

TOWNLEY MEMORIAL HALL TRUST

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Part 1 – General Statement of Policy

- 1.1. This document is the Complaints Policy of the Townley Memorial Hall Trust (Fulbourn Centre).
- 1.2. Townley Memorial Hall views 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.
- 1.3. Our policy is:
 - 1.3.1 To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone making a complaint
 - 1.3.2 To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
 - 1.3.3 To make sure everyone at the Fulbourn Centre knows what to do if a complaint is received.
 - 1.3.4 To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
 - 1.3.5 To make sure that all complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
 - 1.3.6 To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.
- 1.4. Definition of a Complaint
 - 1.4.1 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the operation of the Fulbourn Centre or of the Trustees, directors or staff of the Fulbourn Centre.
 - 1.4.2 Complaints may come from any person, user or organisation that has a legitimate interest in the Fulbourn Centre.
 - 1.4.3 A complaint can be received verbally, by telephone, by email or in writing.
 - 1.4.4 This policy does not cover complaints from staff who should use Townley Memorial Hall's Discipline and Grievance Policy.
- 1.5. All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following data protection requirements.
- 1.6. Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Trust Management Committee.
- 1.7. The Management Committee will review this policy annually. The next review is due in January 2020.

Approved by the Management Committee on: 20/7/16

Name: Richard Townley
Position: Chair

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2. Part 2 – Complaints Procedure

- 2.1. Contact Details for Complaints
- 2.2. Written complaints may be sent to Townley Memorial Hall at the Fulbourn Centre, Home End, Fulbourn, Cambridge C821 SBS or by email at fulbourncentrebookins@gmail.com.
- 2.3. Verbal complaints may be made by telephone to 07954 427681 or in person to any Trustees or staff of Townley Memorial Hall Trust. This does not include the staff of the Fulbourn Institute.
- 2.4. Complaints received by telephone, or in person will to be recorded. The person who receives a telephone or in person complaint will:
 - 2.4.1 Write down the facts of the complaint.
 - 2.4.2 Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number.
 - 2.4.3 Note the relationship of the complainant to the Fulbourn Centre eg. as a visitor, user or representing an organization.
 - 2.4.4 Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure.
 - 2.4.5 Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take.
 - 2.4.6 Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidance about handling verbal complaints see Appendix" 1.

3. Part 3 - Resolving Complaints – Internal Stage 1

- 3.1. In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.
- 3.2. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Administrator or her Assistant within a week.
- 3.3. On receiving the complaint, the Administrator will record it in the Complaints Log. If it has not already been resolved, the Administrator will refer it to the Management Committee Chair, Vice Chair or Treasurer to delegate to an appropriate person to investigate and take action.
- 3.4. Where a complaint relates to a specific person, that person should be informed of the complaint and given a fair opportunity to respond, subject to maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality to protect the complainant.
- 3.5. Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. A copy of this complaint's procedure should be attached.
- 3.6. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- 3.7. Whether the complaint upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

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4. Part 4 - Resolving Complaints – Internal Stage 2

- 4.1. If the complainant feels the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by the Management Committee. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair, or should the Chair be the subject of or implicated in the complaint to the Vice Chair, the Treasurer or another independent Trustee to ensure the complaint can be addressed without Conflict of Interest.
- 4.2. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.
- 4.3. The Chair may investigate the facts of the case himself or delegate another Trustee to do so. This may involve reviewing paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage 1.
- 4.4. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.
- 4.5. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.
- 4.6. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- 4.7. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.
- 4.8. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Management Committee decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance for resolution.

5. Part 5 - Resolving Complaints – External Stage

- 5.1. The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage.
- 5.2. The management Committee may at any time decide to refer the complaint to the Charity Commission.
- 5.3. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in and the process to be followed can be found on their website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission/about/complaints-procedure>

6. Part 6 – Learning from Complaints

- 6.1. Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

APPENDIX 1 — PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR HANDLING VERBAL COMPLAINTS

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