

ST BOSWELLS VILLAGE HALL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

St Boswells Village Hall SCIO aims to provide and maintain the Village Hall and to organise activities for the benefit of the inhabitants of St Boswells and environs in the Scottish Borders, without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, for recreation, leisure and educational purposes of all kinds with the objective of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants. Complaints and suggestions can be made about both the services St Boswells Village Hall provides, and those that it is considered should be provided, together with any actions involving the organisation's employees, members of its Board (including trustees, members and office-bearers), and authorized volunteers.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES & PROCEDURES

- 1 The Board of St Boswells Village Hall will manage our resources to best effect in delivering the organisation's purposes as stated above, providing services for individuals and organisations in the abovementioned area, and striving to make considered and fair decisions about priorities.
- 2 We will plan, provide and deliver services in a non-discriminatory way.
- 3 We will inform users of our services of our Complaints Procedure and enable them to make easy use of it should they wish to do so.
- 4 Complaints will be handled with due regard to confidentiality. We recognise that making a formal complaint is a stressful experience, and will endeavour to relieve this as far as possible. Complaints and suggestions will be handled sensitively within the framework of the Complaints Procedure. You may involve a representative or colleague both in supporting you to make your complaint and in any meetings where the complaints procedures are activated.
- 5 Many complaints will be dealt with informally. The policy of 'frontline resolution' applies in respect of issues that are straightforward and easily resolved, requiring little or no investigation. Informal complaints will be recorded, and used for monitoring purposes, as they are part of the organisation's Complaints Procedure. For formal complaints, see below, 'Handling of complaints'.
- 6 The Complaints Procedure will be part of the process of monitoring the quality, effectiveness and non-discriminatory nature of St Boswells Village Hall's services. It will be monitored periodically by the Board's office-holders to check its effectiveness and efficiency, and will contribute to organisational planning.
- 7 The Board's Secretary will keep a complaints book for the recording of all complaints and suggestions, and provide an annual summary report on complaints received, and actions taken, to the Board. The complaints book and all relevant correspondence will be treated as confidential material, and held securely.

HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS

- 1 The Chairperson of St Boswells Village Hall's Board will hold the responsibilities of 'Complaints Officer' for the organisation.
- 2 Complaints may be made to any member of the Board. Should the complainant wish to make a formal complaint or suggestion, it must be put in writing, either by them or, with the complainant's agreement, by another office bearer. It will then be referred to the Board's Chairperson. Alternatively, formal complaints or suggestions may be made, in writing, directly to the Chairperson.
- 3 In any case, the Chairperson will acknowledge receipt within 4 working days, send you a copy of St Boswells Village Hall's Complaints Procedure, and investigate your complaint in full consultation with the Board. In normal circumstances, you will receive a written response within 2 working weeks. This will inform you of the outcome of your complaint.
- 4 In most instances, complaints will be dealt with under the leadership of the Chairperson. The principle of collective responsibility applies here, as in other areas of SCIO management. 'The group shares the responsibility equally. No individual charity trustee, for example the Chair or Treasurer, has more responsibility than the other charity trustees do'. <https://www.oscr.org.uk/managing-a-charity/trustee-duties/> Therefore dealing with any complaint is the responsibility of the Board as a whole.
- 5 All correspondence relating to the complaint will be made available to the Board. Any formal response to a complainant will come from the Board as a whole and be approved by it. We will refer to the terms of the Complaints Procedure when responding to complaints.
- 6 In the case of a complaint involving the Chairperson, the Secretary will lead the investigation.
- 7 In the case of a complaint involving a Board member, that person shall be excluded from the investigation (which shall involve all the other members of the Board).
- 8 In the event of a complaint about a Village Hall Board member, employee or authorized volunteer being upheld, decisions taken about disciplinary action will be taken separately from the operation of the Complaints Procedure. Implementation of disciplinary procedures will be a separate action of management. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action initiated as the result of their use of the Complaints Procedure, as such action does not fall within the parameters of the Complaints Procedure.

CAUSES FOR COMPLAINT

Whilst St Boswells Village Hall will not prescribe causes for complaints, examples of possible reasons are laid out below. The organisation will respond to any complaints and suggestions about the services it offers, the actions of its officers and staff, and services that have not been received, and that, in the view of the complainant, should have been available.

Examples of Causes for Complaint

- Have you been refused a service requested from St Boswells Village Hall?
- Do you feel dissatisfied with any service given by St Boswells Village Hall?
- Are you unhappy with the way you have been treated by St Boswells Village Hall's Board members or staff?
- Do you wish to challenge a decision or statement made, or an action taken, by the Board of St Boswells Village Hall?
- Have you any suggestions which you would wish to make to help St Boswells Village Hall improve and develop its practices and services?

ALLEGATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

- 1 In the case of an allegation of discrimination (in respect of, for example, disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender identity), the principles outlined on this Equality & Human Rights Commission website will be followed: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/reporting-race-hate-crime>
- 2 If someone is claiming unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation, then the burden of proof begins with them. They must prove enough facts from which the Board can decide that the discrimination, harassment or victimisation has taken place.
- 3 Given this information, in the first instance the Chair and Secretary, acting together, will make a realistic assessment about whether what has been done amounts to unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation. If they judge that this is indeed the case, then an investigation shall be conducted as a matter of urgency, involving the entire Board.

FOLLOW-UP AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

- 1 If a written reply is inappropriate or insufficient you will be offered the opportunity to meet with the Chairperson of St Boswells Village Hall and another Office-Bearer to discuss the matter in detail, in an attempt to reach a satisfactory outcome.

- 2 If you are not satisfied with the outcome or response to your complaint you may appeal to the Board. This should be done within a maximum period of twenty-eight days of receiving written notification of the outcome of your complaint. The Board will normally appoint a small working group from among its membership, to deal with the complaint. Their recommendation shall be made to the entire Board, which will be responsible for the final decision. You will be informed of the outcome as quickly as possible. This decision will be final as far as the organisation is concerned.