

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Appledore Book Festival views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person who has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure, which is clear and easy to use.
- 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 Appledore Book Festival 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 which helps us to improve what we do.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Appledore Book Festival.

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any participants in the Appledore Book Festival.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to The Secretary c/o ABF Box Office, Docton Court, Appledore or info@appledorebookfestival.co.uk

Verbal complaints may be made in person to any of Appledore Book Festival's volunteers or trustees, at the Information Desk or at any of our events or activities.

Confidentiality

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

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Board of Trustees,

Review

This policy is reviewed and updated as required.

Last Reviewed: 27/04/19

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through any of the publicised channels.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint.
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number.
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Appledore Book Festival.
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure.
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take,
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the company Secretary within one week.

On receiving the complaint, the Secretary records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of Trustees.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chair of Trustees may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitable person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.