

THE MEETING PLACE (BOOKHAM)

Registered company No. 7817471 and Registered Charity number 1192001

Complaints Policy and Procedure



Version No	Date	Details of changes included in update	Amendments by name and role
Original	Sept 2021	The Trustees of The Meeting Place (TMP) approved this Policy on 23 /9/21.	n/a
Version 1	April 2022	Version numbering commenced. Added in complaint response timescales Changed Safeguarding reporting structure section 5	MH - TMP Board Member

1. Introduction

The purpose of The Meeting Place Complaints Procedure is to provide a process for dealing with complaints relating to the behaviour of, or activities and decisions taken by, staff, charity trustees, or volunteers.

2. General Principles

Wherever possible The Meeting Place would prefer to follow the principle of reconciling differences informally without resorting to a formal complaint. However, on occasion, attempts to resolve an issue informally may fail or may not be appropriate. A formal complaints process is available for such cases.

3. Can I make a complaint?

Yes. If you believe you have reasonable grounds to make a complaint and you cannot resolve the issue informally or believe it would not be appropriate to do so, you can make a complaint.

4. What kind of complaint can I make using this procedure?

You can make a complaint about:

The services that The Meeting Place provides. Poor service might include dirty facilities or the trustees failing to carry out other health and safety requirements.

The behaviour of a trustee or volunteer that has affected you or someone for whom you are responsible. For example, inappropriate language or behaviour; persistent late payment of bills; sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination.

The application of policies and procedures, or decisions made by The Meeting Place, that affect you or someone for whom you are responsible.

5. What kind of complaints are not suitable for this procedure?

Safeguarding concerns relating to child or vulnerable adult protection:

Any safeguarding concern should be reported to TMP's Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Safeguarding Advisor following TMP's Safeguarding procedure.

TMP Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Hilda Williams

07789920856

hildawilliams494@msn.com

Designated Safeguarding Lead for Anna Chaplaincy only

Elaine Crutchley 07792 178539 elaine.crutchley1@gmail.com

An employment grievance:

TMP has a staff Grievance Procedure which is set out in the employee's contract of employment. Employment-related grievances should be dealt with in accordance with that grievance procedure.

6. How do I make a complaint and how will The Meeting Place deal with it?

You should submit your complaint in writing using the complaints form (see Appendix 1).

On receipt of your complaint, The Meeting Place, acting through its charity trustees, will:

- Acknowledge your complaint and tell you who will review it within 7 days of receipt;
- Within 14 days, begin the review, contacting you for further information if needed; finding out what happened, when it happened, and who was involved, and if necessary, interviewing people involved;
- Inform the person who is the subject of the complaint about the nature of the complaint unless this would seriously prejudice the review;
- Recommend what remedial action, if any, should be taken, giving reasons;
- Write to you informing you of the outcome of the review within 28 days (and every 28 days following that until a full response is achieved).

The Meeting Place may, on occasion, receive related complaints, or several people may make the same complaint. Depending upon the nature of the complaint and when each complaint is received, the trustees may decide to consolidate the review or to deal with the earliest complaint first.

The more complex the complaint is, the longer it may take The Meeting Place to respond. This is especially likely if the complaint relates to historic matters or several people need to be interviewed.

Please understand that if the police investigate the person who is the subject of the complaint in relation to the same or related matters, The Meeting Place may not be able to begin or complete the review until the police have completed their investigations.

Please be aware that The Meeting Place may decide that it is under a duty to report the matter to statutory authorities or the Charity Commission. If this is the case, The Meeting Place will write to you to tell you this.

The Meeting Place will treat the facts and content of your complaint carefully and in line with The Meeting Place Data Protection Policy. However, on occasion, The Meeting Place may need to make a public statement about the subject matter of the complaint, report it to statutory authorities or seek professional advice, and consequently The Meeting Place cannot guarantee to keep your complaint confidential. You should maintain reasonable confidentiality as to the nature and content of your complaint, other than to seek professional advice if required. Once you have submitted your complaint and while the matter is being reviewed, you should avoid communicating with the person complained about.

7. What if I am not happy with how The Meeting Place deals with my complaint?

You should write to the Chair of the Trustees stating that you want to appeal and the grounds for your appeal. The Chair of Trustees will consult with the other Trustees to determine if another member of the Trustees can review your appeal, and if so, how long it will take for that person to review your appeal. If The Meeting Place is unable to allocate someone to review your appeal, the Chair of Trustees will let you know, and advise you instead to consider contacting the Charity Commission. An appeal should not include new evidence, unless you could not with reasonable diligence have provided that evidence when you first complained.

If you are unhappy with how The Meeting Place deals with your complaint, you may choose to contact the Charity Commission, the regulator of charities, using the following form: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-aboutcharity/>.

8. Vexatious Complaints

If The Meeting Place concludes that your complaint is vexatious TMP may not answer any further complaints you make.

Appendix 1

The Meeting Place (Bookham) Complaints Form

Your details

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email Address:

Details of your complaint

Date(s):

Person(s):

Complaint about: *Briefly describe the nature of your complaint.*

Supporting information:

State the matter or name of the person who is the subject of the complaint, what happened, when and where.

Provide the contact details or statements of any witnesses. Include any additional information that you think would be helpful.

If complaining about a decision, explain what the decision was about, when it was taken, and who made it.

Explain what impact this decision has had, or you may fear will have, and upon whom. Provide any additional information that you believe would be helpful.

Have you tried to resolve this matter informally? Yes / No

If "No" please explain briefly why you decided not to try to resolve the matter informally.

If "Yes" and you tried to resolve this matter informally, what happened?

State who you dealt with, when and where, what information you provided to them, and what you felt was unsatisfactory about the outcome.

Action sought:

Describe what actions you want The Meeting Place to take. While the charity trustees cannot promise to do what you ask, it would be helpful to understand what you are seeking.

The Meeting Place will treat your data carefully and in accordance with the TMP Data Protection Policy. The Meeting Place cannot guarantee to keep the fact and details of your complaint confidential if it is necessary and proportionate to share your data in order to review and resolve your complaint.

Date you submitted your complaint to The Meeting Place:

Appendix 2

Template for The Meeting Place to acknowledge complaint

[Date]

Dear [insert name]

I am writing to confirm that The Meeting Place Bookham has received your complaint on [insert date].

We are sorry that you feel that [provide brief summary of complaint].

The Meeting Place, acting through our charity trustees, will review your complaint in accordance with our Complaints Policy.

The Chair of Trustees will be in touch with you within 7 days to begin their review of your complaint.

The Meeting Place will treat the facts and content of your complaint carefully and in line with our Data Protection Policy. However, on occasion The Meeting Place may need to make a public statement about the subject matter of the complaint or to report the matter to the statutory authorities and consequently The Meeting Place cannot guarantee to keep the fact of or details of your complaint confidential.

You should maintain reasonable confidentiality as to the nature and content of your complaint, other than to seek professional advice if required, and now that you have submitted your complaint, you should avoid communicating with the person complained about while the matter is being reviewed.

You may expect a full response within 28 days, or if this is not possible, details of the likely timescale of the response, and how frequently updates on progress may be expected.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Chair of Trustees in writing.

Yours sincerely

[Name and signature]

On behalf of the Trustees of The Meeting Place.