



Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

The Friends of Winchester Cathedral (“FOWC”) view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or the organisation that has made the complaint. Whilst this policy applies to complaints, FOWC is always delighted to receive compliments as well, as these can also help us to improve what we do.

2. Informal Resolution of Concerns

The FOWC understand that from time-to-time members will have concerns and they will always aim to resolve these, informally, through dialogue. Formal processes will always be a last resort. If a successful resolution cannot be achieved then the policy and procedures set out below will apply.

3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to:

- Members of the Friends
- Volunteers, staff, and committee members
- Visitors and external partners

Complaints may relate to conduct, events, communications, or other activities connected with the Friends.

4. The purpose of our policy

- 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 FOWC 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 and reconciliation explored
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

5. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of FOWC.

6. What this policy does not cover

- Complaints from staff.
- Matters relating to safeguarding which should be dealt with in accordance with FOWC’s Safeguarding Policy.

7. Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in FOWC. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

8. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints are accepted, but they present limitations and may be less likely to lead to a resolution without corroborating details. To ensure fair handling:

- They will be assessed based on the information provided
- A discreet preliminary investigation will be initiated, if appropriate
- Action will be taken only if there is sufficient detail to do so responsibly
- The anonymity of the complainant will be protected if their identity is later disclosed in confidence
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9. Malicious or Vexatious Complaints

While all complaints are taken seriously, the Friends of Winchester Cathedral recognise the importance of safeguarding individuals and the organisation from misuse of the complaints process.

A complaint may be considered malicious or vexatious if it:

- Is intentionally false, misleading, or made to harass, threaten, or cause distress
- Contains abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language
- Is repeatedly submitted with no new evidence after thorough resolution
- Targets individuals unfairly, without cause, or in a manner that breaches acceptable conduct

In such cases:

- The Trustees reserves the right to halt investigation after initial assessment
- A formal record will be made, including rationale for classifying the complaint
- Support will be offered to any individuals affected
- Further engagement with the complainant may be restricted or formally concluded

10. Confidentiality

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

11. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Trustees of FOWC.

Complaints Procedure

1. Contact Details for Complaints

(a) Written complaints should be sent to

The Director
Friends of Winchester Cathedral
2 The Close
Winchester
SO23 9LS

(b) by e-mail to friends@winchester-cathedral.org.uk

(c) Verbal complaints may be made by phone, 01962 857244 or in person at the FOWC office

(d) Complaints should not be addressed directly to Trustees, but to the Director (unless the complaint involves the Director). Any complaint received by a Trustee will be passed to the Director for action (unless the complaint involves the Director).

2. Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person will 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 FOWC
- 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.

3. Investigation

- Complaints are forwarded to the Director as soon as practicable by the person receiving it.
- On receiving the complaint, the Director will make a full record of it. If it has not already been resolved, they will assign a suitable person to investigate and to take appropriate action. This will either be the Director themselves (provided the Director is not the subject of the complaint) or a Trustee of FOWC.
- FOWC aims to acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days. The acknowledgement will say who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply.
- FOWC aims to investigate and resolve (if possible) a complaint within 20 working days. If a complaint is more complex, a progress report will be sent to the complainant with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

4. Outcome

The complainant will be made aware of the outcome of the investigation into the complaint. An apology will be given if appropriate.

5. Conflicts of Interest

When dealing with a complaint, FOWC will take appropriate steps to avoid any conflict of interest. For example, if a complaint is about the Director or a Trustee, they will not be the person carrying out the investigation into the complaint or be involved in any decision leading to its outcome.

6. Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

FOWC carefully monitors complaints received in the course of the year and is always willing to “learn lessons” from complaints that are made. If necessary, changes will be implemented and training provided.

Complaints received will be reported annually to the Trustees. All data will be anonymised.

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