

# **PCC OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, WESTBOURNE**

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person (or organization) that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at St John the Baptist knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### **2 DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of St John the Baptist, Westbourne.

### **3 WHERE COMPLAINTS COME FROM**

Complaints may come from any individual, volunteer or organisation with a legitimate interest in St John the Baptist, including the general public if something is perceived to be improper. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

### **4 CONFIDENTIALITY**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

### **5 RESPONSIBILITY**

Overall responsibility for this procedure lies with the PCC of St John the Baptist, Westbourne.

## **6 RECEIVING COMPLAINTS**

Complaints may arrive verbally, through email, or via any other opportunities the complainant may have, such as social media. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

- The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:
- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to St John the Baptist, e.g. donor, volunteer, sponsor
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words

## **7 RESOLVING COMPLAINTS**

### **Stage One**

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Rector or churchwardens within five days.

On receiving the complaint, the recipient records it as an MSWord document on the Box electronic filing system. If it has not already been resolved, they will delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, that person should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person receiving the complaint within five days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

### **Stage Two**

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at PCC level.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to PCC. The request for PCC level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The PCC may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the PCC decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

### **External Stage**

As the PCC is a registered charity, the complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Charity Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/>.

### **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The PCC may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a Chair or trustee should not also have the Chair and/or trustee involved as a person leading a Stage Two review.

### **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Complaints are reviewed annually by the Standing Committee to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

## **8 REVIEW**

This procedure is reviewed by the PCC every three years.

## **8 REVISION HISTORY**

VERSION	DATE	DETAILS	BY
Draft	January 2024	Written	Stewart Taylor
1	24 January 2024	Reviewed and approved	PCC