



Guidance for managing complaints.

**The Parochial Church Council of the Parish of
St Peter and St Pauls Rustington**

Our Church recognises that our church members and all those who visit our church or any of our church activities will have certain expectations of what is offered and what they take part in. However, we recognise that from time to time there may be occasions when people feel that the quality or level of what they experience falls short of what they could reasonably expect.

We hope to resolve any day-to-day difficulties or complaints informally and as quickly as possible. In the first instance we would expect you to raise any complaint directly with the church member concerned.

If all that we do does not meet expected standards, then you have the right to complain.

A complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet about an action, or lack of action by a person acting on behalf of the church, or about the policies and procedures of the church.

We will consider any complaint using the procedures set out below.

It is important that we give all persons the ability and information with which to complain. They should determine the seriousness of the complaint, which could be about:

- conduct of our clergy and/or some or all members of our church,
- discrimination,
- provision of inaccurate information, or
- poor administration including delays in responding to enquiries.

What is the purpose of the policy?

- To protect the interests of all church users and visitors
- To enable church users and visitors to propose improvements to our ways of working.
- To protect our minister and church members
- To provide a means of monitoring our performance.

The clergy and all church members should be familiar with the process.

Complaints against clergy should be addressed to the Churchwardens in the first place who may then pass this to the archdeacon.

Informal Procedure

How is a complaint dealt with?

The aim always, when responding to complaints and grievances, is to enable them to be resolved informally, speedily and fairly by discussion, problem solving, mediation and negotiation.

- The person making the complaint should in the first instance speak to the person(s) deemed responsible for the area of dissatisfaction or disquiet and will hopefully be resolved in this way.
- If they receive no satisfactory response, they should ask to see a churchwarden.
- If the complaint cannot be dealt with immediately, we should give a written response within 7 days.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied, they have the right to appeal.
- They should write to the Chair of the PCC, requesting a meeting at a mutually convenient time and place.
- The appeal committee will be made up of the Chair, one churchwarden and a member of the PCC.
- We will provide a written response within 10 working days of that meeting.

It is important that we give the complainant any help they need including: -

- Assistance in writing the formal complaint.
- The opportunity to be accompanied by a friend, adviser or advocate.
- Ease of access to any meeting. In some circumstances it may be possible to meet at the complainant's home (lack of transport, disability, mobility, etc)

All complaints should be reported to the Churchwardens and recorded in the appropriate file which is kept in the Church Office. Details should include the nature of the complaint and the date received, the process followed, and the action taken and the outcomes including further follow-up.

If a complaint or grievance relates to or includes an allegation that a child or adult who may be vulnerable has been harmed or is at risk of harm, or that an adult or another child may have caused harm to a child or adult who may be vulnerable please refer directly to our Safeguarding policy and contact the Safeguarding Officer immediately.

If the complaint or grievance does not concern a child or adult who may be vulnerable, and the person bringing it is not satisfied with the outcome at the problem-solving stage, s/he may then invoke this further and formal procedure.

The more formal procedure outlined below is intended for use by members and other users of our services, where informal communication has not resolved the problem.

Formal Procedure

This is what you should do:

The complaint should be made either in person, or by telephone, letter or email to the *Incumbent (Rev Natalie Loveless)* or a *Churchwarden*, who will acknowledge, in writing within ten working days, the receipt of any complaint. If the complaint is about a Churchwarden, the complaint should be addressed to the Chair (marked 'confidential'). At this, and any subsequent stage, the complainant may be accompanied or supported by a friend, but not a legal representative.

This is what the PCC will do:

The Chair will investigate the circumstances leading to the complaint and will communicate the results of the investigation to the complainant within a reasonable time – normally within 20 working days of the complaint being received. If the complaint is found to be justified, the Chair will agree any necessary further action with the complainant.

The complainant will have the right – if dissatisfied with the results of the enquiry – to put their case, in writing, to an appeal panel of the other Churchwarden and two different PCC members to the one in the appeal committee.

If the appeal is found to be justified, the appeal panel will agree any necessary further action with the complainant. The decision of the appeal panel is final, and no further appeal is possible.

The Chair will keep the PCC informed of the number and nature of complaints, and the outcomes. S/he will report to the PCC on this at least annually.

Initial Contact

If you have a complaint, contact:
The Chair of PCC/Churchwardens
C/O The Parish Office
St Peter and St Pauls Church
77 The street
Rustington BN 16 3NL

Please also let us know if you are happy with what we offer and activities you are involved in.

When your complaint cannot be resolved

Where we have exhausted all avenues and the complainant is still dissatisfied, contact the Charity Commission as follows:
<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

**PCC of St Peter and St Pauls Rustington Complaints
Record Form**

Name of complainant:	
Address:	
Telephone number:	
Nature of complaint:	
Date received:	
Action taken:	
Outcome:	
Is it resolved?	
Follow-up needed?	
Date followed up	