

St Mary's, Eastrop Complaints Policy And Procedure

Complaints Policy

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is committed to building a church culture that reflects God's love and care for all people. Everyone serving at St Mary's is expected to conduct themselves in keeping with these high standards and to treat members of the public and members of the church with dignity and respect. However, there may be a time when you need to complain. This complaints procedure is for those who are unhappy about matters for which the PCC is responsible that have affected them.

Raising a formal complaint should not automatically be the first step. Before using this formal procedure, the PCC encourages an informal approach (reflecting Matthew 18:15–16) by first speaking to the person concerned and/or contacting the Rector rector@stmarys-basingstoke.org.uk or a Churchwarden churchwardens@stmarys-basingstoke.org.uk to see if the matter can be resolved in that way.

Definition of Complaint.

A complaint is a formal statement, either oral or written expressing dissatisfaction about any aspect of church life. This can be about a person or persons, an activity, or a group or about a service provided by the church.

But if your complaint is about:

Safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults; if the complaint involves an allegation or disclosure of abuse against a child or vulnerable adult, whether present or historic, please follow our safeguarding policy. More information can be found on our safeguarding page [link included on webpage].

The Rector or another ordained minister; please raise the matter with the Rector or a Churchwarden. If the matter remains unresolved you can contact the Archdeacon of Winchester via the Complaints page on the Diocesan website <https://winchester.anglican.org/about-us/complaints/>

Whistleblowing; if you have concerns about a serious wrongdoing that it is in the wider public interest to raise, such as a criminal offence or breach of a legal obligation, you should report it. This applies to present and historic actions. There are legal protections for "whistleblowers" and no one who makes a report in good faith can be victimised for doing so. To make such a complaint, please follow the complaints procedure below or you may prefer to contact the Winchester Diocese via its complaints page [link included on webpage] or a whistleblowing charity such as protect-advice.org.uk. Your concern should be reported as quickly as possible so that it can be investigated, and appropriate action taken. You must have a reasonable belief that your concern is well-founded. However, appropriate action will be taken if a malicious allegation is made.

Your employment by the PCC; if you are a PCC employee please refer to and follow the grievance procedure provided for in the Staff Handbook.

Making a complaint to the PCC

Complaints should be made whenever possible using the Complaint Form [link included on webpage] or by email to complaints@stmarys-basingstoke.org.uk. The PCC will ensure that your complaint is:

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

You should complain within three months of 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 five working days of its receipt and arrange for it to be considered by the PCC's Standing Committee. If your complaint refers to particular individuals who are members of the Standing Committee, it will meet without them being present.

The PCC's Standing 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 Standing Committee may appoint one or more persons to look into the matter on its behalf but it will be the Standing Committee that makes any decisions. The Standing Committee and any such appointed persons will treat the matter confidentially.

The Standing Committee may invite you to present your complaint to them. If so, you may attend with a friend or 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 Standing 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 six 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 Diocese of Winchester winchester.anglican.org/about-us/complaints. If you continue to remain dissatisfied you may contact The Charity Commission 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. While Parochial Church Councils are independent bodies, they are charities and as such are regulated by the Charity Commission.

PCC Secretary
St Mary's Church Office
01256 464249
complaints@stmarys-basingstoke.org.uk

PCC of St Mary's Eastrop, Basingstoke
Charity Registration Number 1130650

Complaints process flow

