

The Parish Church of
St Stephen
HOUNSLOW

Complaints Policy



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1 INTRODUCTION

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Stephen Hounslow ('the PCC') views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

2 IMPLEMENTATION

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To make sure everyone at St Stephen's Church knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- 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.
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

a. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the delivery of our Mission Action Plan, charitable aims, or any associated activity

b. Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from members, associates, supporters, hall-hirers, visiting congregants or occasional church visitors and others including both individuals and organisations. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

c. This policy does not cover complaints from staff

d. Confidentiality

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

e. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the PCC.

f. Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required to ensure appropriateness

3 PROCEDURE

Written complaints may be sent to **St Stephen's PCC, c/o The Vicarage, 205 Kneller Road, Twickenham, TW2 7DY** or by email office@whittonchurch.com

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to the Parish Administrator who can be contacted on 020 8898 2694 or in person to any of the Clergy, Officers of St Stephen's Church, PCC Members or volunteers at **St Stephen's Church, Parkside Road, Hounslow, TW3 2BP** or at any event or service we attend.

1. Receiving Complaints

- a. Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.
- b. The person who receives a phone call or in person complaint should:
 - i. Write down the facts of the complaint.
 - ii. Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number.
 - iii. Note down the relationship of the complainant to St Stephen's Church (for example: member, visitor or hirer).
 - iv. Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure.
 - v. Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take.
 - vi. Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

2. Resolving Complaints

a. Stage One

- In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.
- Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to The Parish Administrator within one week.
- On receiving the complaint, the Administrator records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they will liaise with the Vicar or Warden in order to delegate to an appropriate person to investigate it and take appropriate action.
- If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.
- Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this Complaints Policy should be attached.
- Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant may describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint. From time to time, the PCC reserves the right, for appropriate confidentiality, to not disclose a resolution, only that one has been put in place.

b. Stage Two

- If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by the Vicar and Churchwardens. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Vicar.

- The request for review at this level should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.
- The Vicar and Churchwardens may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably qualified person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.
- If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.
- The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening, where appropriate.
- Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- Whether the complaint is upheld or not, 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. From time to time, the Vicar and Churchwardens reserve the right, for appropriate confidentiality, to not disclose a resolution, only that one has been put in place.
- The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Vicar and Churchwardens decide it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

c. External Stage

- The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage.
- Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

4 VARIATION OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The PCC may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Vicar should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

Signed _____

Date _____