

ST JUDE'S SOUTHSEA

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is committed to its role which primarily includes 'cooperation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.' But there may be a time when you need to complain. This complaints procedure is for those who are unhappy about matters that have affected them for which the PCC is responsible.

Jesus says in Matthew's Gospel: "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector." Mathew 18:15-17

We believe that most complaints are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage. We also believe that complaints should always be taken seriously and dealt with fairly in a way that respects confidentiality where appropriate.

Most concerns can be resolved quickly by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, the following procedure is available to you.

Prior to using this formal procedure the PCC request any complaint is made via an informal approach to the Vicar or a churchwarden (or both) to see if the matter can be resolved in that way.

If your complaint is about:

Safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults: please in the first instance contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser at <https://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/safeguarding/contacts/>

The Vicar or another ordained minister: please raise the matter with the Vicar and/or a churchwarden. If the matter remains unresolved you should then contact the Archdeacon (Jenny Rowley - jenny.rowley@portsmouth.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?" at <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 for in your terms and conditions of employment.

Complaint

How to complain

Stage 1 – Informal verbal concern.

If you are uneasy about any aspect of the church ministry for which the PCC has oversight you should talk over any worries and anxieties with the Vicar (who is chair of the PCC) or a Church warden. The Vicar or Church Warden will meet with you at the earliest opportunity to resolve the issue. The Vicar or Church Warden will confirm the outcome of the meeting with you by email.

We have two church wardens (whose contact details are below) which should enable you to choose someone who is independent to the complaint you are making.

Please only raise your complaint with one of the above, enabling others to chair the PCC Complaints committee (detailed below).

Stage 2 – Formal written complaint.

If you are dis-satisfied with the outcome of your informal concern or if the problem recurs, you should put your complaint in writing to the Vicar or a Church Warden. When you do so, please include as much detail about the issue or incident as you can and let us know the action you wish us to take to resolve the matter. The recipient will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, then record and investigate your complaint and respond to you in writing within 28 days. They may consult with another church warden or member of PCC but will inform you of this if the need arises.

Stage 3 – Investigation by the PCC's Complaints committee.

If the matter is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you can ask that your complaint is elevated to the PCC's complaints committee. You can ask the vicar or a church warden to do this, and it should be someone who has not already been involved in the complaint.

If this is not possible another member of the church's Standing Committee (members of which are on our website) can be asked to convene this group.

This person will convene the panel to hear the complaint which may involve meeting the complainant and other parties involved. The panel will consider the complaint and report their decision to you in writing within 28 days, this will be the PCC's final response to your complaint.

The panel will consist of 4 members of the PCC, not previously involved in your complaint, however they may seek advice/clarification from those previously involved, and copies of the responses previously given will be included in their deliberations.

Our Response

If the Panel upholds your complaint, in whole or in part, it will go on to determine any action which ought to be taken by the PCC as a result. You will be informed of this as part of our response.

Meetings with the Vicar, A Church Warden or the PCC Complaints Committee.

When meeting you can, at any point, have someone accompany you if you wish. Another member of PCC will accompany the Vicar or Church warden in order that a written record of the discussion can be made and distributed afterwards.

The role of the Diocese and Charity Commission

If you remain dissatisfied, you may wish to consider contacting the Charity Commission, as while Parochial Church Councils are independent bodies, they are charities and as such are regulated by the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission can be contacted either via their website <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity> or by writing to them at Charity Commission First Contact, PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG.

In addition, you are welcome to raise this complaint with the Archdeacon. We will share any prior correspondence to whoever next looks at your complaint.

Churchwardens (for contact):

Jane Portlock
07792 374 568
Jane.Portlock@sjs.church

David Bacon
07570 096 008
david.bacon@sjs.church

This policy was first adopted at a meeting of the PCC on 15th November 2021 and remains in place until amended.

PCC of St Jude's Southsea
Charity Registration Number 1131705.