

THE PARISH OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST, BROUGHTON

Charity Number: 1134595

Jesus said, "I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." John 15:16
We seek to make Jesus known in our community, through our joyful, loving service and worship

Parish Complaints Policy and Procedure

This Procedure mirrors the Complaints Procedure of Blackburn Diocese

Introduction

The key role of the PCC and employed members of staff is to support the parish in its mission and ministry. High standards are expected of clergy, PCC members, paid staff and volunteers who contribute to the life of the parish in any way. Those who feel that they have not been treated fairly, or that the service/advice they have been offered is inadequate, have the right to raise the issue in line with the attached procedures.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the Parish of Broughton St John Baptist.

Complaints Policy

Complaints are viewed as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for or give a satisfactory explanation to the person making the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use.
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired, and reconciliation explored.
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.
- Anonymous complaints will not be investigated unless there is compelling evidence of a valid case and good reason why individuals in the case would need to protect their anonymity.
- A written complaint must be received within 3 months of any alleged incident, event or project completion for this policy to apply.

This policy does not cover:

- Complaints relating to diocesan church schools, where the individual school's complaints procedure should be used.
- Complaints from staff, where the PCC's grievance procedure should be used.
- Matters relating to safeguarding, where the Parish Safeguarding Officer should be contacted directly.
- Complaints regarding members of clergy, where the Area Dean of Preston or Archdeacon of Lancaster should be contacted.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, involving only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Resolving Complaints

Informal Approach

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue from which the complaint has arisen. If the complaint has been received by that person, he/she may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Most matters can and should be resolved informally and locally.

If, for example, a person is dissatisfied with the service received, in the first instance the person concerned should be advised of this dissatisfaction. He or she should be willing to listen, to discuss the matter and seek to satisfy whether or not the concerns raised were justified.

Following the informal process, if the complainant remains dissatisfied or the informal route is inappropriate, then the formal procedure should be followed.

Formal Stage

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved during the informal process, the complaint can be escalated to the formal process. A formal complaint must be made in writing or via email and be received within 3 months of any alleged incident.

At this stage, the complainant should address the written complaint to the PCC Secretary.

The complaint should be acknowledged within 7 days. The acknowledgement should give details of the person dealing with the complaint and advise when the complainant will receive a reply. A copy of this complaint's procedure should be attached.

Two suitable persons from the PCC should be appointed by the chair to the PCC to investigate the facts of the case. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with anyone who may have been involved in dealing with the complaint at the informal stage.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given an opportunity to respond. If appropriate the person who dealt with the original complaint at the informal stage should be kept informed.

Ideally, complainants should receive a definitive reply within 28 days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, an update should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Upon completion of the investigation, the investigating officers will make a decision as to whether to uphold, partially uphold or reject the complaint. The investigating officer will produce a written report which outlines the decision, summarises the evidence, explains the reason for the outcome and any recommendations which are to be considered for the future. This will be sent to all parties involved in the complaint, usually within 20 working days of the formal complaint being received.

Whatever the outcome of the complaint, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Where disciplinary action is deemed appropriate for any parish employees, the reply to the complainant will not include details relating to an individual staff member's employment record.

If the complaint is upheld or partially upheld against a PCC member or volunteer the Vicar shall be consulted and the appropriate action will be taken. This action could involve extra training, a reminder about future conduct or removal from their position.

It should be recognised that, in some instances, people will take positions where the matter cannot be resolved. However, the aim should be to ensure that the process respects those involved and is a just process in providing an active concern to those who are vulnerable, marginalised or oppressed.

The decision taken at this stage is final.

A log of the complaint will be kept.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The PCC may vary the procedure for good reason.

External Stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. The Commission's involvement in looking at complaints is limited to issues that pose a serious risk of significant harm to a charity's beneficiaries, assets, services or reputation. Information about the type of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk

Approved by the PCC		Last reviewed by the PCC	20 th January 2020
Signed		Print	
Position		Date	