

Tolkien son will not face child sex abuse charges

By Campbell Docherty and Helen Bruce

Police have closed their investigation into Father John Tolkien – the son of famous author JRR Tolkien – on alleged child sex abuse claims after it was decided not to charge him because of his failing health.

West Midlands Police launched an inquiry last March following allegations that Father Tolkien, now aged 84, committed the offences when based at the Roman Catholic Martyrs Church in Evelyn Road, Sparkhill, in the 1950s.

Detectives submitted a file to the Crown Prosecution Service and after a review of the case, the CPS said yesterday it had decided it would not be in the public interest to proceed.

Julie Seddon, a CPS spokeswoman, explained that the case passed what is termed “the evidential test”, in that it was felt there was “sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction”.

She said: “The Crown Prosecution Service has advised the police not to bring charges against Father



Father John Tolkien, son of JRR Tolkien

John Tolkien following allegations of historic sexual abuse.

“After careful consideration of all the circumstances of the case, the CPS has decided that it would not be in the public interest to proceed. This decision was made following the submission of expert medical opinion regarding Father Tolkien’s state of health.”

When asked whether this meant there was sufficient evidence to prosecute Father Tolkien but his poor health prevented this, she replied: “Yes, it was not in the public interest to prosecute following expert medical opinion.”

She added: “The case would have to have passed the evidence test for public interest to be considered.”

Det Ch Insp Steve Basterfield, of Belgrave Road CID, said: “We have received the CPS’s decision and the case is now closed.”

Fr Tolkien moved from Sparkhill in Birmingham to other parishes in the Midlands before retiring in Oxfordshire.

His father, JRR Tolkien, became famous for his fantasy novels, which included *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*. A film based on the latter is currently a box office hit in the UK and America.

Steven Maier, the lawyers acting for Fr Tolkien, said: “Father Tolkien has consistently denied the allegations of impropriety made against him.”

A spokesman for the Archdiocese of Birmingham said yesterday: “The Archdiocese of Birmingham is aware that allegations of historic sexual abuse have been made against Fr John Tolkien, pertaining to many years ago.

“Fr Tolkien has consistently denied these allegations. The Archdiocese has co-operated fully with the police during their investigations and notes the decision of the Crown Prosecution Service not to bring charges.”