

It's all a matter of common sense?

Your leaders are as delightfully human as the rest of the people in our Chaplaincy, and sometimes we may get something wrong. When we do, we need help from the rest of you to put it right. Here's how you can help....

We're really interested in your views, and would like to talk to you about them. If you tell us 'people are saying....' we will then need to know exactly which people, so that we can talk to them as well. We can't talk through you to people we don't know!

Please be aware that a decision may be based on facts we cannot fully share with you, and that we may also be hearing from other people with a passionately held opinion that is exactly the opposite of yours!

Preferring to talk to people who had nothing to do with a decision and have no influence on it simply delays getting anything done about a problem, solves nothing, and could even create division. If people try to do this with you, please encourage them to talk to the right people instead!

Leadership here is a blend of appointed and elected members. The Wardens are directly elected by you each year as a mark of your trust and confidence in them: they are your direct voice in the leadership structure. The Wardens are the people you have elected to listen to and represent your views. *Talk to them!*

You don't have to like a leader, or agree with them, to be blessed by worshipping with them. God is the focus, not personalities. We need to do what we do for the right reasons.

Your Chaplaincy leaders do not have a James Bond-style pool of **hungry sharks** into which we throw people who disagree with us! If you disagree with something, talk to a leader and tell us why, and how you think we could do it better: we're always glad to hear a better idea!



Unless you tell us you aren't, we have to assume you are fine, or at least OK, with what we are doing.



Uncomfortable conversations?

The Bible tells us to 'encourage one another, and build one another up' (1 Thessalonians 5) If you ever find yourself uncomfortable in a particular conversation, especially about someone who isn't there, just ask yourself 'is this encouraging and constructive? Or is it the opposite?'

The problem of grumbling! from thegospelcoalition.org

God takes grumbling seriously. Just consider James's words: "Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door" (James 5:9). We might be quick to think of God's wrath as it relates to sexual sin or lies, but the sin atop James's mind is grumbling.

Do we take grumbling this seriously?

<< To grumble is to leak darkness when we were made to shine. Each of us can think of a grumbler in our family, in our neighbourhood, or in our workplace. They're toxin emitters. Like a black pen leaking in the pocket of a white shirt, they tend to soil every environment they enter. But Christians are being transformed to shine. You are bleach, not ink! >>



We are what we are, a legally registered Church of England Chaplaincy, promising to follow Church of England ways. If we do something else we become something else, and would then need to re-register our changed identity to comply with French registration laws.

We welcome members of many denominations and traditions, and are enriched by their company on our spiritual journey, but we are still what we are. Anglican Christians have varied opinions on all sorts of things, from gender to hymn tunes! Having different opinions can be challenging and enriching, as long as we stay united in the things that truly matter.



Leaders are accountable to the Chaplain, who is accountable to the Bishop. If you think the leaders have exceeded their authority, speak first to the Chaplain, If you still have concerns speak to the Churchwardens, who have authority to take concerns direct to the Bishop if necessary.

Things can go wrong even in the best Church: fortunately there are plenty of ways to put them right!

Something for us all to think and pray about...

- **People join churches for different reasons: some reasons are right and good, some a bit of a mixture, some reasons are bad and harmful.**
- **We want to believe and see the best in people, but that means bad or damaged people sometimes try to join churches and do harm.**
- **Jesus Himself warns Christians about them, calling them 'wolves in sheep's clothing'.**
- **They may 'sound right', and fool people for a long time, but their motives are wrong, and may stem from their own deep problems, and they sometimes get away with doing spiritual, emotional, psychological harm for some time before being recognised.**
- **Wise churches and leaders are aware of the dangers, and need to follow good practice to try to prevent damaged people from damaging others.**

Open to God – open to all

How our Chaplaincy is led

- The Chaplaincy Council meets every two months, and is our annually elected legal decision-making body with defined responsibilities and terms of reference. If you wish to raise any issue with the Chaplaincy Council, speak to a Churchwarden, or contact an officer of the Council.
- Informal Church Committees have no legal powers or set terms of reference. Local Committees organise events and fundraising, and deal with the practicalities of local responsibilities. If you wish to raise any issue with a Church Committee, speak to the Chairperson or a Deputy Warden.

Contact details for all these people can be found on the Chaplaincy website.

.....The Church – it's all of us!