



ALLSAINTS

WOODFORD WELLS

Title of Policy	Complaints Handling Policy
Owner	Churchwardens
Issue Date	March 2021
Reviewed By	Rachel Whitelegg
Approved By	Risk and Governance Committee
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Next Review Due	March 2026

Complaints Handling Policy

Outside the scope of this policy

If you have a complaint about:

- **Safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults**, please contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer – Fiona Green at ASWW or the Diocesan Duty Safeguarding Adviser on 01245 29 44 44.
- **The Vicar**, please raise the matter with the Church Warden(s). If the matter remains unresolved you could contact the Archdeacon. You may wish to read the leaflet *“I have a complaint about misconduct by a member of the clergy – what can I do?”* available on the following website <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/makingcomplainta4.pdf>
- Another minister, please raise this matter with the Vicar. If the matter remains unresolved you could contact the Archdeacon (a.westham@chelmsford.anglican.org) You may wish to read the leaflet *“I have a complaint about misconduct by a member of the clergy – what can I do?”* available on the following website <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/makingcomplainta4.pdf>
- **Your employment by the PCC** - if you are a PCC employee please refer to and follow the grievance procedure provided in your terms and conditions of employment.
- **External organisations which meet on All Saint’s premises, such as the Uniformed Groups and Pre-school, you should address your complaint to those organisations** and their own procedures should be followed.

What is the scope of this policy?

The complaints procedure set out in this policy should be used in relation to matters for which the PCC is responsible, including

- the management and operation of the church sites,
- the maintenance of the church buildings,
- the financial affairs of the church, and
- the activities of employees and volunteers for whom the PCC takes responsibility or on behalf of the church.

The PCC is committed to performing its role of “promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical” to the highest standard. However, we recognise that from time to time there may be occasions when church members, visitors, and others who participate in our church activities (together, “Church Users”) may wish to make a complaint.

Your continued goodwill is greatly valued by us and we would expect to resolve any day-to-day difficulties or complaints informally and as quickly as possible.

What constitutes a complaint?

A complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet about an action, or lack of action by, an employee or volunteer for whom the PCC takes responsibility or who acts on behalf of the church, or about the policies and procedures of the PCC.

We will consider any complaint using the procedures set out below.

What is the purpose of the policy?

- to protect the interests of all Church Users,
- to improve the quality of services we provide by responding to the views and needs of people affected,
- to enable Church Users to propose improvements to our ways of working,
- to provide a means of monitoring our performance.

How is a complaint dealt with?

Informal Procedure

The aim always, when responding to complaints, is to enable them to be resolved informally, speedily and fairly by discussion, problem solving, mediation and negotiation.

- The person making the complaint should in the first instance speak to the person(s) they understand to be responsible for the area in which dissatisfaction or disquiet has arisen, and the complaint will hopefully be resolved in this way. If the person making the complaint is unsure of who is responsible for the relevant area, they should ask a member of the Operations Team.
- If they receive no satisfactory response, they should contact a Church Warden.
- If the complaint cannot be dealt with immediately, they should be given a written response by a Church Warden within 5 working days.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal procedure, s/he may invoke the formal procedure below.

Formal Procedure

Where the formal procedure is used, the complaint should be made either in person or in writing by, letter or email to the Vicar or a Church Warden, who will acknowledge, in writing within ten working days, the receipt of the complaint. If the complaint is about the Church Warden(s) the complaint should be addressed to the Vicar (marked 'confidential'). At this, and any subsequent stage, the complainant may be accompanied or supported by a friend.

Following receipt of the complaint, the Vicar or Church Warden will investigate the circumstances leading to the complaint and will communicate the results of the investigation to the complainant within a reasonable time – normally within 20 working days of the complaint being received. If the complaint is found to be justified, the Vicar or Church Warden will, where appropriate, agree any necessary further action with the complainant.

The complainant will have the right – if dissatisfied with the results of the enquiry – to put their complaint, in writing, to an appeal panel of two PCC members, which will include at least one Church Warden (where the complaint is not about both Church Wardens).

If the complaint is found to be justified, the appeal panel will agree, where appropriate, any necessary further action with the complainant. This policy does not provide for any further appeal, but the complainant may pursue any other remedy they may have apart from this policy.

The PCC will endeavour to ensure the complainant is provided with any help they need in making a complaint, including:

- assistance from a church member independent of the PCC in writing or explaining the formal complaint,
- the opportunity to be accompanied by a friend
- ease of access to any meeting. In some circumstances it may be possible to meet at the complainant's home (where there is a lack of transport, disability, mobility etc)

All complaints made pursuant to this policy should be reported to the Church Wardens and recorded in the appropriate file which is kept by a Church Warden. Details should include the nature of the complaint and the date received, the process followed, the action taken and the outcomes including further follow-up.

Where the formal procedure is used, the person the complainant says is responsible, or, where the complaint arises from an organisational issue, the person with overall responsibility for the activity, will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable after the complaint is received, and will at each stage be given the same opportunities as the complainant to respond.

When your complaint cannot be resolved

If you are not happy with how your complaint has been dealt with, contact details for the regulators handling complaints in respect of matters concerning charities can be found on the following website.

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

Getting on Together: Encouraging positive relationships and preventing bullying and harassment in the Diocese of Chelmsford

All Saints with St Andrew's Complaint Record Form

Name of complainant	
Address	
Contact number	
Nature of complaint	
Date received	
Action taken	
Outcome	
Is it resolved?	
Follow up needed?	
Date followed up	