

## Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust Policies and Procedures

<b>Title</b>	Complaints Policy
<b>Version</b>	1
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<b>Produced/updated by</b>	Paula Smith

### Policy Statement

The Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust strive to ensure its work is undertaken to the best of its ability in accordance with recognised best practise. However, it's not always possible to undertake our work without raising cause for complaint. The Trust views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person, or organisation that has made the complaint.

### Scope of the Policy

This policy covers complaints from all our stakeholders – individuals, groups and communities, members, partners and suppliers. This policy does not cover staff and volunteers for which there are other policies in place. It also doesn't cover contractual disputes.

### Our Aim

We aim:

- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint;
- To resolve as many complaints at first point of contact;
- To make sure everyone at the Trust knows what to do if a complaint is received;
- To make sure all complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly, politely and where appropriate, informally;
- To ensure all complaints are dealt with as confidentially as possible, except where others may be put at risk by matters referred to in the complaint;
- To gather information which helps us to learn from complaints and improve what we do.

### Definition

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the work of the Trust and requires a response.

## **Complaints Procedure**

The Trust's complaint procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

The complainant's responsibility is to:

- raise their concerns promptly and directly with the person concerned and if their concerns cannot be resolved satisfactorily informally, then to follow the formal complaints procedure as detailed below;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow the Trust, which is a small organisation with limited staff resources, a reasonable amount of time to deal with the matter;
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond the control of the Trust.

### ***Informal Complaint***

Upon receipt of an informal complaint, we will:

- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- respond within an agreed period of time;
- take appropriate action if required;

Where it is not possible to resolve the complaint informally, we will request that the complainant puts their complaint in writing to the Trust's CEO, giving as much information as possible to assist with investigation of the matter raised.

### ***Formal Complaint***

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, we will:

- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint;
- Respond to the complaint within 21 working days (where this timescale is not possible to achieve, we will write to the complainant to advise of the revised timescale and give an explanation for any delay;
- Our response will include details of our investigation, whether the complaint has been upheld or not, a reason for the decision and where appropriate how our working practises will be adapted.

## ***Appeal***

If a complainant still remains dissatisfied, then a letter needs to be written to the Trusts Chair/Vice Chairman within 28 days of receipt of the written response from the Trust. The complainant must outline the details of the complaint, why they remain dissatisfied and what action they would like taken to make things right.

The Chair/Vice Chairman will arrange for a review to be carried out by 2 independent Trustees who have no involvement in the complaint. They will:

- review the complaint;
- speak to the individuals concerned, both inside the organisation and outside;
- and make a final decision (to uphold the outcome of the original complaint or overturn it and make recommendations to the CEO to address the complaint).

The Chair/Vice Chairman will respond in writing within 28 days of receiving the appeal confirming the final decision and the reason for the decision.

This is the final right of appeal with the Trust. If the complainant still remains dissatisfied, they can pursue their complaint with an external body. The Charity Commission request that serious concerns are reported to them. Their examples of serious concerns include: not doing what it claims to do; losing lots of money; harming people; being used for personal profit or gain and involved in illegal activity.

## **Vexatious Complaints**

The Trust will not investigate vexatious complaints. A vexatious complaint can be:

- When one person complains twice about something that is already being investigated.
- When one person complains about the same/similar things repeatedly.