

COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS POLICY



Last updated **07/09/20**

Signed by P Wilby

Related Policies:

Volunteer policy
Privacy

COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

1 Introduction

As a trust, Hayle Park Nature Reserve wishes to be open and receptive to the suggestions, comments and complaints from the general public, volunteers and trustees.

It is, however possible that the investigation of an issue raised under these procedures may lead to further action against the trust. The aim of this policy and related procedures is to ensure that the Complaints Procedure is effective and accessible. Hayle Park Nature Reserve undertakes to make available a copy of the procedure to all volunteers and Trustees. The trust will offer guidance in dealing with suggestions, comments and complaints in a positive and constructive manner to all volunteers and trustees.

2 Purpose of This Procedure

This procedure allows the general public, volunteers and trustees to participate in the improvement of the trust's activities and to enable any shortcomings in the operation of the trust to be identified for improvement.

Hayle Park Nature Reserve encourages constructive criticism and encourages comments and suggestions relating to the operation of this trust and resources available to the trust. With this approach we look to prevent major issues from occurring which could have a negative impact on the trust. The main reasons for introducing this procedure are:

- to continuously improve the work of the trust and to be responsive to the views of people inside and outside of the trust;
- to enable the public, volunteers and trustees to challenge decisions made by the trust;
- to protect the public, voluntary workers and trustees and the trust from harm
- to provide an additional means of reviewing the operation of the trust.

The above are based on the assumption that the public and volunteers know what to expect from the trust and its operation. Hayle Park Nature Reserve produces guidelines and information about the trust which are available online at <https://www.hayleparknaturereserve.org.uk>

3 Scope

It is for individual or group of individuals to determine the nature of the suggestion, comment or complaint to be raised. By way of an example, suggestions, comments and complaints may relate to: land management at the reserve, hazards at the reserve, the conduct of trustees or voluntary workers, decisions made by the trust, discrimination by individuals, provision of inaccurate information, failure to provide information, failure to follow agreed policies or procedures.

4 Ensuring Access

All volunteers and Trustees will have access to all procedures used by the trust. Guidance will be developed to ensure sensitive and consistent handling of suggestions, comments and complaints. It is important that this procedure is seen as a positive addition to the work of the trust and not targeting any individual trustees or volunteers. Trustees will be expected to respond sensitively and helpfully to individuals or groups who may be expressing a concern relating to the trust.

Procedures of the trust will be available on <https://www.hayleparknaturereserve.org.uk>.

5. Monitoring

A log of all suggestions, comments and complaints will be kept and a report will be made to each meeting of trustees. All formal complaints will be reported to the trust Chairman as and when they arrive.

INFORMAL PROCEDURE

MAKING AN ANONYMOUS SUGGESTION, COMMENT OR COMPLAINT

Individual suggestion or comment or complaint:
To be made in writing to Hayle Park Nature Reserve, the Barn, Fieldfare Drive, Maidstone ME15 6XL

Any comments or complaints received will be brought to the next meeting of the trust where trustees will consider the next course of action.

MAKING A SUGGESTION OR COMPLAINT THAT IS NOT ANONYMOUS

Individual suggestion or comment or complaint:
Make suggestion, comment or complaint to the chairman or any trustee, who will record and raise for discussion at the next meeting of the trust

Most suggestions, comments or complaints can be dealt with in an informal way. Thus, people will be encouraged, in the first instance, to discuss their suggestions, comments or complaints with the chairman or individual trustees.

The trustee or volunteer must bring the incident to the attention of the chairman and vice chairman and request that the incident be considered at the next meeting of trustees and added to the agenda. The trustee or volunteer should report the following details:

- the subject of the suggestion, comment and complaint and an indication which of the three it is;
- any relevant action they have taken;
- the name, address and telephone number of the individual;
- the date on which the suggestion, comment or complaint was made;
- the name of the trustee / volunteer taking the complaint

Complaints and suggestions will be stored in a safe and secure manner at “the Barn” in accordance with GDPR guidelines (see privacy policy). Any suggestions or complaints will be reviewed at subsequent meetings until the individual agrees that the item has been concluded or, if the individual disagrees with the outcome, when the trustees agree that the item has been concluded.

The Vice Chair will bring suggestions; comments or complaints received which relate to the Chairman to the next meeting of the trustees (the chairman will not be involved in any decision relating to a complaint against the chairman). Any volunteer or trustee who is involved in a complaint to the trust can be consulted but will not be involved in any subsequent decisions made by the trust relating to the complaint.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS

What will happen next?

1. The complainant will be contacted by email or letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint within 5 days of receipt, enclosing a copy of this procedure
2. The complaint will then be investigated.
3. The complainant will be offered the ability to visit the next monthly meeting of the trustees to discuss the complaint and consider options to resolve. The chairman will do this within two weeks of sending out the acknowledgement letter.
4. If attending the meeting is refused or it is not possible, the Chairman will send a detailed written reply to the complainant, including his/her suggestions for resolving the matter, within 3 days of the meeting
5. If an individual feels that the complaint is still not been satisfactorily resolved, they may appeal in writing providing any additional supporting information. This must be done within five days of receiving the written outcome from the meeting or written reply.
6. The trust will consider the appeal at the next trustee meeting, reviewing the reason for the appeal and any further information submitted. The original decision will be examined to establish whether the complaint was conducted correctly. The trusts decision in this meeting will be final.

Monitoring

Decisions regarding complaints for suggestions will be recorded in the minutes of meetings of the trust.