

St Simon Zelotes, Upper Chelsea
34 Milner Street
London
SW3 2QF

Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

St Simon Zelotes views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person who 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 who works or volunteers for St Simon Zelotes 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.

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation is with the Parochial Church Council of St Simon Zelotes (PCC).

2. Aims of the procedure

The procedure laid out below aims to:

- provide a fair procedure which is clear and easy to use.
- be open and transparent about how complaints will be dealt with.
- ensure that all complaints are investigated appropriately.
- ensure that complaints are dealt with in a way that is timely and proportionate.
- ensures that lessons are learned and enable the improvement of operations at St Simon Zelotes.

3. Definition of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of St Simon Zelotes.

Where complaints come from:

Complaints may come from:

- A complaint can be received by email or in writing. It is our policy that we will not investigate anonymous complaints.

- Where a complaint is made verbally the complainant will be asked to follow up with a written complaint *if it is to be considered under the formal process.*

This policy does not cover:

- Complaints relating to the London Diocese where the complaint should be made under their policy.
- Complaints from staff or super volunteers (i.e. Ministry Trainees or LLMs) of St Simon Zelotes, who should use St Simon's grievance policy and its relevant appendices.
- Complaints from members of Clergy where the issue is a grievance relating to the exercise of the office held - the Archbishops' Council has set out a Code of Practice and supportive advice for dealing with such grievances.
- Disclosures, concerns or allegations about abuse of children or vulnerable adults, which should always be referred to the Safeguarding Officer at St Simon Zelotes or the incumbent. Where there is immediate danger, it should be referred directly to the police or Social Services. Further details are on the safeguarding page at St Simon's website <https://www.stsimonzelotes.com/>.
- Complaints regarding members of clergy which are subject to their own complaints' procedure. Further details can be found on the Diocese of London website at <https://www.london.anglican.org/church-and-parish-support/human-recources-hr/diocesan-policies/clergy-informal-complaints-process/>.

4. Complaints procedure

A complaint made verbally should usually be dealt with through a natural, initial conversation between the complainant and the person to whom they have complained. If after such a conversation, however, the complainant wishes to proceed further, or the person who has received the complaint recognises that the issue has not been resolved, they will refer the complainant to the process below.

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have. When the person wishes to proceed with their complaint after an initial conversation, complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded. The member of staff or volunteer who receives a complaint made over the phone or in person should at this point:

- Write down the facts of the complaint.
- Take the complainant's name, address, and telephone number, and if possible, their email address.
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to St Simon Zelotes.
- 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 email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

Written complaints may be sent to the Parish Office, St Simon Zelotes, 34 Milner Street, SW3 2QF, or by email to office@ssz.org.uk

It will then be triaged to the relevant church leader to investigate and action as appropriate.

If the complaint is about a clergy person who is not the incumbent, the complaint should be sent to the incumbent.

If the complaint is about the incumbent or other most senior clergy person at SSZ, it should be sent to the churchwardens at wardenvc@ssz.org.uk (Ed Rose) and warden@ssz.org.uk (Susan Wajih).

5. Resolving complaints

Stage One (Informal Process)

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 and locally.

If, for example, somebody is dissatisfied with the service or support they have received, and their concern or dissatisfaction has not been allayed by a conversation with the person they initially shared that complaint with, then, in the first instance they should tell the person responsible for the issue being complained about, who should be willing to listen, to discuss the matter, and seek resolution where justified. (If the person initially spoken to is the person responsible for the issue being complained about then, if the complainant is not satisfied after the initial conversation, they should tell the complainant that the first step in the complaints process is a fuller, informal conversation, and arrange a time with the complainant to have that discussion).

If a complainant remains unsatisfied after this informal stage, the member of staff or ministry trainee will arrange for the concerns to be discussed with a more senior member of staff or a clergy person line manager. (If the person being complained about is a clergy person, please see 'Complaints against clergy' below.)

If, following the informal process and those further discussions with a more senior person, the complainant remains dissatisfied, or this informal route is inappropriate, then the formal procedure should be followed.

Stage Two (Formal Stage)

If, after all reasonable efforts have been made to informally resolve a complaint, the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily remedied, they can escalate the complaint to the formal process. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the incumbent or senior clergy person licensed to this parish who will triage to a senior PCC member for investigation and ensure that:

- they acknowledge the complaint within 10 working days, confirming who is dealing with the complaint and when they can expect a reply. A copy of this Complaints Procedure should be attached.
- the facts of the case are investigated (which may require appointment of an additional, independent, PCC member or other qualified person to support the selected PCC member). 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 are 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.
- Complainants 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, a 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. If the person complained about is a staff member or ministry trainee, and further action of a disciplinary nature is required, please see the Disciplinary Policy and its appendices for further information.

It should be recognised that in some instances people will take positions which mean 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, unless the PCC decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

A log of the complaint will be kept.

6. Delayed and unreasonable complaints

If the complaint relates to an incident or event which occurred more than six months before the complaint is made (or, where the complaint relates to a series of incidents or events, if more than six months have elapsed from the date of the latest incident or complaint), the person receiving the complaint may notify the complainant that it will not be investigated for that reason. The notification should be given within 10 working days of the complaint being received.

The person who received the complaint will arrange for this to be recorded in the complaints log.

If the person receiving the complaint or the person investigating the complaint considers that the complaint is unreasonable, vexatious, frivolous, or a repeat of a previous complaint, he or she may notify the complainant and, if relevant, confirm that the complaint will be terminated for that reason.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision not to investigate the complaint, he or she may write to or email the incumbent or other most senior clergy person present and wardens asking for the decision to be reviewed.

The incumbent/wardens will be provided with all documentation relating to the complaint, including the letter notifying the decision not to investigate, and will review the decision made. He or she should write to the complainant and the decision-maker within 10 working days of receipt of the request for a review. If he or she concludes that the complaint should be investigated, he or she will nominate a person to respond to the complaint, who should not be the person who decided not to investigate it.

If unreasonable behaviour continues the incumbent or senior clergy person licensed to the parish may write to the complainant to explain that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact St Simon Zelotes, causing significant levels of disruption, specific methods of communication, including limitations on the number of future contacts, may be outlined.

This will usually be reviewed after 6 months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the concerns and actions taken will be put in writing immediately and the police informed.

7. Complaints about Clergy

a. Clergy who are not the incumbent

If a complaint involves a clergy person other than the incumbent, then in the first instance this clergy person should seek to address the complaint informally with the complainant as detailed in the stage 1 informal process.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the conclusion of that initial stage of the informal process, the clergy person will arrange for an informal discussion between the incumbent and the complainant.

If the complainant remains unsatisfied with any resolution steps taken or suggested at this stage, the complainant should make a written complaint to the incumbent. The Incumbent will at this stage get in touch with the Archdeacon to discuss how best to proceed. It may be that the Archdeacon advises that the matter should be escalated to the Diocese's informal complaints process, which itself considers whether a more formal, disciplinary process is required.

b. The incumbent or other most senior clergy person licensed to the parish

If a complaint involves the incumbent or other most senior clergy person licensed to the parish, then in the first instance this clergy person should seek to address the complaint informally with the complainant as detailed in the stage 1 informal process.

If the complaint is not satisfied with the conclusion of that initial stage of the informal process, the clergy person will arrange for an informal discussion between the wardens and the complainant.

If the complainant remains unsatisfied with any resolution steps taken or suggested at this stage, the complainant should make a written complaint to the wardens, using the email addresses above. The Wardens will at this stage get in touch with the Archdeacon to discuss how best to proceed. It may be that the Archdeacon advises that the matter should be escalated to the Diocese's informal complaints process, which itself includes consideration of whether a more formal, disciplinary process is required.

7. External stage

Escalation to the Charity Commission

If the complainant feels that their complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, and the issues of concern pose a risk of significant harm to the beneficiaries, assets, or reputation of St Simon Zelotes, it may be referred to the Charity Commission. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at:

www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx.

8. Additional complaints procedures and policies

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work, e.g., a staff member of the church breaking or proposing to break the law, acting dishonestly in any way, or otherwise seeking to cover up any wrongdoing.

Please see the Whistleblowing Policy of St Simon Zelotes for further information.

Bullying and harassment

Employees or office holders who believe that they have been discriminated against for any reason and feel that it amounts to bullying and harassment, should access the Diocesan Bullying and Harassment policy. Disciplinary action will be considered if any employee or clergy behaviour is deemed to amount to bullying and harassment. Volunteers and agency workers may see their positions terminated.

Grievances

Where a St Simon Zelotes employee is concerned about a breach of their own contract of employment, they should access the St Simon Zelotes grievance policy. Further details of the Codes of Practice and supporting advice that apply to clergy grievance procedures, may be found on the Common Tenure website

9. Variation of the complaints procedure

The PCC may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest.

10. Monitoring complaints and lessons learnt

The Parish Office will ensure that a log is kept of all complaints received, the timescale of resolution, and the lessons learnt.

The number, type, and outcome of complaints will be reported once a year to the PCC so that any trends or further actions deemed necessary can be considered.

11. Data protection (UK GDPR)

St Simon Zelotes processes all complaints information and personal data in accordance with its data protection / processing special categories of personal data policies which can be obtained by contacting the Parish Office.

Inappropriate access or disclosure of data constitutes a data breach and must be reported in accordance with SSZ's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the relevant disciplinary procedure.

12. Further advice

Best practice advice on conducting complaints investigations and HR policy matters can be found at <https://www.acas.org.uk/> ACAS also sets out advice about sharing information and confidentiality in relation to workplace and complaints investigations.

Updated September 2025

Signed on behalf of PCC: Mike Neville

Appendix 1 – Modifications to the Complaints Procedures for the employment of Zannie Ammoun

PURPOSE

These modifications to the St Simon's Complaints Procedures are written with reference to the employment of Zannie Ammoun as the Ministry Coordinator for Children and Women (MCCW) at St Simon Zelotes.

These modifications are intended to ensure that a St Simon's employee overseen and line managed by their spouse, has access to a fair and impartial process if concerns and complaints are raised against them.

These modifications are also intended to give confidence to the St Simon's PCC and church members, that there is a clear and transparent process if they wish to raise a complaint or concern about an employee who is married to their line manager.

These modifications should be read as a supplement to the St Simon's Disciplinary, Grievance and Complaint Policies.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

These notes are to be read in conjunction with the St Simon Zelotes Complaints Policy and Procedure. All that is written in that document applies to complaints about the person referred to in this document, with the following modifications:

5. Resolving complaints

Stage One (Informal Process)

If a complainant remains unsatisfied after this informal stage, the member of staff or ministry trainee will arrange for the concerns to be discussed with a Churchwarden rather than a clergy person line manager.

Stage Two (Formal Stage)

If, after all reasonable efforts have been made informally to resolve a complaint, the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily remedied, they can escalate the complaint to the formal process. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to a Churchwarden for investigation. The Churchwarden will oversee the investigation of the complaint as detailed in The Complaints Policy.

The Churchwarden will review the complaint with the support of an HR Advisor, who will be able to draw on her record of the line management meetings between the Senior Clergy Person and the Employee.

A Churchwarden and HR Advisor (as of January 2026 Susan Wajih and Kate Castellani) may wish to draw on the advice of other PCC members, or those in the congregation with experience of HR. Annabel Hayward, Pastoral Adviser to the Bishop of Ebbsfleet has also agreed to be available to be called upon to help resolve a complaint if needed.

6. Delayed and unreasonable complaints

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision not to investigate the complaint, he or she may write to or email the Wardens asking for the decision to be reviewed.

If unreasonable behaviour by a complainant continues the Wardens may write to the complainant to explain that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact St Simon Zelotes, causing significant levels of disruption, specific methods of communication, including limitations on the number of future contacts, may be outlined. The help of the Archdeacon or Bishop may be sought.