

SOMERSET CHURCHES TRUST

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Our policy

To make sure that:

- Anyone who wishes to make a complaint can do so;
- Any complaint is investigated fairly and in a timely way, and where possible resolved amicably;
- Anyone involved in a complaint knows what to do.

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of our Trust's work.

Complaints may come from members of the Trust, applicants for grants, participants in Ride+Stride or other events, or other people. They might be about grants awarded or not awarded, experience at events, behaviour, decisions taken or other matters. They could be in writing or verbal.

Complaints procedure

1. All complaints should be made to, or passed to, the Secretary of the Trust.
2. Verbal complaints should be captured by writing down the complainant's name and contact details, and the facts of the complaint.
3. Recipients of a complaint should be calm and respectful; should show interest but not take sides or debate the facts; should acknowledge the person's feelings; should agree with the person how the complaint is to be progressed; and should not promise anything that they cannot deliver. If they feel that an apology is deserved, they can and should apologise.
4. In many cases a complaint can be resolved swiftly, informally and locally. If this is possible it should be done.
5. Otherwise, the matter should be regarded as a formal complaint. The Trust Secretary should acknowledge it within one week (attaching a copy of this procedure).
6. A suitably senior person, not implicated in the complaint, should be appointed to investigate the facts of the case. If the complaint relates to a specific person they should be informed and given an opportunity to respond.
7. Ideally the complainant should receive a response within 28 days. If not, they should receive a progress report at that stage. The response should cover the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions reached, and any action taken as a result.
8. All complaints must be handled confidentially and sensitively, telling only those who need to know and complying with any data protection requirements.
9. At any stage the complainant can take his/her complaint to the Charity Commission – see details at www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx