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Ahtutu Complaints Handling

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Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure

1. Ahtutu's policy is

- 1.1 To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- 1.2 To publish the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us and make a complaint.
- 1.3 To ensure that everyone in Ahtutu knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- 1.4 To make sure that all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- 1.5 To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- 1.6 To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

2. Identifying Complaints

- 2.1 Complaints may come from any individual, volunteer or organisation who have a legitimate interest in Ahtutu, including the general public if something is perceived to be improper.
- 2.2 A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.
- 2.3 All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

3. Receiving complaints.

- 3.1 Complaints may arrive through channels published for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have, such as social media. Complaints received by phone will be recorded.
- 3.2 The person who receives a phone call or in person complaint should:
 - Write down the facts;
 - Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number;
 - Note down the relationship of the complainant to Ahtutu e.g. donor, volunteer or sponsor;
 - Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take;
 - Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

4. Resolving Complaints

Stage One

- 4.1 In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person for the issue being complained about. They may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if

possible and appropriate. The complaint should be passed on to the Trustees within five working days.

- 4.2 On receiving the complaint, it should be logged.
- 4.3 If it has not already been resolved, then an appropriate person should be delegated to investigate it and take appropriate action.
- 4.4 If the complaint refers to a specific person they should be informed and given an opportunity to respond.
- 4.5 Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgment should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of the complaints proceed should be attached.
- 4.6 Ideally any complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because an investigation has not been completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication when a full reply will be given.
- 4.7 Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complaint should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage two

- 4.8 If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint be passed on to the Board of Trustees.
- 4.9 This request should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgment should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.
- 4.10 The Board of Trustees may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitable senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. The person who dealt with the original complaint should be kept informed.
- 4.11 If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally the complainant should receive a definitive reply within one month. If this is not possible because of an investigation has not been fully completed a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- 4.12 Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.
- 4.13 The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board of Trustees decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

Ahtutu is a registered charity in England and Wales - see <http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/CharityFramework.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=1182338&SubsidiaryNumber=0>.

Any complaint can be made to the Charity Commission at <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity> .

It is suggested that the contact form be used if there is a serious risk of harm to the charity or people it was set up to help. Examples of serious issues include:

- A charity losing significant funds of money, for example 20% of its income.
- Serious harm to the people the charity helps.
- Terrorist, criminal or illegal activity.
- A charity set up for illegal al or improper purposes.
- A person or organisation receiving significant financial benefit from a charity.

The form must detail:

- Whether you consent to the Charity Commission disclosing your identity as the source of the complaint with the trustees;
- The charity's name and registration number;
- Details of attempts you have made to get the charity to address this issue;
- Details of any previous correspondence with the Charity Commission or other public bodies;
- Details of the issue, clearly describing its serious nature and the potential consequences;
- Details of any legal proceedings involved;
- Your connection with the charity (if any).

Examples of evidence may include (but are not restricted to):

- Copies of bank/credit card statements or pre-signed cheques
- Copies of invoices or receipts
- Copies of contracts, policies and procedures
- Internal complaints or reports from other agencies highlighting failures/weaknesses
- Copies of any legal/professional advice that has not been followed
- Media reporting affecting the charity name
- Literature issued by the charity

Appendices

Appendix 1

Report serious incidents by email to: RSI@charitycommission.gov.uk

Reports must explain what happened and how you are dealing with it, even if you have already reported it to the police or other regulator.

If you are reporting the incident as a trustee, you need to confirm that you have authority to report on behalf of the trustee body. If you are not a trustee, you should explain who you are, your relationship with the charity and confirm that you have the authority of the trustees to report the incident.

Appendix 2

Declaration in the annual return.

As a matter of good practice, all charities, regardless of size or income, should report serious incidents to the Commission promptly.

If the charity's income is over £25,000, there must be, as part of the annual return, a signed declaration confirming there were no serious incidents during the previous financial year that were not reported to the Commission. Any incidents that were not reported at the time, should be submitted before the Annual Return is filed, so that a declaration can be made.

If trustees fail to report a serious incident that subsequently comes to light, the Commission may consider this to be mismanagement. This may prompt regulatory action, particularly if further abuse or damage has arisen following the incident.

Appendix 3

The Charity Commission's Privacy Notice (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission/about/personal-information-charter>) explains how it processes information including information received in serious incident reports.