

## **Horsley Village Hall** **Complaints Policy**

Horsley Village Hall Trustees are committed to maintaining a strong partnership with members of the local community and the users of Horsley Village Hall.

We are open to feedback and comments about our work, both positive and negative, as these can provide us with valuable information about our effectiveness and how we can better meet our aims.

If any user of Horsley Village Hall or member of the local community is unhappy about the standard of service provided, the quality of the facilities within the Hall, the safety of users, the handling of a particular situation or issue, or any other matter, Horsley Village Hall Trustees would wish to work to rectify this.

Horsley Village Hall Trustees are committed to equal opportunities and we take complaints about discrimination very seriously. The adoption of a clear complaints' procedure will help the Horsley Village Hall Trustees to ensure that most complaints are resolved quickly, smoothly and as close to the source of the misunderstanding or problem as possible.

### **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 all Horsley Village Hall Trustees know 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.

## **Complaints, confidentiality and responsibility**

### **Definition of a complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Horsley Village Hall. The Trustees expect they will 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, contractors, or their representatives. 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**

All complaints will be managed sensitively and confidentially, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

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

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Whoever you speak to regarding your complaint will be respectful, calm and listen to you. We will take notes to record the facts so we can deal with your complaint. We may seek clarification on some details to help you more effectively.

Once we have listened to your complaint, we will repeat this back to you to ensure we have understood this 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 Horsley Village Hall Trustees.

The Trustees aim to acknowledge complaints within five working days and give a full response to complainants within two weeks. If the complaint is judged to involve complex issues, complainants will be informed within two weeks when they can expect a full response. The main aim throughout the process is to resolve the matter as quickly and effectively as possible, to everybody's satisfaction.

### **Procedure for handling complaints**

#### **What to do if something goes wrong: Step 1 – Informal**

Informal complaints should be raised with the Chairperson (Stevie Glover) who will resolve minor issues quickly and appropriately. If the complaint is about the Chairperson, then the Deputy Chair (Alex Spurr) will act to resolve the complaint.

Any claims for compensation must be reviewed and agreed by the Trustees.

Complainants who remain dissatisfied at this stage will be informed that they can make a formal complaint. A Complaints Form is attached in Appendix 1.

#### **If we cannot address your concerns right away: Step 2 – Formal**

Sometimes, even prompt action cannot put right something you might be dissatisfied about. In these circumstances, please put your concerns in writing via email at [complaints@horsleyvhall.org](mailto:complaints@horsleyvhall.org) or via paper copy posted to Horsley Village Hall, Main Street, Horsley, NE15 0NT 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 email address so we might contact you in the way that suits you best.
- Your relationship with Horsley Village Hall, e.g. hall user, hirer, local resident etc.

Once we have received your complaint and all the related details, we will first acknowledge your complaint within five working days or sooner.

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 must gather information which may take a little time, we will do so and respond to you not later than four 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 understands why this is necessary.

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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. A guide for Trustees is attached in Appendix 2.

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## **Appendix 1:** **Gathering Information**

### About your complaint

Date:

The facts about your complaint:

How you would like to be contacted:

Name:

Address:

Email address:

Telephone:

Mobile:

Progress and contact record:

## **Appendix 2**

### **Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints**

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation.
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam".
- Do not debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry.
- Show an interest in what is being said.
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details.
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary.
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down.
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you".
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise.
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue.
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Do not promise things you cannot deliver.
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met.
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told.
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal.