



Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy

**Benefice of St James the Great Church,
High Wych and St Marys, Gilston with St
Botolphs, Eastwick**

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1. Introduction

1.1 This policy outlines the procedure for receiving, managing and responding to complaints, compliments and feedback relating to the ministry, activities, services and administration of the Benefice of St James the Great Church, High Wych and St Mary's, Gilston with St Botolph's, Eastwick (hereafter known as 'the Benefice')

1.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all concerns, suggestions, and positive feedback are handled fairly, consistently, respectfully and in a timely manner.

1.3 The Benefice is committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment. Constructive feedback helps the Benefice to improve its ministry and service, while compliments provide encouragement and recognition for those serving within the church community.

1.4 This policy applies to church members, volunteers, visitors, service users, and members of the wider community who wish to raise a complaint, provide feedback, or express appreciation for the work of the church.

2. Principles

Complaints

2.1 The Benefice is committed to listening to and addressing concerns wherever possible in a fair, transparent and compassionate manner.

2.2 Individuals are encouraged, where appropriate, to raise concerns informally with the incumbent before submitting a formal complaint.

2.3 All complaints will be taken seriously and considered without prejudice

Compliments

2.4 The Benefice welcomes compliments regarding its ministry, worship, pastoral care, community activities, volunteers and staff.

2.5 Compliments may be shared with the relevant individuals or groups to recognise and encourage their contribution to the life of the church.

Feedback

2.6 Suggestions and feedback are welcomed as an important means of supporting the continuous improvement of Benefice activities, services and engagement with the community.

2.7 Feedback may relate to any aspect of church life including worship, communication, facilities, events, pastoral support and community outreach.

3. Submitting a Complaint, Compliment or Feedback

3.1 Complaints, compliments and feedback should be submitted in writing, wherever possible, by email to the incumbent on revajacksonhwge@outlook.com. However, if preferred, they can be posted to The Rectory, 1 Dovedale, High Wych, Sawbridgeworth, Herts CM21 0DT

3.2 Individuals should provide sufficient information to enable the matter to be understood and, where appropriate, investigated.

3.3 Anonymous complaints may be considered at the discretion of the incumbent and the appropriate PCC Secretary, although the ability to investigate may be limited.

3.4 Matters relating to safeguarding must be reported immediately to the Benefice safeguarding lead on cathsharples@aol.com and safeguarding procedures must be followed. Safeguarding concerns will not be managed solely through this policy.

3.5 Complaints concerning clergy conduct must be directed to the Bishops of St Albans on bishop@stalbans.anglican.org or to Abbey Gate House, Abbey Mill Lane, St Albans, AL3 4HD.

4. Handling Complaints

4.1 Where able, complaints will normally be acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt, with the aim of providing a full response within 28 days. If this is not possible, the complainant will be advised of the reasons for the delay and updated on progress

4.2 The complaint will be reviewed by the incumbent and/or PCC Secretary, who may gather relevant information and speak with those involved as necessary.

4.3 Every effort will be made to resolve complaints informally and through discussion where appropriate.

4.4 Where a fuller investigation is required, the complainant will be informed of the process and any expected timescales.

4.5 Following consideration of the complaint, a response will be provided outlining any findings, actions taken or recommendations made.

4.6 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request that the matter be reviewed by the Churchwardens and/or the appropriate PCC where appropriate.

Please note – There may be instances where a complaint is received and no action is taken or where the matter falls outside the authority of the PCC. Where appropriate, referral to the Diocese, safeguarding officers or other appropriate bodies will be made.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 All members of the church community are encouraged to treat one another with courtesy, respect and kindness when raising concerns or providing feedback.

5.2 The incumbent, Churchwardens and PCC are responsible for ensuring that concerns are handled appropriately and in accordance with this policy.

5.3 Individuals involved in considering complaints must act fairly, objectively and confidentially.

6. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

6.1 Information relating to complaints will be handled sensitively and in line with UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018), meaning personal data will only be used and shared where necessary, lawful and appropriate. Information will only be shared with those who need to be involved in resolving the matter.

6.2 A record of formal complaints and their outcomes may be maintained by the appropriate PCC Secretary in accordance with applicable UK GDPR requirements.

6.3 Records of all compliments and feedback may also be maintained to support service improvement and recognise positive contributions.

Please note - PCC members are encouraged to note and share informal or verbal feedback received, helping to identify trends, recognise good practice and inform continuous improvement

6.4 Records of all complaints, investigations, outcomes and associated correspondence will normally be retained for 6 years after the complaint has been closed, unless a longer retention period is required for legal, safeguarding or regulatory reasons.

7. Review and Amendments

7.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the PCC Secretary and may be amended as necessary to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the church and its community.

8. Approval

8.1 This policy was approved by the PCC of St James, High Wych and the PCC of St Mary's, Gilston with St Botolphs, Eastwick and is effective immediately.