

The Friends of Walpole Old Chapel (Charity No. 1198030)
Code of Conduct, Complaints and Whistleblowing policy
Adopted by the Board of Trustees on 21st December 2022

Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to set out standards of behaviour expected from volunteers of The Friends of Walpole Old Chapel. The term “volunteers” includes all who support Walpole Old Chapel in their role as Patrons, Trustees, Friends and Stewards. All volunteers should ensure that they have read and comply with this Code of Conduct.

As a volunteer you should maintain the highest standards of behaviour in the performance of your duties by:

- Fulfilling your agreed role to a satisfactory standard;
- Performing your role to the best of your ability in a safe, efficient and competent way;
- Following the charity’s policies and procedures as well as any instructions or directions reasonably given to you;
- Acting honestly, responsibly and with integrity;
- Treating others with fairness, equality, dignity and respect;
- Raising concerns about possible wrongdoing witnessed in undertaking your role with one of the trustees or the appropriate external organisation (see below).
- Meeting time and task commitments and providing sufficient notice when you will not be available so that alternative arrangements can be made;
- Acting in a way that is in line with the purpose and values of the charity and that enhances the work of the charity;
- Communicating respectfully and honestly at all times;
- Observing safety procedures, including any obligations concerning the safety, health and welfare of other people;
- Reporting any health and safety concerns;
- Directing any questions regarding Friends of Walpole Old Chapel’s policies, procedures, support or supervision to the Secretary of the Trustees;
- Addressing any issues or difficulties about any aspect of your role or how they are managed in line with Friends of Walpole Old Chapel complaints policy;
- Declaring any interests that may conflict with your role or the work of the charity (e.g. business interests or employment).
- Keeping confidential matters confidential;

- Exercising caution and care with any documents, material or devices, containing confidential information and at the end of your involvement with Friends of Walpole Old Chapel and returning any such documents, material in your possession;
- Seeking authorisation before communicating externally on behalf of Friends of Walpole Old Chapel
- Maintaining an appropriate standard of dress and personal hygiene;
- Disclosing the fact that you have been charged with, or convicted of a criminal offence by prosecuting authorities (or given the benefit of the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 as amended) to the Secretary. For the avoidance of doubt, volunteers are not required to disclose the fact or details of 'spent convictions' under the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016 (as amended) to Friends of Walpole Old Chapel

Volunteers are expected NOT to:

- Bring the charity into disrepute (including through the use of email, social media and other internet sites, engaging with media etc.);
- Seek or accept any gifts, rewards, benefits or hospitality in the course of your role;
- Engage in any activity that may cause physical or mental harm or distress to another person (such as verbal abuse, physical abuse, assault, bullying, or discrimination or harassment on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community);
- Be affected by alcohol, drugs, or medication which will affect your abilities to carry out your duties and responsibilities while volunteering;
- Provide a false or misleading statement, declaration, document, record or claim in respect of Friends of Walpole Old Chapel, its volunteers or charity trustees;
- Engage in any activity that may damage property;
- Take unauthorised possession of property that does not belong to you.
- Engage in illegal activity while carrying out your role.
- Improperly disclose, during or after your involvement with Friends of Walpole Old Chapel ends, confidential information gained in the course of your role.

Where a volunteer is found to be in breach of the standards outlined in this Code of Conduct or any of Friends of Walpole Old Chapel's other policies and procedures this may result in the volunteer's position being terminated.

Volunteers acknowledge that no employment relationship is created in the context of their role with Friends of Walpole Old Chapel.

The board of charity trustees will review the Code of Conduct for Volunteers at three-year intervals or as appropriate. The Secretary is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively. All other staff and volunteers, including charity trustees, are expected to facilitate this process.

Complaints

We are committed to ensuring that all involved in Friends of Walpole Old Chapel maintain the highest standards of conduct but there may be a time you need to make a complaint.

This complaints procedure is for people who act as volunteers or who visit Walpole Old Chapel

We will make sure that your complaint is:

- treated seriously
- handled fairly without bias or discrimination
- treated confidentially

You should make your complaint to one of the Trustees within 3 months of the event that you are complaining about. You need to tell us:

- what you think went wrong
- what you think we should do to put it right

When someone else complains on your behalf, we need written confirmation from you saying that you agree for them act for you.

What happens next

At first, the Trustee to whom you have made the complaint and who has not been involved in the event, will look fairly at your complaint and will aim to respond to you within 30 working days. S/he will tell you the conclusions from the investigation and the reasons for the outcome.

If you're not satisfied

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the first review, you have one month to ask for your complaint to be reviewed by the Trustees who have not been involved in the investigation or the event. They will look at how the first review was handled, specifically if it:

- addressed the issues of your complaint
- fixed any shortfalls in our service
- conveyed the outcome clearly
- was thorough and fair

They will aim to let you know the outcome within 30 working days. This will be our final response to your complaint.

Whistleblowing

As a charity we aim to meet all our legal obligations and to maintain the highest standards of integrity, honesty and professionalism. We know that occasionally this may not happen, and we want to make it as easy as possible for you to raise any concerns you have about our charity, our volunteers or our trustees.

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, PIDA for short, you have the legal right to share any concerns about the charity without fear of victimisation or being harmed. In the unlikely event this happens we will make sure you are not victimized or affected by your whistle blowing. You must reasonably believe that the event has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen in the near future. The concerns covered by PIDA relate to one or more of the events in the list below:

- a criminal offence like fraudulent and corrupt behaviour, including theft, fraud or malpractice
- a miscarriage of justice
- an act creating risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- a breach of any other legal obligation
- trying to cover up of any of the above.

If you believe that one of the above events has happened, is happening or is likely to happen in the near future, you should raise the issue with the Secretary of the Trustees. If this is inappropriate, you may also raise your concerns directly with another Trustee.

We will let you know who will investigate your concerns and advise you how long the investigation will take. You may be asked to put your concerns in writing, provide as much information and evidence as possible, and attend further meetings as part of the investigation. You can be accompanied to any meeting you attend in connection with the investigation.

We will do our best to maintain confidentiality where possible, but this cannot be guaranteed. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the police or a regulator for example, may need to be involved. Although you may raise your concerns anonymously, it may not be possible to investigate or take further action if you do so.

If you feel that the person with whom you first raised your concern has failed to deal with the issue in the right manner, you should set out your concerns in writing and give them to another trustee., The other trustees not involved to date may investigate your concern or refer it to the appropriate external authority.

Except in exceptional circumstances, you should not share your concerns outside the charity unless you have first provided us with the chance to deal with the problem. This includes talking to anyone from the media.

If you feel that you are unable to raise your concerns within the charity, you may consider raising them with an appropriate authority, for example:

- HM Revenue & Customs
- the Financial Services Authority
- the Charity Commission
- the Health and Safety Executive
- the Environment Agency.

However, we hope and expect that most concerns raised are solved internally to everyone's satisfaction.

People will not be protected by this policy if they tell us something that they know is not true. If this happens, they may be subject to legal action.