

St Stephen's Church Centre (the Parish of New Town and the Hythe)



Complaints Policy & Procedure

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General Statement of Policy

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. In such situations the PCC is committed to fully investigate any such complaint, considering all the facts and evidence pertaining to this and reaching a balanced conclusion as to the validity of any such complaint and any resultant actions which are felt to be needed.

The complaints procedure, as set out below is for those who are unhappy about matters for which the PCC is responsible which have affected them and serves to fulfil the Policy commitments as set out above.

Prior to using this formal complaints procedure as detailed below the PCC encourages an informal approach to the Vicar or a Churchwarden to see if the matter can be resolved in that way.

But if your complaint is about:

Safeguarding of Children or Vulnerable Adults; please in the first instance contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser at <https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/safeguarding> [1].

The Vicar or another minister; please raise the matter with the Vicar. If the matter remains unresolved you could contact the Archdeacon, at b.colchester@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?” at <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1937470/makingcomplainta4.pdf> [2].

Bullying or Harassment (by adults); you may find it helpful to consult the Diocesan policy on this at https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/uploads-new/pages/Getting-on-Together_-_amended_2019.pdf. [3]

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.

Procedure for making a complaint to the PCC

Complaints should be made in writing or by email to the PCC Secretary whose name and contact details are set out below. The PCC Secretary will ensure that your complaint is:

- treated seriously
- handled fairly without bias or discrimination
- treated confidentially.

You should complain within 3 months of the event that you are complaining about. You will need to set out:

- your full name and address
- what you think went wrong and why together with how it has affected you including enough details to show why you are aggrieved
- what (if anything) you think the PCC should do to put it right
- what your desired outcome is as a consequence of the complaint

If someone else complains on your behalf, the PCC will need written confirmation from you saying that you agree for that person to act for you.

The PCC Secretary should immediately record receipt of a complaint in a log.

How your complaint will be dealt with?

The PCC Secretary will write to you or send you an email to confirm receipt of your complaint within 10 working days of its receipt and arrange for it to be considered by the PCC at their next PCC Meeting, unless the matter is thought to be sufficiently serious to require a specially convened meeting to take place.. If your complaint refers to particular individuals who are members of the PCC it will meet without them being present (see also Conflicts of Interest Policy).

The PCC will look fairly into your complaint including seeking the views on the matter from any individuals, whether members of the PCC or otherwise, to which your complaint refers. The PCC may appoint one or more persons to look into the matter on its behalf but it will be the PCC that makes any decisions. PCC and any such appointed persons will treat the matter confidentially.

The PCC may invite you to present your complaint to them. If so, you may attend with a friend / representative if you wish. The meeting should be held as informally as possible. The Chair will explain the purpose of the meeting, introduce the members and emphasise confidentiality. The meeting will be minuted by the Committee.

The PCC Secretary will write to you with the conclusions from the PCC review and reasons for that outcome. The PCC Secretary will aim to respond to you in this way as soon as possible, and no longer than 6 weeks after the date of receipt of your complaint.

This will be the PCC's final response to your complaint.

In the event of an interregnum all complaints made to the PCC will be referred to the Archdeacon and / or Rural Dean

How do I appeal a decision?

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> [4] or by writing to them at Charity Commission First Contact, PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG.

This policy was adopted by the PCC on 06 July 2020.

- [1] <https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/safeguarding>
 [2] <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1937470/makingcomplainta4.pdf>
 [3] https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/uploads-new/pages/Getting-on-Together_-_amended_2019.pdf
 [4] <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

Document Revisions

Version	Date	Changes	Made By	Approved By
V00.01	22 April 2020	Initial Draft	Andrew Topple	PCC
V00.02		Comments to be considered by PCC	John Clifton	PCC
V00.03	03 June 2020	Updates following PCC on 1 June 2020	Andrew Topple	
V01.00	06 July 2020	Approved at PCC	Andrew Topple	PCC
V01.00	16 January 2022	Reviewed and Re-approved at PCC	Andrew Topple	PCC