

Scope	<p>This policy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define what should be viewed as a complaint</li> <li>• Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint</li> <li>• Publicise the existence of our complaints procedure, including via the Church website, so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint</li> <li>• Make sure that office holders know what to do if a complaint is received</li> <li>• Make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way</li> <li>• Make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that there is the opportunity to seek to repair relationships and explore reconciliation.</li> <li>• Gather information which helps us to improve what we do</li> </ul>
Who is responsible for updating the policy?	St Leonard's Church PCC
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### Policy Statement

The St Leonard's Church Parochial Church Council (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."* As a church we aim to love and care for all people and treat them with dignity and respect, whether they are a member of the public or part of the church family, and seek to maintain and uphold biblical standards of love and integrity in the work we do. But there may be a time when you need to complain.

This complaints procedure is for those who are unhappy about matters that have affected them for which the PCC is responsible. Before using this procedure, we ask you to consider an informal approach to individuals who are involved to see if the matter can be resolved or to ask to speak with one of the Churchwardens. We encourage feedback and openness within the church and would want anyone to feel able to raise concerns with leaders or a staff member who is known to them where possible.

If your complaint is about:

- **Matters related to safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults**  
All safeguarding concerns should be resolved through the process outlined in our safeguarding policy which is available on the church website ([www.stleonards.church/safeguarding](http://www.stleonards.church/safeguarding)).
- **Clergy**  
Complaints regarding members of clergy, licensed or commissioned ministers (such as Readers), should be directed to the Archdeacon of Exeter. More information is available on

the Diocese of Exeter website ([www.exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/edbf-complaints-policy/](http://www.exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/edbf-complaints-policy/))

- **Employment by the PCC**

Complaints relating to employment by the PCC should be resolved through the grievance procedure outlined in the staff handbook.

### **Whistleblowing**

If the complaint is about serious malpractice or wrongdoing that is in the wider public interest (e.g. a criminal offence or a breach of a legal duty, you can follow the complaints policy below or you may prefer to follow guidance on whistleblowing. Guidance on the relevant prescribed people and bodies for this purpose and the areas for which they are responsible is available from [www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2) and further information is available from Protect ([www.protectadvice.org.uk](http://www.protectadvice.org.uk)). You may wish to take legal advice before raising a concern externally. You may also raise your concern with The Diocese of Exeter by contacting the Archdeacon of Exeter. Those raising legitimate concerns of this nature are protected by law and should never be victimised for making such a report.

### **Confidentiality**

Complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following all relevant data protection requirements.

### **Making a complaint to the PCC**

Complaints should be made in writing or by email to the Churchwardens whose names and contact details are set out at the bottom of this policy. They will ensure that your complaint is:

- Treated seriously
- Handled without bias or discrimination
- Treated confidentially

In any written complaint please set out:

- Your full name and address
- What you think went wrong and how it has affected you, including details to demonstrate 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.

On receipt of the complaint, the Churchwardens should immediately record receipt of the complaint in the complaint log.

### **How your complaint will be dealt with**

The Churchwardens will write to you or send you an email to confirm receipt of your complaint within 14 calendar days of your complaint being received and will arrange for it to be considered by a complaints committee appointed by the PCC.

The complaints committee will be a group of 3 members of the PCC nominated by the Churchwardens. If your complaint refers specifically to individuals who are members of the PCC they will not be included on the committee. The Churchwardens will seek a representation of men and women.

The complaints committee will look 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 invite you to present your complaint to them. If so, you may attend with a friend / representative if you wish. The meeting will be informal in nature. The Chair will explain the purpose of the meeting, introduce the members and emphasise confidentiality. The meeting will be minuted by the Committee.

A Churchwarden will write to you with the conclusions from the complaints committee's review and reasons for that outcome. The Churchwarden will aim to respond to you in this way as soon as possible, and no longer than 8 weeks after receipt of your complaint.

This will be the PCC's final response to your complaint. A log of the complaint will be kept.

It should be recognised that in some instances matters cannot be resolved. However, the PCC's aim is to ensure that the process respects those involved and is just in providing an active concern to those who are vulnerable.

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 <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity> or by writing to them at Charity Commission First Contact, PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG.

#### **Churchwardens**

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