



WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

Introduction

1. Fritwell Village Hall CIO is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. This policy provides a procedure for trustees, volunteers, donors and all users of the Hall to raise concerns about a perceived wrongdoing openly, confidentially or anonymously. It aims to help those who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety and to prevent them from victimisation or reprisals

2. Aims of the Policy

- To protect the reputation of the CIO by providing procedures to promote openness and accountability
- To encourage all who are involved with the CIO to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible.
- To provide guidance on how to raise concerns
- To reassure any persons raising concerns that they can do so without fear of victimisation or reprisals

3. Definition

A whistle blowing disclosure is the reporting of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing in any aspect of the management of the CIO. It is distinct from a grievance or complaint which have no public interest dimension. It is a report which an individual reasonably believes that one of the following has occurred:

- A criminal offence such as fraud, financial irregularity, improper use of funds, bribery
- There is danger to someone's health and safety
- Breaking the law
- Covering up any of the above

4. Responsibilities

- Trustees have overall responsibility for the policy and its procedures
- Anyone involved in any of the activities of the CIO who has concerns about suspected wrongdoing has the responsibility to disclose it

5. Making a Disclosure

- Any disclosures can be reported in person, in writing, or by email to any officer or trustee of the CIO

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- If the concern relates to a Trustee, the report should be made to the designated Whistleblowing Officer who shall be the Chair of trustees at the time.
- If the disclosure relates to the whistleblowing officer it should be made to another trustee
- Disclosures should, if possible, include some or all of the following information: the background and reasons behind the concern; whether it has been raised with anyone else and if so, their response, relevant dates. Any personal interest in the matter should be declared when raising the concern.

6. Confidentiality and Anonymity

- All disclosures will be dealt with in a confidential and sensitive manner
- The person making a disclosure will be encouraged to put his/her name to the report. Those without a name will be considered at the officer's discretion depending upon the seriousness of the issue, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood or otherwise of being able to validate the allegation.
- Those making the disclosure can ask that their identity remain confidential and the recipient will make every effort to protect their identities.

7. Investigating the Disclosure

- All investigations will be carried out thoroughly and impartially
- The trustee in receipt of a disclosure will report it to the Chair (Whistleblowing Officer)
- In the event of the disclosure relating to the officer it will be referred to the other trustees,
- The Whistleblowing Officer will lead the investigation and appoint at least one other trustee with relevant knowledge or expertise to carry out the investigation.
- The investigating team will be responsible for: sending a written acknowledgement of the disclosure to the reporter; ensuring the reporter is aware of and understands this policy; protecting the identity of the reporter, where possible; informing the person/people against whom the disclosure has been made as soon as possible-but not at a time or in such a way as to impede a thorough and full investigation; ensuring the allegation is investigated as quickly as possible without affecting the depth and quality of the investigation; protecting the effective operation of the CIO to the extent possible in the circumstances of the case; consider whether internal or external auditors, or the Police, need to be involved; keeping the reporter informed in writing of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale;
- An initial interview will be offered to the whistle-blower on receipt of a report with the aim of carrying out an initial assessment.
- Feedback will be given about how the disclosure will be dealt with. Further meetings may be deemed necessary.

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- The need for confidentiality may prevent giving details of the investigation being given. All matters relating to the investigation should be confidential

8. Outcome

- Recommendations may be made to trustees or appropriate person to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing
- In the unlikely event of the person making the disclosure is dissatisfied with the result of the investigation he/she will be entitled to take the matter further by consulting with the Charity Commission, making disclosures to prescribed organisations such as Health and Safety Executive or National Audit Office and/or seeking legal advice.

9. Protection and Support of Whistle-blowers

- Trustees will support those raising reasonable concerns
- No person making a disclosure will suffer detrimental treatment as a result
- Trustees will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of whistle-blowers
- During an investigation every effort will be made to protect everyone involved in the disclosure

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