



Complaints Procedure

In any organisation, problems and grievances will occur from time to time and it is important that members know where to turn for help, advice and support, so that whatever the issue, it can be dealt with quickly and objectively and in an appropriate manner.

All complaints regarding the behaviour of members should be submitted in writing to the Club Secretary. The complaint should be considered with reference to any relevant Club Codes of Conduct, Rules of Shooting, Safeguarding or other relevant policies.

LOW LEVEL CONCERNS

Problems can arise within the Club, e.g.:

- Disagreement between members
- Disruptive and/or unsocial behaviour
- Misuse of equipment
- Unsuitability
- Failure to pay fees

INFORMAL PROCEDURES

Please remember, in most cases a simple apology and a commitment not to repeat the behaviour/situation may be enough to keep everyone happy. Ideally, minor disputes can be settled in an amicable and informal manner.

Just in case matters re-occur or escalate at some stage in the future, so that there is an audit trail, the Club will keep a note of any informal agreement.

PROBLEMS WITHIN THE CLUB AS A WHOLE

When the informal approach is inappropriate for example:

- Member to member
- Member and the committee
- Member and an individual committee member
- A member who brings the Club into disrepute or acts in a way which is prejudicial to the sport of Archery
- A member who causes damage to property and/or equipment through misuse or negligence etc.

The above should all be referred to a Committee Member in the first instance unless that person is personally involved, in which case, the Secretary or Chairperson should take over. In situations where a different member of the club committee than first approached by either party is the appropriate person to investigate the complaint, they should be contacted to take over as soon as reasonably practicable.

If the complaint originates from outside of the club the existing procedures should be followed.

INITIAL PROCEDURE WHEN A PROBLEM/GRIEVANCE IS REFERRED TO THE SECRETARY.

(If the complaint concerns the Secretary, then it should be referred to the Chairperson).

- The Committee/Panel will meet to hear complaints within 21 days of a complaint being lodged. The committee has the power to take appropriate disciplinary action including the suspension and/or termination of membership from the club.
- All complaints should be taken seriously.
- Establish the facts quickly, consulting as many people as possible.
- Have an informal discussion with all concerned to summarise the problem, hear everybody's views and clear the air.
- If it is felt that there is a case to answer but that nevertheless it is a relatively minor issue, it must be made clear to all present that there must be no repeat of the sort of actions/behaviour which led to this problem.
- If it is felt that the situation warrants a more formal approach or a particular course of action, the issue must be referred to the whole Committee.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING GRIEVANCE/PROBLEMS

- The complainant and respondent (accompanied by a friend if required) should be invited to a Dispute Resolution meeting, the panel being drawn from Committee.
- The matter should be fully discussed with the complainant and respondent, who shall be given the opportunity to state their case and present evidence/witness statements (all witness statements need to be corroborated).
- Written records of meetings with the complainant/respondent must be kept.
- The panel, once the complainant and respondent have left the meeting, will then take into account any mitigating circumstances and make its decision which should be communicated in writing.
- The outcome of a Dispute Resolution meeting should be notified in writing to the person who lodged the complaint and the member against whom the complaint was made within 7 days of the meeting.

HIGH LEVEL CONCERNS

However, in the case of an extremely serious situation arising, for example:

- Sexual/racial abuse, discrimination, harassment, bullying.
- Dangerous or violent behaviour.
- Falsification of expense claims.
- Theft.
- Malicious damage.
- Conduct which brings the Club into disrepute or is prejudicial to the running of the Club, in which case the committee has the right, in this instance (only), to move immediately to Level 3-5 of the Disciplinary Actions.

In the event that any of the above situations arise, if necessary, the relevant authorities will be notified and the situation, when required, will be managed using our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and investigated by the Club Welfare Officer (If the complaint concerns the Welfare Officer, then it should be referred to the Secretary).

POSSIBLE FORMS OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- Level 1** A verbal warning about future conduct by a Committee member with another Committee member present, which should be confirmed in writing.
- Level 2** A written warning which clearly states what will happen if the situation is repeated.
- Level 3** A final written warning.
- Level 4** Exclusion from the Club for an appropriate period of time.
- Level 5** Termination of HEA Club membership.

Ideally most problems should be resolved either through an informal chat or through Levels 1 or 2 procedures.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

Before disciplinary action is undertaken, a right of appeal should be offered. An appeal, providing it is lodged within a 7 day period with the Club Secretary, can take the form of written representation for the Committee to consider or a request for a right of reply in person.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING

- **Ensure that every action taken is documented.**
- **Problems and grievances must be dealt with quickly and fairly.**
- **Every effort must be made to settle the issue without having to resort to formal disciplinary action.**
- **Confidentiality should be maintained at all times.**

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