

Complaints Policy

Devauden Hall CIO

Charity number: 1207141

Approved: 14th April 2026

Review date: 14th April 2028

1. Purpose

Devauden Hall CIO is committed providing welcoming, safe and well-managed facilities for the local community. We recognise that, occasionally, individuals may wish to raise concerns or complaints about those facilities, the services provided from them, or the way in which the charity is run. Where concerns or issues are raised, we aim to initially respond in an informal and open way, recognising that early dialogue can often provide a shared understanding of an issue and a way forward without escalation.

Where an initial concern or issue cannot be resolved informally, we will deal with it in a formal way, as outlined in this policy. This policy ensures complaints are:

- taken seriously
- handled fairly and promptly
- resolved where possible
- used to improve how we operate.

If we have got something wrong, we will explain what happened, apologise where appropriate, and take reasonable steps to put matters right. We are also committed to learning from complaints and using the information we receive to improve how the charity operates.

2. What Is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern, whether made verbally or in writing, about the actions, decisions, or lack of action by the charity, its trustees, or its volunteers, which requires a response.

Complaints may relate to matters such as:

- The condition, safety, or accessibility of the building
- Hiring arrangements or bookings
- Behaviour or conduct of trustees or volunteers

- Decisions taken by the management committee
- The use of grant funding, lottery funding, or other charitable resources

A complaint is **not**:

- A criminal matter (these should be reported directly to the police)
 - A challenge to a properly made decision where correct procedures have been followed.
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3. Who Can Make a Complaint?

Complaints may be made by:

- Hall users or hirers
- Members of the public
- Volunteers
- Local residents.

Complaints may also be made by a representative acting on behalf of another person, provided appropriate consent has been given.

4. How to Make a Complaint

Where a concern or issue cannot be resolved informally, through discussion, a complaint should be made in writing so that the issue can be clearly understood and properly considered. Complaints may be made by email or letter and should include:

- The complainant's name and contact details
- A clear description of what the complaint is about
- Relevant dates and details
- What outcome the complainant is seeking

Complaints should be sent to:

The Chair of the Trustees

Email: admin@devaudenhall.org

Postal address:

The Chair
Hood Memorial Hall
Devauden
Chepstow NP16 6NX

If the complaint relates to the Chair, it should be addressed to another trustee.

We will make reasonable adjustments to support complainants who may need help in raising a concern.

5. How We Handle Complaints

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Whenever possible, we aim to resolve concerns quickly and informally at the earliest opportunity. If you raise a concern with a trustee or volunteer, they will try to resolve it straight away through explanation, clarification, or appropriate action.

Informal resolution will normally be completed within **14 days**. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, or if the complainant requests a formal review, the matter will move to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Formal Trustee Review

If a complaint is dealt with formally:

- We will acknowledge it in writing within **7 days**
- A trustee or small group of trustees not directly involved in the matter will consider the complaint
- We will confirm our understanding of the issues raised and the outcome sought
- Relevant information and evidence will be reviewed in a fair and impartial manner.

The formal investigation will normally be completed within **28 days**. If it is not possible to meet this timescale, we will explain why and keep the complainant informed of progress.

In reviewing complaints, trustees will have regard to:

- Relevant charity policies and procedures
- The Devauden Hall CIO Constitution
- Trustees' legal duties under charity law.

Stage 3 – External Escalation

If the complainant remains dissatisfied after Stage 2:

- Funding-related complaints may be referred to the relevant funder (e.g., The National Lottery Community Fund)
 - Concerns about serious mismanagement or governance may be raised with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The Charity Commission does not act as an appeal body but may consider concerns where there is evidence of serious regulatory failure.
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6. Fairness, Openness, and Confidentiality

We will deal with complaints in an open, honest, sensitive and impartial way. Information will only be shared with trustees who need to know about complaint. Making a complaint will not adversely affect a person's future use of, or relationship with, the village hall.

7. Record Keeping

The charity will:

- Keep a written record of complaints
 - Record actions taken
 - Review complaints annually to identify trends or improvements
 - Provide a summary (not personal details) at a trustee meeting.
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8. Serious Complaints

If a complaint suggests:

- Financial mismanagement
- Safeguarding risk
- Fraud
- Significant reputational risk

Trustees will consider whether it constitutes a Serious Incident and whether it must be reported to the Charity Commission, the Police the local authority safeguarding lead, or a combination of these.

8. Vexatious or Unreasonable Complaints

We recognise that there may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a concern or a complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined. We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that those involved with Devauden Hall CIO have the same rights. We, therefore, expect those raising a complaint to be polite and courteous in dealing with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

Trustees may limit contact where a complainant:

- Repeatedly raises the same issue
- Uses abusive or threatening language
- Refuses to engage constructively.

Such decisions will be recorded and agreed by trustees.

9. Review of This Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if required by changes in law or funding conditions.