

Complaints Policy and Procedures

23/9/25

1. Introduction

The trustees of the Bricklehampton, Elmley Castle and Netherton Village Community Hall charity ("the Village Hall") wish to make it easy for all users, hirers, suppliers and staff (ie stakeholders) of the village hall to air any complaints they might have. This will enable us to learn and improve our offering and to keep it safe. We define a complaint as a communication either verbally or in writing where the complainant is dissatisfied with some aspect of the operation or physical nature of the Village Hall which needs, or at least appears to need, a remedy.

2. Purpose

Our policy is designed to:

- Provide a complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use
- Ensure complaints are, wherever possible, resolved informally and that relationships are repaired
- Ensure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner
- Gather information that helps us to improve what we do
- Review complaints annually to identify any need for further action.

3. Process

A complaint might be made by any Village Hall stakeholder. All complaints should be taken seriously and handled considerately. They should also be handled with an appropriate degree of confidentiality and discretion.

- a) Informal complaints about minor matters. Typically, these will concern either the physical nature of the village hall and its correct function (lighting, heating, kitchen equipment etc) and will be made to the Secretary. Whether made directly to the Secretary or, say, a trustee, any such complaints should be dealt with at the discretion of the Secretary, consulting with Trustees as necessary. Such complaints should be noted and reported upon periodically so as to identify any trends. They should not be formally logged as complaints.
- b) Formal complaints. Such complaints might arise because an informal complaint has not been resolved, or because a matter is considered sufficiently serious by the complainant for it to be the subject of a formal complaint from the outset, or because the trustees consider it a formal matter. Thus a complaint should be considered as formal if:
 - the complainant expresses a wish to make a formal complaint;
 - a complaint is put in writing (letter or email);
 - the complaint concerns a matter of safety or safeguarding;

- one or more trustees considers it a formal matter.

When a formal complaint is made:

- It should be acknowledged within 24 hours, or as soon as is practical.
- Formal complaints should be handled by the Chair. Where a complaint is about the Chair, it should be handled by the Secretary who should seek support from at least one trustee other than the Chair.
- Details should be recorded and the complainant informed of the Village Hall procedure and how long it is likely to take. The record should include the complainant's name, address, email and/or telephone number, the relationship of the complainant to Village Hall (e.g. hirer, user, contractor, etc.) and the facts of the complaint.

The complaint should be investigated and dealt with, wherever possible, within two weeks. Where this is not possible, a progress report, including an expected time to complete, should be sent. The full response should provide a practical and proportionate level of detail about the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions drawn and about any action taken as a result of the complaint.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the result, a request can be made for a review of the complaint by the Board of Trustees at their next scheduled meeting (the Chair has the discretion to call a special meeting of the Board if the circumstances warrant it). Complainants should be notified of the date of the relevant meeting and expect to hear the outcome within a week of that date. If the complaint relates to a specific person, he or she should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond. The decision taken at this stage is final.

- c) Vexatious complaints. Should the secretary or any trustee consider a complaint of any kind to be vexatious, abusive or made in bad faith, the Chair should be informed and a decision taken as to how best to respond. The Board is not under any obligation to investigate any such complaint.

Any stakeholder can complain about the Village Hall to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-charities>.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Signature, Michael Taite, Chair:



Date: 23/9/25

Signature, Jeanette Smith, Secretary:

Date: