

The Parochial Church Councils of the Benefice of Witney are committed to their role which primarily includes “*cooperation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.*” But there may be a time when you need to complain. This complaints procedure is for those who are unhappy about matters for which the PCCs are responsible that have affected them. Prior to using this formal procedure the PCCs encourage an informal approach to the Rector or a Churchwarden to see if the matter can be resolved in that way.

If your complaint is about:

Safeguarding of Children or Vulnerable Adults; in the first instance please contact the Safeguarding team. If the safeguarding team can't resolve your complaint, contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser; tel numbers available on the witneyparish.org.uk website.

A church leader; please raise the matter with the Rector, or if the complaint is about the Rector, raise the matter with the Churchwardens. If the matter remains unresolved you should contact the Archdeacon.

Your employment by the PCC; if you are a PCC employee please refer to and follow the grievance procedure provided for in your terms and conditions of employment.

Making a complaint

All other complaints should be made in writing or by email to the PCC Secretary care of the Benefice Administrator office@witneyparish.org.uk. The PCC Secretary will ensure that your complaint is:

- treated seriously
- handled fairly without bias or discrimination
- treated confidentially on a need to know basis

You should complain as soon as possible after the event that you are complaining about. You need to set out:

- your full name and address
- what you think went wrong and how it has affected you including enough details to show why you are aggrieved
- what (if anything) you think the PCC should do to put it right

If someone else complains on your behalf, the PCC 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 in a log.

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 within 10 days of its receipt and arrange for it to be considered by the Standing Committee of the PCC which will act as the PCC's Complaints Committee. If your complaint refers to particular individuals of the PCC 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 look into 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.

The Complaints Committee may invite you to present your complaint to them. If so, you may be supported by a friend. The meeting should be held as informally as possible. The Chair will explain the purpose of the meeting, introduce the members and emphasise confidentiality. The meeting will be minuted 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 after the 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 Archdeacon and if necessary, the Charity Commission as while Parochial Church Councils are independent bodies they are charities and as such are regulated by the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission can be contacted either via their website <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity> or by writing to them at Charity Commission First Contact, PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG.

Appeal

1. The complainant will have the right to ask the Rector to review all the papers with one of the Churchwardens.
2. If the appeal is found to be justified the Rector and Churchwarden will agree any necessary further action with the complainant and advise the complainant in writing within 10 working days.
3. If the appeal is rejected then the case is closed. The decision of the appeal panel is final and no further appeal will be considered.

Adopted by Witney PCC on 4 August 2020

Adopted by Minster Lovell PCC on _____

Signed *Toby Wright*

Counter-signed *Kayleigh Lucas*

Counter-signed _____

Review date: 5 years from date of adoption