



St Thomas' Church Salisbury

The Parish of St Thomas & St Edmund

COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCE POLICY

This Document is in 2 parts:

Part 1 - Complaints made by a member of the congregation.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that the complaints process is flexible and responsive to the needs of individual complainants. The policy seeks to ensure that:

- parishioners who complain are listened to and treated with courtesy and empathy.
- parishioners will never be disadvantaged because of making a complaint.
- complaints are investigated promptly, thoroughly, honestly, and openly.
- apologies are given as appropriate.
- complaints' handling will comply with confidentiality and data protection policies.

The parish will not be able to deal with an issue through the complaints process if:

- The complaint relates to a legal matter that is already being dealt with by a solicitor.
- The complainant is anonymous unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to substantiate the complaint.

Parishioners should be encouraged to raise minor complaints informally to a Churchwarden in the first instance, preferably verbally, as this can lead to better understanding and very often to a quick resolution of the issue.

If the complaint cannot be solved quickly or if the complaint is more serious, it should be made in writing to the Churchwarden. A written complaint should include sufficient detail to enable the parish to investigate. Should the complaint be made against a Churchwarden, it should be made to the other Churchwarden.

If the complaint is about the Rector and is of serious misconduct or behaviour unbecoming for a Clerk in Holy Orders, as all clergy are subject to The Clergy Discipline Measure, the Churchwarden must refer the matter to the Archdeacon of Sarum for investigation.

The Process.

Written complaints should be made to a Churchwarden in the first instance, who will acknowledge receipt within 7 working days.

The acknowledgement will indicate the next course of action and the anticipated timescale. The parish will seek to resolve the complaint as a matter of urgency.

- (a) The complaint will initially be considered informally by the Churchwarden to whom it was made together with such members of the PCC as the Churchwarden considers would assist in the resolution of the complaint.
- (b) Where the complaint is against a Churchwarden, the complaint should be addressed to the other Churchwarden who will follow the same informal procedure
- (c) A complaint against the Rector will initially be considered by the Archdeacon of Sarum on an informal basis without invoking the procedure of the Clergy Disciplinary Measure.

The decision maker will normally communicate the initial decision in writing to the complainant within 14 working days.

Appeals.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the complainant has 14 working days to submit a written appeal.

Unless the appeal is about the Rector, it will be dealt with by the Rector who will convene a special meeting of three members of the PCC within 7 working days of an appeal being submitted. The Rector will respond in writing to the complainant within 14 working days of the meeting advising of the action taken to resolve the Appeal.

If a complaint is pursued unreasonably or where a *complainant*'s actions or behaviour are deemed to be unreasonable, those considering the complaint reserve the right to close the complaint and will inform the complainant of their reasons.

If the complaint has been made informally about the Rector and rejected, and the complainant wishes to appeal against the rejection, the complainant will be informed about the procedure for instigating a complaint utilizing the Clergy Disciplinary Measure. The complainant should be reminded that this procedure is limited to accusations of serious misconduct or behaviour unbecoming for a Clerk in Holy Orders, and that any complaint falling short of that definition will be summarily dismissed. Any complaint invoking a CDM process will automatically remove the matter from further consideration by the PCC.



Unless the appeal is subject to the Clergy Disciplinary Measure, the decision on appeal will be final and the PCC and its officers will entertain no further correspondence on the complaint.



Part 2 - Complaints made by an Employee.

The parish has several part-time employees, the parish manager the organist, the director of music, vergers and the caretaker. Employees should seek to raise and solve issues informally with their line manager in the first instance.

A formal or written complaint by an employee should be addressed to a Churchwarden. Where the complaint is against a Churchwarden the complaint should be addressed to the other Churchwarden.

The Churchwarden who has received the written complaint, will call a meeting of two other members of the PCC within 7 days, to discuss the grievance. The employee has a right to be accompanied by a "Mackenzie friend" at this meeting. After the meeting, the chairman of the meeting will give a decision in writing, normally within 14 further working days.

A complainant who is unhappy with the decision and wishes to appeal should inform the Rector within 14 days of receipt of the decision. The Rector will set out the procedure for further appeal and conduct it in such manner as he or she thinks fit.

Again, the employee has the right to be accompanied by a "Mackenzie friend" at this meeting. The Rector will give a decision, normally within 14 days. The Rector's decision is final.

Nothing in this policy will affect the employee's rights under the Employment Protection Act 1975 and the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023.

Complaints Register

A register of written complaints is maintained on the computer in the parish office.

The records are held and preserved in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations made thereunder.

This Policy was approved by the PCC at the August 2025 PCC meeting .