



# Complaints Policy

## All Saints' Church, Walsoken

Please refer to Document S&S\_Doc\_001 for all Safeguarding and Social requirements.

### Specific Policy

This Safeguarding & Social (S&S) sub-policy controls non-safeguarding complaints at church.

There may be a time when you need to complain. This complaints procedure is for those who are unhappy about matters for which the PCC is responsible that have affected them. Prior to using this formal procedure, the PCC encourages an informal approach to the Vicar or a Churchwarden to see if the matter can be easily resolved in that way.

This policy is not for complaints about.

- 1) The safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults. In the first instance contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- 2) The Vicar or another minister, please raise the matter with the Vicar. If the matter remains unresolved you could contact the Archdeacon.

At All Saints' Church, Walsoken the complaints committee is the standing committee. Complaints will be received by the PCC Secretary.

### Reference Documents

None

### Procedure

#### 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:

- 1) Treated seriously
- 2) Handled fairly without bias or discrimination
- 3) Treated confidentially.

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

- 1) Your full name and address.
- 2) What you think went wrong and how it has affected you including enough details to show why you are aggrieved. Many complaints are accompanied by "Unacceptable behaviour" which is defined for the purposes of this policy in appendix 1.
- 3) A declaration that what you state is the truth
- 4) What (if anything) you think the PCC should do to put it right.

If someone else complains on your behalf, the standing committee 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.

#### 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 normally within 7 days of its receipt and arrange for it to be considered by the PCC's Complaints Committee. If your complaint refers to individuals who are members of the Complaints Committee, it will meet without them being present.

The PCC's Complaints Committee 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 Complaints Committee may appoint one or more persons to investigate the matter on its behalf, but it will be the Complaints Committee that makes any decisions. The Complaints Committee and any such appointed persons will treat the matter confidentially.

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The Complaints Committee may invite you to present your complaint to them. If so, you may attend with a friend or 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. Meeting minutes will be produced by the Committee.

The PCC Secretary will write to you with the conclusions from the PCC Complaints Committee's 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 the after receipt of your complaint.

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

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 PCC Secretary is

Chris Mills

Email: [chrismills22@aol.com](mailto:chrismills22@aol.com)

The Parish Safeguarding Office is

Christine Newman

Tel: 01945 880846

Email: [chrissiejane1947@sky.com](mailto:chrissiejane1947@sky.com)

### **Raising a concern**

If you don't want to make a complaint but want to raise a concern the see the poster in church which is reproduced as appendix 2.

## **Forms**

None

## **Diagrams**

None

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1. Defining "Unacceptable behaviour"**

'Unacceptable behaviour' means acting in a way that is unreasonable, regardless of the level of someone's stress, frustration or anger. It may involve acts, words or physical gestures that could cause another person distress or discomfort. Unacceptable behaviour might include someone harassing our staff or volunteers or continuing to contact us about a complaint which has been given a final response. We reserve the right to ignore complaints that are made accompanied by unacceptable behaviour, even if the complaint itself may be valid.

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### Appendix 2. Raising a Concern



# Raising a Concern

**Do you have concerns about safety in your Parish?**

**Who should you tell?**

Office holders, lay staff and volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns where:

- the law may have been broken
- Diocesan policies and procedures may have been breached
- there are concerns of a safeguarding nature

Office holders, lay staff and volunteers should initially raise any concerns with their Vicar, line manager, volunteer co-ordinator, Parish Safeguarding Officer, Archdeacon or Bishop.

Alternatively, Clergy, lay staff and volunteers may contact the **Diocesan Secretary** on **01353 652702** or [diocesan.secretary@elydiocese.org](mailto:diocesan.secretary@elydiocese.org)

If the concern is related to **Safeguarding**, please contact the **Safeguarding Team** on **01353 652747**

You can read the Diocese of Ely's 'Raising Concerns' Policy on our website: [elydiocese.org/edbf-policies-and-procedures](https://elydiocese.org/edbf-policies-and-procedures)

If you are raising a **Whistleblowing** concern, please contact **Protect** on **0207 3117 2520** or [whistle@protect-advice.org.uk](mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk)

Protect offer independent, free expert help and advice in relation to Whistleblowing.