



## **Guidance for managing complaints**

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of  
St Wilfrid's, Parklands, Chichester**

The churchwardens from time to time are responsible in the first instance for the handling of complaints.

# Complaints Handling Policy

Our Church recognises that our church members and all those who visit our church or any of our church activities have the right to expect high quality services. However, we recognise that from time to time there may be occasions when users of our services feel that the quality or level of service provided falls short of what they could reasonably expect.

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. In the first instance we would expect you to raise any complaint directly with the church member concerned.

If all that we do does not meet expected standards, then you have the right to complain.

A complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet about an action, or lack of action by a person acting on behalf of the church, or about the policies and procedures of the church. However, this policy does not apply to a complaint which includes an allegation that a child or adult who may be vulnerable has been harmed or is at risk of harm, or that an adult or another child may have caused harm to a child or adult who may be vulnerable; such a complaint must be dealt with in accordance with the Diocesan and Charity Commission procedures for handling allegations of abuse.

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

It is important that we give all persons the ability and information with which to complain. They should determine the seriousness of the complaint, which could be about:

- conduct of our clergy and/or some or all members of our church,
- the standard or sort of service we provide,
- discrimination,
- provision of inaccurate information, or
- poor administration including delays in responding to enquiries.

## What is the purpose of the policy?

- To protect the interests of all church users and visitors
- To improve the quality of services we provide by responding to the views and needs of people affected
- To enable church users and visitors to propose improvements to our ways of working
- To protect our minister and church members
- To provide a means of monitoring our performance.

The clergy and all church members should be familiar with the process.

Complaints against clergy should be passed to the archdeacon or the area bishop.

## How is a complaint dealt with?

The aim always, when responding to complaints and grievances, 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) deemed responsible for the area of dissatisfaction or disquiet, and will hopefully be resolved in this way.
- If they receive no satisfactory response, they should speak to a churchwarden.
- The churchwarden, if he or she cannot deal with the complaint at once to the complainant's satisfaction, shall ask the complainant to put the complaint in writing and reply within 5 working days of receipt.
- A complainant who remains dissatisfied may appeal in writing to the chair of the PCC.

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- If the chair cannot resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction, he shall arrange for the appeal to be heard by himself and the churchwardens at a mutually convenient time and place.
- If the Chair or either of the churchwardens is the subject of the complaint, such other member of the PCC as the remaining members may appoint to replace him.
- The Chair shall inform the complainant in writing of the outcome of the appeal within 10 days of the hearing.
- If the appeal is found to be justified, the appeal panel will agree any necessary further action with the complainant.

Subject to any complaint to the Charity Commissioners (see below), the decision of the appeal panel is final and no further appeal is possible.

It is important that we give the complainant any help they need including

- Assistance in writing the formal complaint
- The opportunity to be accompanied by a friend, adviser or advocate
- Ease of access to any meeting. In some circumstances it may be possible to meet at the complainant's home (lack of transport, disability, mobility, etc)

The PCC shall nominate a complaints handler responsible for recording all written complaints and replies and any steps taken to remedy the cause of a complaint.

The churchwardens shall keep the PCC informed of the number and nature of written complaints and the outcomes. S/he will report to the PCC on this at least annually.

A record will be kept of complaints and, unless either the complainant does not wish the complaint to be made public or the priest and churchwardens or the PCC decide otherwise, for example, because the complaint appears libellous, shall be available for inspection by any member of the congregation.

### Initial Contact

If you have a complaint, contact the senior churchwarden at:

St Wilfrid's Church  
Sherborne Road  
Parklands  
Chichester  
PO19 3AT

Please also let us know if you are happy with services at St Wilfrid's.

### When your complaint cannot be resolved

Where we have exhausted all avenues and the complainant is still dissatisfied, contact the Charity Commission as follows:

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

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PCC of St Wilfrid's, Chichester Complaints Record Form	
<b>Name of complainant:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Telephone number:</b>	
<b>Nature of complaint:</b>	
<b>Date received:</b>	
<b>Action taken:</b>	
<b>Outcome:</b>	
<b>Is it resolved?</b>	
<b>Follow-up needed?</b>	
<b>Date followed up</b>	