

## **1      Introduction**

1.1 This policy is authorised by Tidenham Parochial Church Council (PCC) and sets out the various ways in which complaints about the activities of Tidenham Parish Church or personnel involved in delivering these activities will be responded to. The intention is to ensure people working or volunteering for Tidenham Parish Church know what to do when a complaint is received.

## **1.2      Principles**

The overriding principles are that all complaints will be:

- Normally in writing, anonymous complaints will rarely be followed up. If telephone or email complaints are raised these will be followed up so that clear information is received/agreed with the complainant (e.g. telephone notes that are taken).
- Responded to promptly and with confidentiality so that only those needing to know or be involved are included and in line with data protection rules.
- Investigated fairly and with pastoral care and sensitivity
- Resolved as amicably as is possible in any situation with complainants asked where appropriate how they would like their complaint, if upheld, resolved.
- Reviewed by appropriate team members of the parish (ordained or lay).
- Reviewed at the end point to ensure learning takes place at organisation and other appropriate levels.

1.3 Complaints therefore can be made about issues of policy, action, or individual service / action by a member of staff or a Trustee / Committee member.

1.4 Complaints cannot be made about decisions or actions that have been taken following legal national church process protocols, due process, and appeal processes.

1.5 Tidenham PCC aims to be an open and transparent organisation which both welcomes and encourages challenge where there are perceptions that decisions or actions may reflect potential discrimination. This applies to the widest contexts of justice and equality, racial justice, and all protected characteristics as set out in law.

1.6 Under no circumstances will the Parish Church accept vexatious, threatening or intimidating complaints made about any individual. These may be referred to the statutory authorities as appropriate.

## **2      Who can make a complaint and where should it be directed?**

2.1 Complaints about a member of staff employed by the Tidenham PCC should **during the vacancy be directed to the Churchwardens** of Tidenham Parish. These will be followed up appropriately through the normal policies such as capability, and/or disciplinary.

2.2 Complaints about a member of clergy should be directed to the Archdeacon of Gloucester, who will follow them up within the frameworks of national and diocesan protocols and policies.

2.3 Complaints about decisions taken by Tidenham Parochial Church Council (PCC) should be directed to the Secretary of Tidenham PCC (information about them is available on the parish church website or through the administration assistant).

- 2.4 Internal complaints from and about parish employed staff or volunteers should be taken up using the staff employment handbook's grievance and whistleblowing policies.
- 2.5 Complaints about the action of an individual member of staff or a volunteer should be directed to the PCC Secretary so that appropriate follow up can take place.
- 2.6 Complaints about any safeguarding decision should be directed to the Parish Safeguarding Officer Rosalind Seward or the Chair of the PCC Safeguarding Committee Robin Riordan. Please refer to the Safeguarding Complaints process, which you can find on page 14 of our Safeguarding Policy by referring to this link: [Safeguarding](#)
- 2.7 Concerns relating to Tutshill Church of England School should be directed to the school's Chair of Governors so that the school's own complaints policy can be followed.

### **3 What will happen if a complaint is received?**

- 3.1 A complaint received by email/letter will be acknowledged within 48hrs of receipt. The acknowledgement will state what further steps will be taken, and what the complainant can expect will happen next. (Complaints could be so varied, so it is important that each is dealt with according to issue, need, level of seriousness, further information needed, etc.)
- 3.2 Where a complaint is taken by telephone, the details will be confirmed including name, address, contact details, nature of complaint – and this will be passed on to the appropriate person to call back to confirm the details and seek any clarification or further information that would be needed to progress the complaint.
- 3.3 Paperwork relating to all complaints received, actions taken, etc will be recorded and stored within data protection provisions.

### **4 How will complaints be progressed and resolved?**

- 4.1 Wherever possible complaints will be resolved amicably, professionally and with pastoral care and sensitivity.
- 4.2 Individuals making complaints will be dealt with courteously and professionally. Information will be clarified and any further information sought.
- 4.3 Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant will set out how the complaint was progressed and conclusions and set out how a referral can be made (see section 5 below).
- 4.4 As appropriate where actions/decisions are taken in relation to a complaint these will be shared with the complainant. This will not include personal employment information about any member of staff.
- 4.5 Each person progressing a complaint will keep clear notes, and copies of any correspondence related to it (kept and stored within data protection provisions).

**5      What happens if a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint?**

- 5.1 If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at the first stages set out in 4 above, they are able to refer their complaint to the Area Dean of Forest South Deanery. They may investigate what has occurred, review any paperwork, and report back to the complainant.
- 5.2 Referrals may take up to 28 days to complete (and practical extensions may be required) – however the complainant will be kept informed about progress by the Area Dean.

**6      What is the role of The Charity Commission?**

- 6.1 The complainant can complain to The Charity Commission at any stage. The commission's involvement in looking at complaints is limited to issues that pose a serious risk of significant harm to a charity's beneficiaries, assets, services or reputation. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: [Complaints about charities \(CC47\) - GOV.UK](#)

**7      Complaints involving others**

- 7.1 As an employer Tidenham PCC has a duty of care to ensure that all staff are treated with respect and dignity at work and their line manager takes up this day to day responsibility.
- 7.2 On occasions concerns and complaints may be raised against members of the public, contractors and others where their inappropriate use of language in PCC work related emails, phone calls and meetings has caused offence to members of parish staff.
- 7.3 All concerns should be raised with the line manager so that appropriate follow up actions can be taken, and the PCC Secretary can provide further advice and guidance.

**8.      Making a complaint**

- 8.1 Written complaints may be sent to the **Churchwardens** or Tidenham PCC Secretary and addressed to: Tidenham Vicarage, Gloucester Road Tutshill, CHEPSTOW NP16 7DU.
- 8.2 Telephoned complaints to the **PCC Secretary: 07738 095839**.

**9      Reviewing this policy**

- 9.1 **As we are in vacancy, the Churchwardens** are responsible for ensuring this policy is shared across the team, and with key volunteers.
- 9.2 The PCC may review this policy annually or at any time it sees fit. The date of the policy/policy version will be indicated **on the footer of each page**.
- 9.3 **Changes over the previous version are highlighted in yellow.**