

St. Andrew's

— CULLOMPTON —

**WHISTLE BLOWING
POLICY**

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH
COUNCIL**

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

Who approves the policy?	PCC
Who is responsible for updating the policy?	SLT
Classification	GENERAL
Original Issue Date	13 th June 2022
Last Revision date	NA
Revised By	NA
Next Revision Date	June 2023
Location of Electronic Copy	St Andrew's Website
Scope	This Policy applies to all employees, volunteers and church members. The PCC reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion at any time. It does not form part of any employees' contract of employment with PCC.
Extensions	None
Exclusions	None

As a church community St Andrew's has the vision of 'Revealing the heart of Jesus in the heart of our community'

As a church community we are seeking to be:

Hopeful – We are a positive, optimistic & expectant people, because we believe in the goodness of God and His power to transform lives through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Engaging – We are a people called to engage deeply with God, with each other, with our community and with our culture, to love, serve, bless and challenge.

Accepting – We are a community where all are welcome, journeying together, learning, growing, and being transformed by the extravagant love of Jesus.

Real – We believe that God calls us to drop our masks, and to be real with him and with each other. Forgiven and forgiving, transparent, genuine and honest.

Truthful – We believe in the generous Christian faith as revealed in the Bible, demonstrated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and brought alive in us today by the Holy Spirit.

We are a Christian organisation and can reasonably expect all members and employees to be at least sympathetic to Christian values. Genesis chapter 1 tells us that humankind is made in the image of God who loves us unconditionally. However, none of us are perfect – 'we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God,' (Romans 3:23) so we need an acknowledged way of comprehensively resolving any issues that may arise between individuals who may be the public, the congregation, volunteers, contractors, staff and/or the clergy and leaders.

WHAT IS WHISTLEBLOWING?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations

1 ABOUT THIS POLICY

- 1.1 St Andrew's Church are committed to honesty and integrity in our church life and we expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees, volunteers or church members and will treat seriously any concern that a colleague or member of the church may have about any suspected illegal or improper conduct including 'covering up'.
- 1.2 This policy covers all ministers, all employees appointed by the Parochial Church Council (PCC), volunteers and members of the church. This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

2 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY?

- 2.1 This Policy sets out a procedure that is designed to enable employees, volunteers or members of the church to notify the PCC of any reasonable suspicion of illegal or improper conduct. Where the concerns are about safeguarding children or vulnerable people, the Church's Safeguarding Team should be notified.
- 2.2 Employees, volunteers or St Andrew's members will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the PCC any serious impropriety or breach of procedure.
- 2.3 The PCC will be expected to act swiftly and constructively in the investigation of any concerns.

3 WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?

- 3.1 Employees, volunteers or members of the church who are worried about any kind of wrongdoing within the church are encouraged to speak up. It will not be assumed that they have a personal grievance.
- 3.2 The 'whistleblower' must act in good faith and must have reasonable grounds for believing the information to be accurate.
- 3.3 No person who uses this procedure in good faith will be penalised for doing so. The church will not tolerate harassment and/or victimisation of any person raising concerns.

- 3.4 Any person who is not sure whether the conduct he/she is concerned about does constitute illegal or improper conduct or is unsure about how to proceed can contact a member of SLT for advice though if that's not appropriate then a member of PCC who may wish to take advice in determining whether the issue constitutes improper conduct.
- 3.5 Any person who suspects' fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity should ensure this is reported for possible investigation. Normally you must first report any suspicion of such an irregularity to the PCC.

4 PROCESS FOR RAISING CONCERNS

- 4.1 Where the issue concerns the Vicar or church employee then this should be brought to the attention of one of the churchwardens.
- 4.2 If Individuals feel unable to follow this route, then the next option is to contact the diocese through the Archdeacon of Exeter.
- 4.3 Depending on the nature of the concern the complainant will be asked to justify and support their claim. Normally the complainant will be asked to do this in writing. It will, therefore, be helpful to note down any facts and dates as they happen.
- 4.4 Where anonymity is requested efforts will be made to meet the request where appropriate but that might not always be possible. The earlier and more open the expression of concern the easier it will be to take appropriate action. (see Section 9 Protection and Support for Whistleblowers)
- 4.5 Each case should be informally investigated by a minimum of 2 PCC members with the aim of informing the complainant of the outcome as quickly as possible. However, it may be necessary to initiate a formal investigation if it has not been possible to ascertain the facts of concern.

5 EXAMPLES OF ILLEGAL AND/OR IMPROPER CONDUCT

- fraudulent or improper use of the church's money or assets
- dangerous practices at church
- corruptly receiving any gift or advantage
- allowing private interests to override the interests of the church.

The above is not an exhaustive list and any doubt can be clarified with one of the church wardens

6 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

- 6.1 All employees, volunteers or church members have a duty to report concerns about the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 6.2 Concerns about any of the following should be reported to the church's safeguarding team:
- physical abuse
 - sexual abuse
 - emotional abuse
 - neglect
 - an intimate or improper relationship between an adult and a vulnerable person
- 6.3 The reason for the concern may be the actions of an employee, a volunteer, a member of the church, another vulnerable person or someone outside the church. Whatever the reason, concerns must be reported.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

We hope that whistleblowing concerns can be voiced openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

8 EXTERNAL DISCLOSURES

- 8.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing associated with church activities. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.
- 8.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy

9 PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS

- 9.1 We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers that raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 9.2 If you have raised a safeguarding concern with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) then the DSA will usually liaise with the Safeguarding Team about any support you may need.

- 9.3 Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If anyone believes they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the Churchwarden or Vicar immediately. If you are an employee and the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.
- 9.4 Whistleblowers should not be threatened or experience retaliation in any way. If an employee is involved in any such conduct they may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases if the whistleblower is an employee they could have a right to sue a colleague personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.
- 9.5 However, if we conclude that a whistleblower who is an employee has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, they may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 9.6 Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

10. Contacts

Church Wardens	wardens@standrewscullompton.com
Vicar	Rev Edward Hobbs 07985 428938 vicar@standrewscullompton.com
St Andrew's Safeguarding Team	Rev Edward Hobbs 07985 428938 Nikki Phillips 07712 599654 Vivian Southall 07738 081700
Exeter Diocese Safeguarding Team	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor 01392 345909
Public Concern at Work (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: (020) 7404 6609 E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website: www.pcaw.co.uk