

THE ROBERT THOMPSON CHARITIES AT SALTWOOD, KENT

Registered number: 1194270

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY; SALTWOOD VILLAGE HALL

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy applies to the Trustees of The Robert Thompson Charities in relation to their ownership and management of the Saltwood Village Hall. The Policy seeks to ensure that the Charity's Customer Feedback and Complaints processes are fair, consistent, and flexible, and responsive to the needs of the Hall's hirers and users; hereafter in this Policy referred to collectively as "Users".

Feedback

- 1.2 We value and welcome feedback about our services. This includes any comment you wish to make based on your experience of using the Charity's services. Customer feedback enables the Charity to understand what works well (and should therefore be repeated) as well as to identify improvements we can make in the way we deliver our services. Gathering customer feedback helps us achieve our ambition to refine our services to meet and exceed our customers' expectations. Compliments for outstanding service enable us to give credit to the staff involved, and share their good practice across the Charity, so other customers can benefit from the same excellent service.
- 1.3 Feedback can be provided to the Charity Manager, to our other staff, or to the Trustees, by telephone, face-to-face, by email, or by letter or other means of correspondence. Any feedback received by us will be acknowledged, normally within 10 working days from the date of receipt by the Charity Manager, if contact details have been provided.

Complaints

- 1.4 We recognise that sometimes the Charity may get it wrong and a User will make a complaint. Where things go wrong, we value complaints and treat them as an opportunity to put things right, and to review what we do to reduce the likelihood of the same thing going wrong again. We will always thoroughly investigate any complaint we receive and see what lessons we can learn to serve our Users better.
- 1.5 A complaint is defined as: "an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the Charity, its Trustees, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual User or group of Users.
- 1.6 The word "complaint" does not need to be used expressly for the matter to be considered a complaint. Whenever a User expresses dissatisfaction, the Charity must give them the option to make a complaint. Complaints made by Users may be made by a representative of a User, and these must be handled in line with the Charity's Complaints Policy.
- 1.7 Complaints should normally be made to the Charity Manager. In cases where this would lead to a conflict of interests or the complaint relates to the Charity Manager, a complaint may be made to the Chairman of Trustees. Contact details are provided at Section 5.

- 1.8 An informal complaint can be made Face to Face or on the telephone, and in most cases, can be dealt with informally, quickly, and efficiently and to the User's satisfaction. A formal complaint must be made in writing by email or letter unless, in exceptional circumstances, agreed otherwise.
- 1.9 A service request is a request from a User requiring action to be taken to put something right. (e.g., to carry out routine maintenance etc.) Service requests are not complaints, but may be regarded as feedback, as outlined above.
- 1.10 In dealing with complaints the Charity will ensure that:
- (a) individuals who raise a complaint are listened to and treated with courtesy and empathy;
 - (b) Users will never be disadvantaged as a result of raising a complaint;
 - (c) complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, honestly, and openly; and
 - (d) in dealing with complaints the Charity will comply with confidentiality and data protection policies.

2. Exclusions

- 2.1 The Charity must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so and will consider each complaint in context.
- 2.2 The following matters will not be considered as complaints:
- (a) The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.
 - (b) Legal proceedings have begun as defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at Court.
 - (c) Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.
 - (d) the complainant is anonymous, unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to substantiate the complaint.
- 2.3 If a complaint is not accepted, a detailed explanation will be provided to the User setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process.
- 2.4 The Charity reserves the right to close the complaint in the following circumstances:
- (a) If a complaint is pursued unreasonably or where a complainant's actions or behaviours are deemed to be unreasonable.
 - (b) If a complainant displays threatening or abusive behaviour or language (whether verbal or written), that causes staff or Trustees to feel threatened, abused and/or continues to contact the Charity with unreasonable demands during/following a complaint investigation, a complaint may be closed and, if the complainant is a hirer, this may be grounds for future hirings to be terminated.

- (c) In cases where the Trustees bring the complaint to an end in accordance with this section of the policy, they will inform the complainant of their reasons.

3. Accessibility and awareness

- 3.1 Complaints will be dealt with in a manner that is consistent with the Charity's Equality & Diversity Policy and the Charity's duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 If any individual making a complaint wishes the Charity to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate an individual's particular needs, they, or their representative, should contact the Charity's representative, in this case by phone or by email or in person to discuss what adjustments may be possible.
- 3.3 The complaints handling policy will be published on the Saltwood Village Hall website and in the Hall on the notice board.
- 3.4 Users will have the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting where their complaint is being considered. We will always follow data protection measures when disclosing any information to a third party.

4. Complaints process

- 4.1 Complaints will be investigated by the Complaints Officer appointed by the Trustees upon receiving the complaint.
- 4.2 The Complaints Officer will acknowledge the complaint and make a record, usually within 5 working days. Where the 5 day timescale is not achievable, a reasonable alternative timescale will be set out to the complainant. The acknowledgement will:
 - (a) summarise the Charity's understanding of the complaint
 - (b) make clear which aspects of the complaint the Charity is, and is not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear;
 - (c) summarise the Charity's understanding of what the Complainant is seeking as an outcome;
 - (d) raise any questions that require clarification from the Complainant; and
 - (e) set out the next course of action and anticipated timescale.
- 4.3 The Charity will usually issue a full response within 20 working days from the complaint being acknowledged. In exceptional cases, if the Complaints Officer anticipates that the complaint will take longer to resolve, this will be explained to the User with a clear timeframe set out for the resolution of the complaint. If any further extensions are required, this will be in agreement with the User, who will be updated at regular intervals.
- 4.4 The Complaints Officer will investigate the complaint in an impartial manner permitting all relevant parties to provide information. The User and any third parties involved in the complaint should be given the opportunity to set out their position before any final

decision is made. The Complaints Officer may delegate the management and investigation of the complaint to another individual.

- 4.5 The Charity will seek to resolve the complaint as a matter of urgency.
- 4.6 If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, they have 15 working days to submit a written appeal, and the appeal will be handled by the Chairman of Trustees, who will convene a special meeting at the earliest reasonable opportunity following the appeal being submitted.
- 4.7 Receipt of the appeal will be acknowledged within 10 working days, outlining the proposed timescale for the appeal to be heard.
- 4.8 The Chairman of Trustees, or a Trustee appointed by the Chairman, will respond in writing to the complainant within 10 working days of the decision at the Special Meeting advising of the Trustees' decision and any action to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- 4.9 The decision of the Trustees will be final.

5 Contact details for the purposes of this Policy

Charity Manager: Lana Wright,
Contact number: 07486597551
email: robertthompsoncharities@gmail.com
Postal Address: The Robert Thompson Charities, c/o Magee Gammon,
Henwood House, Henwood, Ashford. TN24 8DH

The legal name of the Charity: The Robert Thompson Charities at Saltwood, Kent - CIO

Chairman of Trustees: Miss Susan J Carey (Email and postal address as above.)

6 Annual Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees of the Robert Thompson Charities at Saltwood, Kent

Signature:

Name:

Position:

Date:

