

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Scope

At All Saints, Gravenhurst & Shillington, we believe that living faithfully means being open, honest, and accountable. A clear complaints policy is one way we show care for one another and uphold the values of justice, integrity, and love. When concerns are raised, we see it as part of our calling to listen well, respond with compassion, and learn from what has happened. In this way, even difficult moments can help us grow as a community.

Purpose

All Saints, Gravenhurst & Shillington, is committed to being a safe, welcoming, and accountable church. We know that from time-to-time things may go wrong or concerns may arise. Having a clear complaints policy ensures that anyone can raise an issue with confidence, knowing it will be taken seriously and handled fairly.

Our approach follows best practice guidance from the Church of England and aligns with legal and safeguarding requirements. By listening carefully and responding well, we hope not only to resolve concerns but also to learn from them, strengthening the life and witness of our church.

The Roll of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the board of Trustees of the parish church. It is committed to its role which is primarily “co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.” It strives to be open, honest, fair and responsible, but recognises that from time to time it will fall short of expectations and there may be a time when you need to complain.

All complaints will be handled sensitively, however, if your complaint is about:

Safeguarding of Children or Vulnerable Adults

please contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer - 07394 903560
allsaintssafeguarding0@gmail.com or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team on [01727 818 103](tel:01727818103)

The Rector or another minister/leader

please raise the matter with the Rector. If the matter remains unresolved, you may contact an Archdeacon, at: archdbed@stalbans.anglican.org

You may wish to read the leaflet “I have a complaint about misconduct by a member of the clergy – what can I do?” at:

churchofengland.org – makingacomplaint

Bullying or Harassment

you may find it helpful to consult the Diocesan policies on this at:

<https://www.stalbansdiocese.org/resource/preventing-bullying-and-harassment-policy/>

How to make a Complaint

Informal Concern

Many issues can be resolved quickly and informally. If you feel able, please speak first with the person concerned, or with a member of the clergy, a churchwarden, or PCC member.

Formal Complaint

If the matter is not resolved informally, you may make a written complaint to the PCC Complaint Handler whose name and contact details are set out below.

The PCC Complaint Handler will ensure that your complaint is:
treated seriously, handled fairly without bias or discrimination, treated confidentially.

You should complain within 3 months of the event that you are complaining about.

You need to set out:

- your personal details (name, address, telephone number, e-mail, etc.),
- a clear statement of what your complaint is,
- details about the complaint (when, where, what happened, etc.),
- the evidence you provide to justify the complaint (this may be statements, letters, etc.),
- a declaration that what you state is the truth,
- 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. If you have difficulty with written material, the PCC can provide a person to assist you.

The PCC Complaint Handler should immediately record receipt of a complaint in a log.

How your complaint will be dealt with

The PCC Complaint Handler will write to you or send you an email to confirm receipt of your complaint within 5 days of its receipt and arrange for it to be considered by the PCC's Complaints Committee. If your complaint refers to particular individuals 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 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 Complaint Handler will write to you with the conclusions from the PCC Complaints Committee's review and reasons for that outcome. The PCC Complaint Handler 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.

Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may request a review of the decision. This will normally be undertaken by someone not previously involved in the complaint, to ensure fairness and independence.

Unacceptable Behaviour

‘Unacceptable behaviour’ means acting in a way that is unreasonable, regardless of the level of someone’s stress, frustration or anger. It may involve acts, words or physical gestures that could cause another person distress or discomfort. Unacceptable behaviour might include someone harassing our staff or volunteers or continuing to contact us about a complaint which has been given a final response.

We reserve the right to ignore complaints that are made accompanied by unacceptable behaviour, even if the complaint itself may be valid.

If you remain dissatisfied, you may wish to consider contacting 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 [gov.uk/complain-about-charity](https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity) or by writing to them at Charity Commission First Contact, PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG.

PCC Complaint Handler

Revd Jenna Dearden, The Vicarage, 77 Church Street, Arlesey, SG15 6UX
07708 666612 revjennadearden@gmail.com

This policy was adopted by All Saints, Gravenhurst & Shillington Parish church PCC on 3 July 2026

The review period for this policy is 2 years.

Date of next review: June 2028