EMMANUEL CHURCH, LLANDUDNO



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COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURES

Last Review Date: 24th September 2026

Next Review Date: 24th September 2027

Complaints Policy and Procedures - Emmanuel Church

1. Introduction

1.1. Emmanuel Church, Llandudno ("the Church") is committed to ensuring that complaints are addressed in a way that is fair, transparent and timely. The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly how complaints will be dealt with.

1.2. As a church, we want to follow what the Bible says about how we should relate to each other. Where something goes wrong, our aim is work towards restoring the relationship as much as possible, recognising that both justice and mercy are important to that end.

1.3. We also want to learn from our mistakes. Hearing complaints can help us to do that.

1.4. The overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation rests with the Emmanuel Church Committee.

1.5. The Emmanuel Church Committee will take into account any conflicts of loyalty that may arise where one, or more, of them is the subject of the complaint, and in relation to any appeal, they will take appropriate and reasonable steps to manage those conflicts of loyalty, insofar as that is practicable in the life of the Church.

1.6. The Emmanuel Church Committee is aware of The Charity Governance Code. The Charity Commission/OSCR and members of the public may regard the Code as setting the standard for good governance in charities. The Code expects charity trustees to have in place "a transparent, well-publicised, effective and timely process for making and handling a complaint, and that any internal or external complaints are handled constructively, impartially and effectively". The Church aims to build trust and confidence with those who participate in the life of the Church and engage with its activities. That includes how it deals with complaints.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all employees and volunteers who act on behalf of the Church who may receive or handle complaints.

2.2. Where an employee or an office-holder of the Church wants to raise concerns about their employment/engagement, those matters should be addressed in accordance with the Church's employment/HR policies, such as an internal grievance policy, rather than as a complaint under this policy.

2.3. The Church will not be able to address a complaint unless it includes sufficient information to allow the matter to be properly reviewed and investigated.

2.4. Where the Emmanuel Church Committee has reasonable grounds, based on the evidence available to them, for assessing that a complaint has not been raised in good faith or is not an appropriate use of this policy, they may disapply it and will provide the complainant with their reasons for making this decision. One example would be that the complaint has been raised to harass or cause distress to an individual. Another is where a complaint raises the same or very similar matters to those that have been addressed in a previous complaint.

2.5. Some complaints may relate to other policies that the Church has in place, such as for safeguarding, whistleblowing or discrimination/harassment. If any of these other policies are relevant to the nature of the complaint that is raised, the Church will inform the complainant that the matter is being dealt with in accordance with that other policy, as described below. This may be important to ensure that the Church is complying with its legal obligations, particularly in relation to safeguarding.

2.6. The Church is committed to handling complaints sensitively and in line with its data protection and privacy obligations. However, it cannot guarantee complete confidentiality where sharing information is necessary and proportionate to review and resolve a complaint. In some cases, the Emmanuel Church Committee may need to involve third parties, such as the local authority, the police or the Charity Commission, or seek legal advice and share information with professional advisers.

2.7. This policy does not form part of any legal agreement or contract by or on behalf of the Church.

3. **Definition of a complaint**

3.1. A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of church life, where the complainant wishes to receive a response. This can be about the actions or behaviour of a person or persons, or about an activity or group, or about a service provided by the Church.

3.2. By raising a formal complaint with the Church, a complainant is asking the Church to devote time and resources to properly addressing their concerns. This may be legitimate, but a formal complaint should usually only be raised after other methods of resolution have been exhausted. Raising a formal complaint would preferably be the last step taken, not the first.

3.3. A formal complaint is not the same as raising a concern. Concerns can often be dealt with by taking the matter up with the leaders at the Church before there is a need to raise a formal complaint.

4. **Receipt of Complaints**

4.1. Complaints should be addressed to Camilla Fisher ("the nominated person"). Complaints may be made through various channels - in person, by phone, via email or message, or by post. If you wish to lodge a complaint you can do so by sending it by email to emmanuelchurchllandudno@gmail.com or by post to the Emmanuel Church Office c/o Jabez, Herkomer Road, Llandudno, LL30 2YZ, addressed to Mrs Camilla Fisher.

4.2. If any other person in the Church receives a complaint, they should ask the complainant to raise the complaint directly with the nominated person.

4.3. Where a complaint is made in writing, including by email or message, it is helpful (and may mean the complaint can be addressed more easily) if the complainant sets out:

4.3.1. Their name and contact details.

4.3.2. The date of the incident or decision that the complaint relates to.

4.3.3. The nature of the complaint and who is involved.

4.3.4. The nature of the complainant's relationship with the Church.

4.3.5. Whether there is any other information that the Church should be aware of.

4.3.6. What steps they have taken so far to resolve the matter, if any.

4.3.7. What actions or outcomes they are looking for from the Church.

4.4. Where a complaint is made verbally, the "nominated person" will respond to the complainant within 3 working days with a written record of the complaint that has been made, asking the complainant to confirm that the record is accurate and to complete any information that is missing from the list set out above.

4.5. All complaints will be logged in the Church's designated complaints register upon receipt, including the date, time, nature of the complaint and any other relevant information. It will not contain or refer to the identity of the complainant, and the register will therefore be an anonymised record of complaints. The complaints register is a matter of record for the Emmanuel Church Committee, and they will review it periodically.

5. **Acknowledgement of Complaints**

5.1. Upon receipt of a complaint or confirmation of the written record of a complaint, the Church will formally acknowledge it within 5 working days.

5.2. Complainants will be informed of this policy and provided with a copy, if requested.

6. **Initial Review**

6.1. The "nominated person" will carry out an initial review of the complaint to confirm that it falls within the scope of this policy. An initial response to the complainant will be provided within 2 weeks, setting out

6.1.1. Whether or not the complaint will be handled in accordance with this policy. If not, which other policy applies and the next steps. If it does, the further information that follows;

6.1.2. Who has been nominated to investigate the complaint (this may be more than one person);

6.1.3. Who will be responsible for communicating with the complainant, and their contact details - this will usually be one of the investigators;

6.1.4. The likely timeframe for the investigation and a response.

7. **Investigation and Resolution**

7.1. Assigned Officer: An officer of the Church will be nominated to be responsible for investigating the complaint. The nominated investigator will be someone who is independent of any person that is the subject of the complaint, insofar as this is possible to achieve in the life of the Church. The investigator will gather all necessary information, including contacting the complainant if required, and work towards a satisfactory resolution of the issues raised in the complaint.

7.2. Timescales: The Church aims to resolve complaints as promptly as possible. Complex complaints may require more time for investigation, but the Church will provide regular updates to the complainant regarding the progress and expected timeframe for a response.

7.3. Resolution: Depending on the nature of the complaint, the complainant will usually be notified of:

7.3.1. the steps the Church has taken to investigate the complaint;

7.3.2. the conclusions drawn from the investigation; and

7.3.3. any actions taken as a result of the investigation.

8. **Confidentiality**

8.1. Complaints may be shared with any or all of the Emmanuel Church Committee members, if appropriate and taking account of any conflicts of loyalty that they may have in relation to the substance of the complaint.

8.2. If the complaint relates to a named individual, the trustees may inform that person as to the nature of the complaint in the course of their investigation and seek a response from them. The identity of the complainant will not be shared with the subject of the complaint. Sensitive information about the complainant will only be shared with the named individual to the extent that it is necessary to do so for the complaint to be properly investigated.

8.3. Where a complaint relates to a member of staff or an individual trustee, the Church may need to carry out its investigation in accordance with its internal employment/HR policies and governance procedures. The nature of these internal processes, data protection considerations and the expectation of confidentiality that staff are entitled to may mean it is not appropriate to provide the complainant with full details about the process being followed or the outcome of that process, where that has not been agreed to by the staff member. However, we would normally expect to be able to inform the complainant of:

8.3.1. the completion of the initial investigation;

8.3.2. the fact that an internal process is being followed; and

8.3.3. the completion of that internal process.

9. Communication

9.1. Throughout the complaints handling process, clear and transparent communication with the complainant is essential. The Church will use its best endeavours to keep the complainant informed of the progress, any delays, and the final outcome of the investigation.

10. **Closure and follow up**

10.1. Once the complaint is resolved, the trustees will formally close the matter and record the outcome in the complaints register. They may also conduct follow-up checks to ensure that the resolution remains effective.

11. **Appeal**

11.1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint or the way in which the complaint has been handled, they should send a written appeal to the "nominated person" within 3 months of being told of the outcome. If an appeal is raised at a later date, the trustees will decide whether or not it is appropriate to consider it, acting in the best interests of the Church.

11.2. The "nominated person" will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within two weeks.

11.3. The trustees will identify someone other than the original investigator to lead on the appeal process. This person will review the original evidence, the investigation report and the grounds for the appeal set out by the complainant, but will not reinvestigate or open new lines of enquiry, to assess whether or not the original decision was within the range of reasonable conclusions that the trustees could draw, based on the evidence that was available to them.

11.4. The Emmanuel Church Committee will collectively consider the findings of the person conducting the appeal process and will notify the complainant of the outcome. They will aim to do so within 2 months of receipt of the appeal notice or will otherwise provide an update to the complainant within that time, setting out the timescales that will apply.

11.5. The outcome of the appeal will also be recorded in the complaint log.

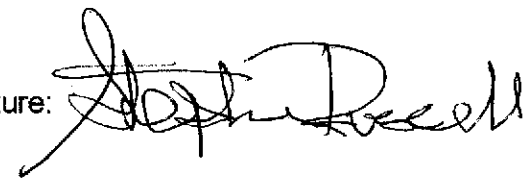
11.6. The appeal decision will be considered final.

12. **Further Steps**

12.1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may complain directly to the Charity Commission whose website sets out the kinds of issues that they can assist with.

13. **Continuous improvement**

13.1. The trustees are committed to continually reviewing and improving the Church's complaints handling process to ensure they can fulfil the Church's charitable purposes effectively and prevent future complaints. Feedback received through the complaints handling process will be analysed, and any necessary adjustments to policies, procedures, or employee training will be implemented.

Signature: 

Date: 24/9/26