



Farningham Village Hall

Complaints Policy

v4 of 27.02.23

Summary

FVH has this policy to ensure openness and fairness in our service to users. In the event that something does not meet with the satisfaction of a user, every effort will be made to resolve this as soon as possible. If the user is still not satisfied, then a formal process will follow using the checklist at the end of this policy document.

Policy

The Farningham Village Hall (FVH) Management Committee is committed to maintaining its strong partnership with members of the local community and the users of FVH. 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.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at FVH knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information helping us to improve what we do

Definition of a Complaint:

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service provided by FVH that an individual or group of users' claim has affected him, her, or them, that cannot be immediately resolved at point of delivery, and about which the complainant desires a follow-up action is taken and a response provided. Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in FVH through use of the Hall.

Confidentiality:

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and follows any relevant data protection requirements.

Procedure for Handling Complaints:

FVH believe that most complaints can be resolved satisfactorily by informal discussion. FVH aim to acknowledge complaints within five working days and give a 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. All safety concerns that would endanger a user of the Hall will be dealt with immediately notice is given.

Stage One: Informal Complaints

Informal complaints should be raised with the Booking Secretary. Every effort will be made to address the issue immediately, and to communicate steps taken back to the complainant. A record will be kept and reported at the next Committee meeting. Complainants who remain dissatisfied at this stage will be informed that they have the opportunity to make a formal complaint.

Stage Two: Formal Complaints

Formal complaints should be made in writing and will normally be investigated by a Panel comprising the Chairperson and 2 Committee members in the first instance. (See Checklist below).

You will be advised of the date and time of the panel meeting and will be invited to attend, when you may speak in support of your complaint if you wish. If attending personally, you have the right to be accompanied by a friend or advocate to help you put your case. (The panel also has the right to have an advisor present). The panel members will listen to all the evidence presented and decide by a majority vote whether your complaint is valid, or provide reasons if your complaint is not upheld. The decision of the panel will be final. Where appropriate, the panel Chair will send you a written apology and details of any further action necessary to prevent the issue arising again and, thereby, improve the quality of the services provided.

If the complaint directly concerns the Chairperson, complainants should contact the Booking Secretary, who will consult with the rest of the committee members.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:

The Committee will annually review the outcome of all complaints at their ordinary meetings to inform their policies and practice to ensure the continued improvement in the services provided.

All formal complaints and the responses made to them will be recorded and filed in a secure place, along with any action taken. At each Committee meeting, the Secretary will inform the Committee of the number and nature of any formal complaints received and their outcome. Annually, consideration will be given to the implications of complaints or suggestions received. These considerations will be fed into the planning and management of future services, as part of FVH's self-evaluation.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure:

FVH may vary the procedure for good reason, for example, to avoid a conflict of interest.

Complaints Checklist

This checklist must be used when investigating a complaint to ensure compliance with the complaints policy and procedure.

	Action	Status	Evidence
1.	Have you conveyed to the complainant the investigation procedure and timescale?	YES / NO	
2.	Have you conducted an interview to establish background to and detail of the complaint?	YES / NO	
3.	Have you written a record about the complaint which you have dated and signed?	YES / NO	
4.	Has the complainant countersigned as correct the record you have made?	YES / NO	
5.	Have you given a copy of the complaint to those associated with its contents?	YES / NO	
6.	Have you asked, in writing, for a statement from those associated with the complaint within an agreed period of time?	YES / NO	
7.	Have you received the statements within the agreed time period?	YES / NO	
8.	Have you advised those being interviewed that they can have a representative or friend with them?	YES / NO	
9.	Have you interviewed all those associated with the complaint?	YES / NO	
10.	Have you written up, signed, and dated your notes from each of these interviews?	YES / NO	
11.	Have you reviewed all the evidence placed before you?	YES / NO	
12.	Have you assessed whether or not you feel there are grounds for complaint?	YES / NO	
13.	If so, have you considered all the options for action that could/should be taken as a result?	YES / NO	
14.	Are you clear in your own mind what will be the content of the discussion with the Chair about this investigation and its findings?	YES / NO	
15.	Have you discussed fully with the Chair the findings of your investigation and your recommendations for action?	YES / NO	
16.	Have you put your findings in writing to the Chair, together with the statements and notes taken during the course of the investigation?	YES / NO	
17.	Have you sent a letter to the complainant with the outcome of the investigation?	YES / NO	