



## Complaints Procedure 2024

The Beach Life Committee have agreed the following procedure for complaints.

### Introduction

The primary purpose of the Beach Life complaints procedure is to provide a clear and fair process for dealing with complaints relating to decisions taken by or the conduct of members of the team.

### General Principles

We are mindful that all people make mistakes and that a formal complaint should be the last resort. Beach Life's desire is that wherever there is any concern they will do all they can to resolve the concern informally rather than escalating it into a formal complaint. It is advisable to follow scriptural principles of reconciling differences wherever possible before resorting to this formal process. However, when attempts to resolve the issue informally have failed or where, due to the nature of the complaint, it is not appropriate to address it with the person concerned then it may be necessary to resort to a formal complaint.

### How to make an informal complaint

It is important that you speak to the person concerned as soon as possible to ascertain what happened. If you are not satisfied you will need to speak to one of the following team members: the Age Group Leader, Pete Skivington or the Minister on Duty that day, in order to resolve the concern as quickly as possible. However, if you are still not satisfied it may be necessary to resort to a formal complaint.

### How to make a formal complaint

A formal complaint must be made in writing by either letter or email and must set out the following:

- the action you are complaining about
- when it took place
- why do you think the action is wrong
- details of what you have done to try and resolve your concern
- what you consider would resolve your concern
- details of who else you have reported the matter to
- any additional information
- confirmation that you are happy for the detail of your complaint and the supporting documentation to be provided to those who have made the decisions in question
- any supporting documentation that exists should be enclosed

Your complaint will not be dealt with unless you provide all the information set out above.

Your complaint letter or email should be sent to either Pete Skivington, Lighthouse Church Leader, ([pskivington@lighthousesheringham.org](mailto:pskivington@lighthousesheringham.org)) or Constance Tyce, St Peter's Church. ([constancyce@btinternet.com](mailto:constancyce@btinternet.com)) who will arrange for an investigation to take place.

## **How the formal complaint will be dealt with**

In the first instance, the complaint will be acknowledged in writing or by email within five working days. Secondly, the Church Leader will appoint an investigator to look into the complaint. You will be informed who will be appointed to investigate.

The complaint will then be reviewed by the investigator. The person investigating will seek to:

- establish what happened, when it happened and who was involved
- meet with the complainant or contact them if there is need for clarification or if further information is required
- if following the initial information and any discussions with the complainant the investigation is to proceed, the investigator will inform those who have been complained about of the nature of the allegations made unless in the opinion of the investigator this would prejudice the investigation interview
- interview those involved and those complained about where necessary to understand their accounts of the events
- keep notes of all investigatory interviews

Once the investigation is concluded, the investigator will decide whether the complaint is well founded and send a letter or email to the complaint informing them of the decision. Where any aspects of the complaint are upheld the investigator will specify the actions suggested to remedy the situation. If the investigator concludes that the evidence suggests that conduct is worthy of disciplinary action the issue will be dealt with by the person's Church Leader. The complainant will be informed that the matter is being dealt with in this way.

## **Timescales**

Following receipt of the complaint, the investigator will within 21 days give the complainant an estimate of the expected timescale for dealing with the complaint. Where, as the investigation proceeds, if it is not possible to meet the timescale, an updated timeline will be provided. If the subject matter of the complaint has also been referred to the police, it may be that the investigation cannot be completed until the police have completed their investigation.

## **Safeguarding issues**

Where a complaint relates to child or adult protection the investigation and follow up actions will be carried out in accordance with our Safeguarding Procedures.

## **Contact by Complainant**

Once a formal complaint has been made, on going discussion or correspondence with the person who has been complained about should be avoided without the consent of the investigator.

## **Confidentiality**

The fact of and content of the complaint will be kept confidential save in so far as is necessary in order for the complaint to be properly investigated. Please note that it is expected that the complainant is to maintain reasonable confidentiality as to the nature and content of the complaint so that the investigator is able to work without obstruction.