



Cause for Complaint?

Complaints Policy

Contents

Introduction

Definition of Complaint

Where do Complaints Come From

Confidentiality Assured

Responsibility

What to Do If Something Goes Wrong: Step 1 Informal

Unable to Address Your Concerns Right Away: Step 2 Formal

If You Are Not Satisfied with Our Response: Stage 3

Final Stage 4

Variation of Complaints Procedure

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

What This Policy Does Not Cover

Introduction

Hook Village Halls Charitable Association (HVHCA) is a registered Charity that has been created for the management of Hook's two village halls – The Elizabeth Hall and Hook Community Centre.

The company's objects are stated in its Memorandum of Association as:

“To provide or assist in the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for the benefit of the inhabitants of Hook Parish and within its vicinity for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals including those who have the need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age infirmity or disability, financial hardship or social circumstances with the object of improving their conditions of life;

To advance education and the religious and intellectual development of the members of the community; and

Such other charitable purposes as the Charity's officers in their discretion shall see fit for exclusively charitable objects or purposes in any part of Hook Parish.

The halls are managed by a small team of part time staff with a volunteer board of trustee directors.

The village halls are a vibrant hub of village life and the association's aim is to continue to provide much-needed public facilities to enable the residents and community organisations of Hook and surrounding villages to meet and pursue their mutual interests and thus enhance the social welfare of the community in general. Many of the regular users are charitable or not-for-profit organisations.

Whilst we would like everyone who comes into contact with the village halls to enjoy a positive experience, we recognise that on rare occasions satisfaction may fall below that which we aspire to and on such occasions, we have outlined how we will deal with any complaints, formal or informal, so we might learn from these and where appropriate, change how we do things to avoid any repetition.

We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person (or organisation) that has made the complaint. Our policy is intended to:

- Provide a transparent and fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- Publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- Make sure everyone in HVHCA knows what to do if a complaint is received
- Make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- Make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved quickly and that relationships remain healthy, so all our customers benefit
- Gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of HVHCA.

The Trustees expect to hear about a complaint within three months of any incident.

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from members of the public or persons and organisations using the hall, local residents or suppliers or their representative. A complaint can be received verbally, face to face or by phone (in which case we will keep a note of your complaint), by email or by letter.

Confidentiality Assured

All complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially, telling only those whom need to know and follow any relevant data protection requirements.

The Trustees will not discriminate in any way in their dealings with handling complaints.

Whoever you speak to regarding your complaint, they will be respectful, calm and listen or understand your complaint. We may seek clarification on some details in order to help you more effectively.

Once we have listened to your complaint we will repeat this back to you to ensure we have understood correctly. We will also ask what a successful resolution will look like from your point of view.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Trustees.

What to do if Something Goes Wrong: Step 1 – Informal

If your complaint cannot be resolved by an HVHCA member of staff, it is important to us that you make your concerns known to the Village Halls Manager at the earliest opportunity so that we might understand your concerns and seek to address these right away. We know from experience that if we have an understanding early enough we can often put matters right so that your experience is a positive one, as it should be.

The Village Halls Manager can be contacted on.... or email
john.watson@hookvillagehalls.org.uk

Written complaints may be sent to John Watson, Hook Village Halls Charitable Association, Hook Community Centre, Ravenscroft, Hook, RG27 9NN.

If your complaint is about the Village Halls Manager, it will be passed to the Director responsible for HR to deal with in the first instance.

All complaints received will be recorded and retained in line with data protection legislation and confidentiality assured.

The Village Halls Manager will seek to establish all the facts quickly and act in everyone's best interests. If required, there may be a need to raise your concern with a Trustee which may take a

little time, depending on their availability. Please remember, Trustees give of their time free and are keen to ensure the charity and all the activities associated with the halls are successful.

If We Can't Address Your Concerns Right Away: Step 2 – Formal

Sometimes, even prompt action can't put right something you might be dissatisfied about. In these circumstances, please put your concerns in writing via letter or email, making clear all the associated facts with your complaint, including for example:

- All the facts related to the complaint
- Your name, address, telephone number and/or email address so we might contact you in the way that suits you best
- Please help us to understand your relationship with Hook Village Halls, e.g. hall user, local resident, etc.

Once we have received your complaint and all the related details, we will first acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days or sooner. We will send you a copy of this complaints policy and to confirm how we handle your complaint.

We will take steps to speak to any other party involved to ensure everyone has a fair opportunity to put their perspective forward. Where we have to gather information, which may take a little time, we will do so and respond to you no later than two weeks after receiving your complaint. If your complaint is complex, we will agree a timescale with you that may be longer than this, sharing the steps required so everyone understand why this is necessary.

In responding to your complaint, we will share with you what action we have taken, the conclusions we have reached from any investigation and any action resulting from your complaint.

If You are Not Satisfied with our Response: Stage 3

If you believe your complaint hasn't been satisfactorily resolved then you can request that your complaint be reviewed by the Board of Trustees at their next formal meeting. It is important that you respond within a month of receiving our letter of outcome and conclusion so we can expedite the matter effectively.

This should be addressed to the Chairman, who will designate two Trustees to review your complaint and our initial response. Once it is known who will review your complaint, we will write and acknowledge this. The review will take no more than four weeks, unless it is especially complex, in which case, we will agree a timescale with you. All related parties will be kept informed at each stage, so everyone know where we are.

Complaints: Final Stage 4

Should you still be dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, the Chairman and Board of Trustees will review your complaint (excluding those who undertook Stage 2 Review). Any action and decision taken at this time will constitute full and final response to your complaint. In very unusual circumstances, we might ask an external third party to review your complaint.

All complainants have the right to approach the Charity Commission at any stage, although they will seek to ensure you have tried to resolve the matter locally first. The Charity Commission details are available from their website at www.charitycommission.gov.uk

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure on occasion for good reason, for example, to avoid any conflict of interest.

Repeated and Vexatious Complaints

In the event of repeated or vexatious complaints, the Board of Trustees will write and acknowledge the number of complaints received, actions and decision taken, the reasons for the decisions and actions, together with the amount of time taken to this point, which must be disproportionate to the complaint.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints will be reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action or change the way we operate.

What this Policy Does Not Cover

This Complaints Policy does cover any issue related either someone employed, under contract, or is volunteering for the Charity.