

## Complaints Policy

The Parish of Winchcombe is a church community that, in all things aspires to treat everyone equally and with respect and in the spirit of reconciliation. However we recognise sometimes there are issues or problems which need addressing, and we commit to ensuring that a fair process is followed.



This complaints policy explains the steps that will be taken should issues be raised with us.

### 1. Scope of this policy

- 1.1 This policy applies to complaints raised by volunteers, contractors, members of our wider community, those who attend our services and/or other activities or about decisions made by the PCC.
- 1.2 This policy does not apply to employees who follow employment handbook policies and practices. If a complaint is made about a PCC employee this would be followed up through contractual and other employment provisions.
- 1.3 Complaints about the incumbent or clergy should be raised directly with the Archdeacon.

### 2 Safeguarding concerns

- 2.1 Complaints or concerns about any aspect of our safeguarding work should be reported straight to the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and/or Incumbent on [safeguarding@winchcombeparish.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@winchcombeparish.org.uk) see Winchcombe Parish Safeguarding policy <https://www.winchcombeparish.org.uk/safeguarding/>
- 2.2 Issues can also be raised directly with the diocesan safeguarding team.

### 3 Raising a general concern or complaint

#### 3.1 Informal route

Step one: The complainant should contact the Church Office or Incumbent or a Churchwarden as soon as possible requesting a meeting or telephone conversation.

Step two: Ideally the complaint/concern should be detailed in an email or letter, but notes can be taken at a meeting or from a telephone call and then clarified with the complainant.

Whilst a speedy response is anticipated, usually within 7 days, there may be occasion when the identified point of contact is out of the Parish or on leave.

If the concern/complaint is urgent and the incumbent/churchwardens are not available advice should be sought from the Area Dean or Archdeacon (details on the Diocese of Gloucester website)

Step three: It may be that there is a swift resolution to the issue that can be done on the phone or via email.

Step four: Meeting the complainant: Where a meeting is going to take place to follow up a complaint/concern the complainant may like to bring an accompanying person with them for support.

The incumbent/churchwarden, if appropriate, may also choose to have a PCC colleague with them. Any notes taken at the meeting will be shared at the end of the meeting or soon after as an aide memoire.

The meeting may take place at an agreed venue eg the church premises, vicarage etc

Step five: At the meeting it will be important for the complainant to feel heard and possible outcomes and ways forward will be discussed and they will always be asked to share what a possible preferred outcome may be for them. It may be that no decision will be made at that time, and that further advice or options need to be followed up.

Step six: Meeting the subject of the complaint: Where a meeting is going to take place to follow up a complaint/concern the subject of the complaint may like to bring an accompanying person with them for support.

The incumbent/churchwarden, if appropriate, may also choose to have a PCC colleague with them. Any notes taken at the meeting will be shared at the end of the meeting or soon after as an aide memoire.

The meeting may take place at an agreed venue eg the church premises, vicarage etc

Step seven: If a resolution cannot be agreed, or the nature of the incident warrants a formal complaint process from the outset, then a formal complaint process will be followed and external diocesan or other advice may be sought by the incumbent/churchwarden.

## **2.2 Formal complaint process**

Step one: The complainant should contact the Church Office or Incumbent or a Churchwarden as soon as possible requesting a meeting or telephone conversation.

Step two: The complaint should detail the nature of the complaint, times/dates, who was involved, and, if appropriate, if there were any witnesses.

If a complaint is made by a telephone then notes of the call will be taken and clarified with the complainant.

Whilst a speedy response is anticipated, usually within 7 days, there may be occasion when the identified point of contact is out of the Parish or on leave.

If the concern/complaint is urgent and the incumbent/churchwardens are not available advice should be sought from the Area Dean or Archdeacon (details on the Diocese of Gloucester website)

Step three: It may be that there is a swift resolution to the issue that can be done on the phone (or by email) this will always be followed up by an email to confirm things.

Step four: Meeting the Complainant: Where a meeting is going to take place to follow up a complaint/concern the complainant may like to bring an accompanying person with them for support.

The incumbent/churchwarden, if appropriate, may also choose to have a PCC colleague with them. Notes should be taken at the meeting in order to clarify any issues and will be shared at the end of the meeting or soon after

The meeting may take place at an agreed venue eg the church premises, vicarage etc

Step five: At the meeting it will be important for the complainant to feel heard and possible outcomes and ways forward will be discussed and they will always be asked to share what a possible preferred outcome may be for them. It may be that no decision will be made at that time, and that further legal advice or other options need to be followed up for example with the Archdeacon.

Step six: Meeting the subject of the complaint: Where a meeting is going to take place to follow up a complaint/concern the subject of the complaint may like to bring an accompanying person with them for support.

The incumbent/churchwarden, if appropriate, may also choose to have a PCC colleague with them. Notes should be taken at the meeting in order to clarify any issues and will be shared at the end of the meeting or soon after

The meeting may take place at an agreed venue eg the church premises, vicarage etc

Step seven: If a resolution cannot be found locally the matter may be referred to the Archdeacon as an independent person to advise on the best next steps.

PCC policy

V 1 August 2023