

# Complaints Policy

Widcombe Community Hall CIO (registered charity no. 1182621) • Public policy

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## Introduction

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

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

Generally, the purpose of this 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 that is satisfactory to them and to the Charity.

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

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 it, and that all relevant data protection requirements are met.

All complaint information is passed promptly to our Charity Secretary, who reports on complaints to our Trustees at the next Trustee meeting.

## What we mean by a complaint

A “complaint” in this policy means any expression of dissatisfaction in relation to the Charity that requires a response from the Charity.

## Where complaints may come from

Complaints may come from a number of sources, including (but not limited to) 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 with a legitimate interest in the Charity.

## Complaints which cannot be dealt with under this policy

This policy is only for the type of external complaint described above. It is 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, the Charity will not deal with complaints or challenges that, in the reasonable opinion of the Chair of Trustees, amount to persistent, habitual or vexatious complaints or challenges.

The Charity expects any complainant to be polite and courteous. We 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 your complaint, please give us as much information as possible. This should cover:

- the nature of your complaint;
- where, when and what happened;
- the name(s) of anyone involved (if known);
- what outcome you are hoping for (although 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 will depend on how you decide to make contact, and on who your complaint is about, as indicated below.

### Verbal complaints

You can make a complaint by telephone, or by speaking to us in person, during office hours (Monday to Friday, 09:30–17:00). Please 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, arrange for the appropriate person to contact you.

### Complaints in writing

If you do not feel able to approach any of the above verbally, you can instead write to us.

By letter addressed to: Charity Secretary, Widecombe Community Hall CIO, Old Walls, Ponsworthy, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ13 7FA.

Or by email to: [info@widecombecommunityhall.org](mailto:info@widecombecommunityhall.org).

Once we have received your complaint, we will normally deal with it as follows:

| Who the complaint is about                                          | Who will investigate and respond                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| The Chair of Trustees                                               | The Vice Chair of Trustees                      |
| The Charity Secretary                                               | The Chair of Trustees                           |
| Any other associated person (e.g. a Trustee, volunteer or supplier) | The Charity Secretary or an appropriate Trustee |
| Any other matter                                                    | The Charity Secretary or an appropriate Trustee |

### Timescales for all first-stage complaints

We will try to resolve the problem as quickly as possible. If we cannot do this (for example, because we need to investigate further), we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 48 hours, 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 the same timescale.

Our acknowledgement will tell you when we will next contact you, either with a proposed resolution or an update, and will give you the name of the person dealing with your complaint. That person will then investigate and respond with their definitive reply.

You should receive that definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible — for example, because an investigation has not been 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 and wish to take it further, please contact the Chair of Trustees within 28 days of receiving our definitive reply. Please write by letter or email, as set out above.

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

You will receive an acknowledgement 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 under the first stage). The panel will further investigate your complaint and 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 we receive your request to begin the second stage.

## Follow up

To help us improve the Charity and its services and activities, we may contact you within a month of your complaint being dealt with to check that you were satisfied with our resolution. Any information you give will be handled confidentially.

## Taking your complaint outside the Charity

If you remain dissatisfied after our internal process, you may be able to refer your complaint to one of the following bodies.

### The Fundraising Regulator

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

- Fundraising Regulator, 50 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8RT
- Telephone: 0300 999 3407
- [www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk](http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk)

### The Charity Commission

If your complaint is about any aspect of our charitable work other than fundraising, you may wish to contact the Charity Commission. Before doing so, please consider whether it is appropriate to raise the matter with us first; the Commission's website has guidance on when to direct complaints to a charity rather than to the Commission.

- Telephone: 0300 066 9197 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)
- Report a concern about a charity: [www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity)

## Other authorities

The Charity Commission's 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 to the Report Fraud service (which replaced Action Fraud from December 2025) at [www.reportfraud.police.uk](http://www.reportfraud.police.uk), or by calling 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 your complaint relates to your personal data, it may be appropriate to contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO): [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk), helpline 0303 123 1113.

— End of Policy —

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