



*The Parish of St. Neots  
with Eynesbury*

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedure for complaining about matters which have caused distress and need to be addressed.**

The Complaints Committee will consist of the members of the Standing Committee who will report back to the PCC.

The PCC is committed to its 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 church matters for which the PCC is responsible. Prior to using this formal procedure the PCC encourages an informal approach to the Rector or Churchwardens to see if the matter can be resolved without formal complaint.

Safeguarding complaints will be dealt with following the Parish Safeguarding Policy. Complaints made by office holders, lay staff and volunteers will be addressed following the Whistleblowing Policy.

### **Making a formal complaint - Stage One**

If an informal approach to Rector or churchwardens has not resolved the matter, a formal complaint should be made in writing to any of the Rector or churchwardens, seeking a formal response. The Rector and the churchwardens may consult each other about the matter, make enquiries of persons involved, seek Diocesan guidance where appropriate, and agree between them which of them would be the most appropriate person to make a response in the context of the complaint made. They aim normally to acknowledge complaints within 48 hours of receipt, and to provide a response within 14 days (although a variety of factors may not always make it possible to provide a final response in this timescale: if this is the case, some indication will be given of how long will be required). Within these understandings, your complaint will be treated confidentially and without bias or discrimination.

### **Making a formal complaint to the PCC - Stage Two**

Complaints should be made in writing or by email to the PCC Secretary whose name and contact details are set out below. The PCC Secretary will ensure that your complaint is:

- treated seriously
- handled fairly without bias or discrimination
- treated confidentially.

PCC Secretary

Mrs C. Griffiths, Parish Office, Church Street, St Neots, PE19 2BU

Complaints should be received within 3 months of the event detailing what you think went wrong and how it has affected you, including enough details to show why you are aggrieved; and 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 7 days of its receipt, and arrange for it to be considered by the PCC's Complaints Committee. If your complaint refers to individuals who are members of the Complaints Committee the Committee will meet without them being present. If the Committee is reduced by this to fewer than three members, the remaining members will co-opt sufficient other PCC members to bring the number up to three.

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 attend with a friend / representative if you wish. 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 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 Charity Commission: while Parochial Church Councils are independent bodies they are charities and as such are regulated by the Charity Commission. The Parish of St Neots with Eynesbury is registered charity number 1195249. 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.