

Parish of the Resurrection, Alton

Complaints policy and procedures

I have a complaint — what can I do?

While we hope you will never have to cause to complain, sadly, sometimes things do go wrong. The Parish of the Resurrection, Alton (POTR) views complaints as an opportunity to put things right, learn and to make improvements for the future.

Children or Vulnerable Adults

If your concern relates to or includes a concern that a child, or an adult who may be vulnerable, has been harmed or is at risk of harm, you must use our **Safeguarding Procedures**. You will find our policies and procedures on the POTR website and should contact the Parish or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

If your concern is not a safeguarding one, please now keep reading.

What you should do and who you should contact, will depend upon the circumstances of your concern and who or what you want to complain about.

Our policy in the POTR is to:

- provide a fair procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint (see What is a complaint?)
- be open about how we will deal with complaints
- make sure that all complaints are responded to in a fair and timely manner
- treat information sensitively, telling only those who need to know
- resolve complaints wherever possible as near to the point of delivery as possible, and repair relationships
- review and learn from cases, so that we improve what we do

What is a complaint?

For the purpose of this policy and related procedures, a complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the conduct or behaviour of the clergy, lay ministers, church officers, or other employees of the POTR.

The aim should be to resolve complaints or grievances where possible (excepting those related to the harm or abuse of children and vulnerable adults where the formal safeguarding procedures must be used) informally, locally, speedily and fairly by discussion, problem solving, mediation and negotiation.

Problems should therefore be brought directly to the person(s) deemed responsible for the area of dissatisfaction or disquiet, and will hopefully be resolved in this way.

If however, after this problem-solving stage, resolution has not been reached, more formal action may be needed.

Where can complaints come from?

Complaints may come from any person or organisation which has a legitimate interest in the conduct of the person whose conduct is being complained about. Complaints are best made in writing.

Who or what do you want to complain about?

Any complaint will initially be responded to within 14 days.

1. POTR employees Contact the Vicar in the first instance.

2. Problems with churchyards or monuments

Contact the Parish Office, Vicar or Associate Vicar in the first instance. Their addresses and other contact details are on the church website.

Church land that has been set aside for burials and the interment of ashes is subject to Ecclesiastical law, known as faculty legislation. Every PCC (Parochial Church Council) office should have the churchyard regulations, which can be provided on request. If further help is still required, the Archdeacon may then be able to help.

4. Disagreements within the church or congregation about church life/ worship or Complaints about church officers, contracts or lettings

Contact the Vicar or Parochial Church Council (PCC) via the secretary (currently Parish Administrator)

Contact details are on the POT R website and individual church notice boards.

Parish Churches within the Church of England are run as independent charities by the Vicar (or Rector, or Priest in Charge) and the PCC. As legal entities in their own right, they are independent of the Diocese, although the Bishop and Archdeacon oversee ministries, and aim to work in close partnership with the clergy and churchwardens.

Any concerns about the running of a church or its activities (worship, lettings, buildings, gardens, PCC contracts etc.) should therefore be addressed to the Vicar or PCC in the first instance. If further help is required, the Churchwardens or Archdeacon may then be able to assist

5. Complaints about Clergy or other Licensed Ministers

High standards of integrity and service are expected of our all our clergy and ministers, but sometimes they can fall short of what is expected.

In most cases it is best to share any disappointment with the member of clergy or other minister concerned, and to try and resolve it together.

If that proves insufficient, you may then wish to bring your concern:

- about clergy, to the attention of the Archdeacon or Bishop's office (01962 854050);
- about a non-ordained/licensed lay minister, to their Vicar, or the Warden of Readers

Complaints against clergy are dealt with under the Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM) 2003.

Stage 1 of the CDM process will endeavour to resolve the complaint informally if this is what you wish;

Stage 2 of the CDM involves completing a complaint form, which can be obtained from the Bishop's Office or from the Church of England website. The complaint is made formally to the Bishop, and then considered by his or her legal advisor, the Diocesan Registrar. If the content of your complaint is serious it may amount to misconduct warranting formal disciplinary action.

Anonymous complaints cannot be made. To make a complaint you must have a 'proper interest' and the concern itself must have 'sufficient substance'.

6. Speaking out ("whistleblowing")

If any current or recent employees of the POTR (left within a three month period); agency staff; staff seconded to work in the POTR; students on placement; other learners; volunteers or sub-contracted staff have any concerns with the POTR that they believe to be true and in the "public interest" then they should speak out by the most appropriate route which may be a Church Warden, the Vicar or in exceptional circumstances the Bishop or Archdeacon.

"In the public interest" has a number of definitions but broadly means anything affecting the health, the rights or the finances of the public at large (for example public safety or suspected fraud)



Signed:

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