

## **Dunwich Town Trust**

### **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

Every individual should, and can, expect a consistent and quality service from the Dunwich Town Trust, irrespective of his/her circumstances. However, should the Trust or any individual associated with it give cause for complaint the following procedure will apply. The Trust will comply with the complaints procedure and will encourage, monitor and act upon suggestions for improvement and positive feedback.

The most obvious source of complaints which the Trust may face is from the people to whom a service is provided – mainly Dunwich residents. Complaints may also be made by individuals or organisations not eligible to benefit from the Trust. Whatever the source, complaints are of equal importance and will always be dealt with promptly and thoroughly, and the initiator of the complaint will be informed of the actions taken as a result of the complaint.

#### **The Procedure for Dealing with a Complaint**

Complaints procedures must address the needs of the complainant and must be seen to be fair and effective. If the complaint is about an individual, it is imperative that the person implicated in the complaint is not involved in investigating it or in formulating the response.

A complaint may be made verbally, in writing, by e-mail or any other form of social media and should be addressed to the Chairman unless the complaint relates specifically to him/her. In that event, the complaint should be addressed to the Vice Chairman or to a named Trustee. On receipt of a complaint the Chairman, Vice Chairman or Trustee, as appropriate, will seek to give an immediate explanation as to why the problem has occurred, will offer an apology and give reassurance that the problem is being dealt with. If the complaint can be resolved at this stage the consideration and outcome will be recorded and brought to the attention of the Trustees as soon as practicable.

In other cases a complaint may be more complex and require investigation. In that event, the complaint will be acknowledged, usually in writing, and an explanation given that the Trust will carry out a full investigation into the circumstances surrounding it. If necessary, the Trust will contact the complainant to clarify both the cause of the complaint and the outcome sought. The Trust will also check whether the complainant needs support, for example interpretation and language services, advocacy, access to induction loops etc. Any discussions with the complainant will be conducted in as informal and relaxed a way as possible and will seek to separate hearsay from fact.

If the complaint is upheld a full, written apology must be given together with details of any remedial action taken by the Trust. The full response must contain sufficient information to assure the complainant that his/her complaint has been taken seriously. If the complaint is upheld there must be a full apology for his/her experience, and details must be included as far as possible of action taken to prevent a recurrence of the situation about which the complaint was made. The letter must also inform the complainant of his/her right to escalate the complaint through the Charity Commission if s/he is not satisfied with the outcome. Details of how to do this will be provided.

In every case, the fact that a complaint has been made and the identity of the complainant will be kept confidential and restricted to those investigating, as people are more likely to access a complaints system if assured of confidentiality. However, during the investigation of a complaint it may be necessary to speak to other individuals who were witness to events. In that case, it will be made clear to any such persons that they are bound by confidentiality regarding the whole matter.

The Chairman will report to the Trustees Board on any complaints made and the outcome, but confidentiality will be safeguarded at all times.

A central record of all complaints made will be held by the Trust. This will be reviewed annually to identify any trends or areas requiring improvement. Action taken arising from the outcome of complaints will be considered and a review about whether other measures need to be taken to correct unsatisfactory procedures will be part of the process.

All documents will be held and protected strictly in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

**First approved by Trustees on: 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015**  
**Reviewed annually by the Chairman.**

Signed:.....*Nick Mayo*..... Nick Mayo Chairman

Dated: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022.