



Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor

## Grievance Policy

### Introduction

Disagreements when working or volunteering with others are inevitable. Sometimes they become intractable and need to be addressed. Having a set grievance procedure can depersonalise the process so that a resolution can be achieved.

The PCC at St John the Baptist's is too small to involve an independent person for the employee or volunteer to raise a grievance with. This is quite normal but we would like to stress that we are committed to treating all grievances fairly and objectively, even if the grievance is about something one of the PCC members have said or done.

In this case, we will aim not to take any grievances as personal criticism. Rather we will follow the grievance procedure set out below, to make it easier to hear any grievances in a calm and objective manner, and be as fair to the person making the grievance as possible in the resolution of the problem.

All discussions, whether informal or formal, should give the employee or volunteer sufficient time to state their case. In some circumstances, simply giving the opportunity to air the grievance and be heard, will take most of the heat out of it.

Wherever possible grievances should be dealt with informally first. This can often be achieved by mediation although this route must gain consent from everyone involved in advance.

The PCC recognise that failing to follow this formal grievance procedure can affect both people's morale and confidence as they serve in the church, and the outcome, should the employee later make a claim through an employment tribunal.



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ACAS have some useful resources for managing grievances. They have also produced the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance procedures, from which the following procedure is drawn.

### **Step 1: Understanding the options:**

#### Option 1: An informal chat

- a. This can range from a quiet word to a more structured meeting, and should be with your manager or team leader
- b. You can ask to bring someone else for extra assistance or support, for example a translator or care worker

At the meeting:

- c. The person making the grievance should explain what the problem is and what they think should happen (they may be requested to show any evidence that might be relevant).
- d. Both parties should take notes
- e. Both parties should listen to each other
- f. Both parties should try to find a solution that works for both.

#### Option 2: Make Formal Grievance

- a) If a solution to the problem cannot be reached, the person making the grievance can raise the issue formally

### **Step 2: Raising a formal grievance**

- a) The person with the grievance should put it in writing to whoever is most appropriate. This could be a lead volunteer, team leader or the vicar
- b) The letter or email should include:
  - what the grievance is about
  - any evidence they have to support their claim
  - what they want the church to do about it

### **Step 3: Responding to a formal grievance**

- a) Gather evidence from all sides, consider all the information and aim to follow the same fair procedure
- b) Keep written records of what takes place during the grievance procedure:



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- what the grievance is about
- any decisions and actions taken, and why
- whether the complainant appeals the grievance outcome

- c) Protect personal information keeping it confidential
- d) Avoid assuming anything about the grievance or the people involved
- e) Be sensitive to the circumstances and needs of the person the grievance is about, as well as the person who raised the grievance
- f) Do not discipline anyone involved in a grievance before getting all the information about it. However taking temporary mitigating action may be helpful e.g. changing rotas.

### Step 4: The grievance meeting

- a) This should be held as soon as possible after all the evidence is gathered
- b) Give suitable notice and find a mutually agreed time and place
- c) Allow the person making the grievance to be accompanied
- d) Discuss the issue and allow everyone to have their say
- e) Remain impartial, take notes and sum up the discussion

### Step 5: Deciding the outcome

- a) Following a fair grievance procedure, the employer should decide on the best outcome based on:
  - the findings from meetings and investigations
  - what is fair and reasonable
  - what their workplace has done in any similar cases before
- b) The employer should tell the employee of the outcome as soon as possible and in writing

### Step 6: After the grievance procedure

- a) The outcome needs to be kept confidential, although it may be necessary to share it with the people involved
- b) Records of the outcome should be kept
- c) Should the complainant not be happy with the outcome, they should be directed to the appeals process on the diocesan website