



# Morpeth Parish

St James the Great + St Mary the Virgin + St Aidan

**Morpeth Parish supports wholeheartedly TOWARDS A SAFER CHURCH**

## **Complaints Policy 2023/24**

The Parish of Morpeth views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint. Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone in our parish knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired and reconciliation explored
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### **Definition of a Complaint:**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, about any aspect of the parish. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded. The person who receives a complaint by telephone or in person should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by e-mail so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

N.B. A formal complaint can only be received by e-mail - [rev.simonjhwhite@gmail.com](mailto:rev.simonjhwhite@gmail.com)

or in writing - Revd. Simon White, The Rectory, Cottingwood Lane, Morpeth, NE61 1ED.

It is our policy that we will not investigate anonymous complaints.

*Matters relating to safeguarding should be referred directly to Debbie Bass-Pickin, the Parish Safeguarding Officer (07983936626) or Carol Butler, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (07825167016)*

## Confidentiality

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

## Informal Approach

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Most matters can and should be resolved informally. If for example a person is dissatisfied, then in the first instance they should tell that person of their dissatisfaction. He or she should be willing to listen, to discuss the matter and, where justified, to seek to satisfy the concerns. If following the informal process, the complainant remains dissatisfied or the informal route is inappropriate, then the formal procedure should be followed.

## Formal Stage

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved during the informal process, they can escalate the complaint to the formal process. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to **Revd. Simon White, Rector of Morpeth Parish (517716)** or if already involved, **Revd. Chris Grocock, Area Dean (813358)**. Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints' procedure should be attached. A suitably senior person may be appointed to investigate the facts of the case. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with anyone who may have been involved in dealing with the complaint at the informal stage. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given an opportunity to respond. The person who dealt with the original complaint at the informal stage should be kept informed of what is happening where appropriate. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 28 days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint. It should be recognised that in some instances people will take positions where the matter cannot be resolved. However, the aim should be to ensure that the process respects those involved. The decision taken at this stage is final. A log of the complaint will be kept.

Responsibility for this policy and its implementation is with the PCC and it is reviewed each year.

Rector .....

Churchwardens.....

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Date.....