

## **COMPLAINT POLICY FOR WIDECOMBE COMMUNITY HALL CIO**

### **Introduction**

We aim to maintain high standards in all that we do but recognise that we can sometimes get things wrong, despite our best intentions.

Widcombe Community Hall Charity views a complaint as an opportunity to put things right for the person making the complaint, and to improve the services and activities that Widcombe Community Hall Charity offers. We would not be able to do so or learn for the future if we did not receive feedback when things go wrong. Therefore we value and take seriously any feedback we receive.

Generally, the purpose of this Complaints Procedure is to resolve disputes informally without resorting to formal investigation or legal proceedings. We will try to explore every reasonable option to resolve complaints by working with the person making the complaint to agree an outcome which is satisfactory to them and Widcombe Community Hall Charity.

Whether your complaint is justified or not, our reply to you will describe the action we have taken to investigate the complaint, conclusions we have reached as a result of the investigation, and any action we have taken or are taking as a result of your complaint.

We will ensure that all information received and produced in connection with a complaint is treated as confidential and handled sensitively, that only those who need to know have access to that information, and that relevant data protection requirements are all met.

All complaint information is passed promptly to our Charity secretary and he/she reports on them to our trustees at the next trustee meeting.

The information below sets out our Complaints Procedure.

### **Complaint**

A 'complaint' in this Procedure means any expression of dissatisfaction in relation to Widcombe Community Hall Charity that requires a response from Widcombe Community Hall Charity.

### **Where complaints may come from**

Complaints may come from a number of sources, including, but not exclusively, users of the Charity's services and activities - organisers, performers and/or attendees; members of the local community; suppliers and/or contractors, or any other person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in Widcombe Community Hall Charity.

## **Complaints which cannot be dealt with under this Procedure**

This Procedure is only for the above type of external complaint, not for complaints or grievances from staff, volunteers or trustees.

Whilst complainants are generally entitled to receive responses to a complaint and to challenge any responses received from Widecombe Community Hall Charity, it will not deal with complaints or challenges where in the reasonable opinion of the Chair of trustees they amount to persistent, habitual or vexatious complaints or challenges.

Widecombe Community Hall Charity expects any complainant to be polite and courteous. It will not tolerate aggressive, abusive or unreasonable behaviour or demands.

## **How to make a complaint**

### **First Stage**

If you have a complaint you can contact us in person or by phone, email, or letter.

To help us investigate and address all complaints, we ask you to provide us with as much information as possible. This should cover:

- The nature of your complaint
- Where, when and what you are complaining about happened
- The name(s) of anyone involved (if known)
- What outcome you are hoping for (but we are not obliged to resolve the complaint in that way)
- Your contact details (name, address, daytime telephone number and/or email address) and preferred method of contact.

Who you should contact within Widecombe Community Hall Charity will depend on how you decide to make contact, and about who you wish to make a complaint. We have indicated below who you can contact.

### **Verbal complaints**

You can make a complaint by telephone or by speaking to us in person in any of the following ways, during office hours. (Mon.-Fri. 09:30 - 17:00)

Phone us on 01364 621230

- If your complaint is about our Chair of trustees, ask to speak to our Vice Chair of trustees.
- If your complaint is about our Charity Secretary, ask to speak to our Chair of trustees.
- For any other complaint, ask to speak to our Charity Secretary.

They will either speak to you about the complaint or, if they are not the appropriate person to do so, they will arrange for the appropriate person to speak to you on the phone.

**Complaints in writing**

If you do not feel that you can approach any of the above verbally for any reason, you can instead write to us as follows.

Either by letter addressed to:

Charity Secretary  
Widecombe Community Hall Charity  
Old Walls  
Ponsworthy  
Newton Abbot  
Devon TQ13 7FA

or by email to him/her at [wch.secretarymail@gmail.com](mailto:wch.secretarymail@gmail.com)

Once that person has initially received your complaint, we will normally deal with it as follows:

Who the complaint is about to you about it.

Who will investigate, deal with, and respond

Chair of trustees

Vice Chair of trustees

Charity Secretary

Chair of trustees

Any other associated person (eg trustee, volunteer, supplier)

Charity Secretary or appropriate Trustee

any other reason

Charity Secretary or appropriate Trustee

**Timescales for all First Stage complaints made by phone, in person or in writing.**

We will try to resolve the problem as quickly as possible but if we cannot do this (for example, if we need to investigate further), we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within the following timescale:

- within 48 hours on receipt of your complaint, or the following Monday if received on a Friday.
- If your preferred method of contact is by letter, the letter of acknowledgement will be sent within 48 Hours or the following Monday.

Our acknowledgement will inform you of when we will next contact you either with a proposed resolution or update. It will also inform you of the name of the person dealing with your complaint. That person will then investigate and deal with it and then respond to you with their definitive reply.

You should receive that definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

## **Second stage**

If for any reason, you are not happy with the resolution of your complaint under the First Stage procedure outlined above, and wish to take your complaint further, please contact the Chair of trustees within 28 days of receiving the definitive reply we sent to you under the First Stage.

Please contact him/her by letter or email as set out in the First Stage.

Please set out clearly the details of the complaint, explaining why you were not satisfied with our response under the First Stage and what you would like us to do to put things right.

You will receive an acknowledge within 5 working days.

Your case will then be passed to a panel of at least three trustees (not including any trustee about whom the complaint was made or the trustee who investigated and responded to you under the First Stage). The panel will further investigate your complaint and will contact you with their conclusions and any actions to be taken.

You can expect this to take a further 20 working days from the date on which we receive your letter or email request to implement the Second Stage.

## **Follow up**

In order for us to make improvements to Widecombe Community Hall Charity and its services and activities, we may wish to contact you within a month of your complaint being dealt with in order to check that you were satisfied with our resolution. Any information you give will be handled in a confidential manner.

## **Taking your complaint outside Widecombe Community Hall Charity**

### **The Fundraising Regulator**

If your complaint is about our fundraising work and you are not satisfied with our response, you are entitled to take it to the Fundraising Regulator. Their contact details are:

Fundraising Regulator  
2nd Floor CAN Mezzanine Building  
49-51 East Road,  
London N1 6AH

Tel: 0300 999 3407

Website: [www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk](http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk)

### **Charity Commission**

If your complaint is about any aspect of our charitable work other than our fundraising, you may wish to contact the Charity Commission. However, we suggest that, before you do so, you consider whether it is appropriate to contact the Commission in the first instance rather than ourselves. The Commission has guidance on its website as to when to direct complaints to a charity and not to the Commission. Their contact details are:

Charity Commission Direct,  
PO Box 1227,  
Liverpool, L69 3UG

Tel: 0845 300 0218

Website: [www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx)  
and

[www.charitycommission.gov.uk/contact-us/general-enquiries/report-a-concern-about-a-charity](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/contact-us/general-enquiries/report-a-concern-about-a-charity)

### **Other Authorities**

The Charity Commission guidance to the public states that:

- if you believe there is criminal activity within a charity, you should inform the police
- if you suspect fraud connected to a charity, you should report it using the Action Fraud Online Reporting Service at [http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud) or call 0300 123 2040
- if you have information about possible terrorist activity connected to a charity, you should report it to the Anti-terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321.

If a complaint relates to your personal data, it may be appropriate to contact the Office of the Information Commissioner.

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