without additional evidence to suggest anti-Semitic intent.
It is not anti-Semitic to hold the Israeli Government to the same standards as other liberal democracies, or to take a particular interest in the Israeli Government's policies or actions, without evidence to suggest anti-Semitic intent."

I am aware that a number of people, including myself, have been accused of anti-Semitism based on the perception of others. If perception alone is the criteria for guilt then there can no longer be free speech or proper debate about any subject that creates strong emotions and perspectives. And further, it is the death knell to democracy.

4. Much of the complaint against Stephen is based on guilt by association. Any panel or conference involves debate. Real debate is impossible without a variety of opinions being expressed. To avoid any platform with someone who has a disagreeable perspective is to close down all such debate.

Most parliamentarians prefer diplomacy to conflict. Diplomacy entails engaging with people with whom they disagree. It would be strange if most politicians had not shared a meeting, venue, discussion, conference or dinner with those labelled despots, terrorists or law breakers on various occasions. Taking this into the Christian realm. Jesus was criticised for mixing with those deemed by others to be beyond the pale. We cannot soften or even convert the views of others without active engagement.

5. Finally the orchestrated campaign against Stephen Sizer is not becoming of any person or institution that upholds democracy, free speech, human rights and international law. Such harassment and intimidation of an individual surely runs counter to the very values that this country and the Church holds dear.

*You must explain in your statement how you know about each of the matters you describe, **unless** you know about them because you have **personally** seen or observed them.*

I believe the facts in my statement to be true. I am aware that the contents of this statement may be made public

You must sign and date this statement.

Signed: 

Dated: 27/11/15