

Surrey Association of Woodturners Complaints Policy

It is the hope of the Committee that, provided all members comply with the rules of conduct and safety, the need for a formal complaint should be rare.

In the event that anyone feels sufficiently concerned or aggrieved then this policy dictates how to make a complaint and how it will be handled.

Values and principles

You have the right to complain: we take complaints seriously. You should not be harassed, bullied or put at a disadvantage because of making a complaint.

Equality: you should receive a proper response to your complaint, regardless of your age, gender, disability, race, religion, nationality, social status, sexual orientation or political persuasion.

Fairness: we believe that complaints should be dealt with fairly and openly. Unless it would put other people at risk, those affected by a complaint should have a chance to contribute and respond to any investigation.

Confidentiality: we treat complaints as confidentially as possible.

How to make a complaint?

If you have a complaint or a concern, it is often best to start by having a conversation with someone from the Club Committee. They may be able to help resolve any problem or alternatively direct you to another more appropriate officer.

If a verbal review of your concern fails to resolve the matter and your complaint needs to be further investigated, you may be asked to put your complaint in writing. Whilst we accept anonymous complaints, it is often very difficult to investigate these properly. It is easier for us to handle a complaint if you provide as much detail as possible.

We treat all complaints as confidentially as possible.

Who to contact to make a complaint?

Complaints will usually be handled by one of the Officers of the Club. Any written complaint should initially be addressed to the Club Secretary. Contact details can be found on the Club's website and/or Newsletter.

Complaints involving the Secretary should be directed to the Chair of the Club who will control the handling procedures in the Secretary's stead.

How will the Complaint be handled?

Your complaint will be acknowledged as quickly as possible and an indication of the expected timeline for any investigation provided.

The Secretary will establish a Complaints Committee who will be responsible for a review all aspects of the complaint and communicating their response to the complainant

The Complaints Committee shall comprise of at least three Committee members and include at least one Officer of the Club (Secretary and or Treasurer).

The Complaints Committee will investigate your complaint fairly. This may mean that they will need to discuss the complaint with all of the relevant people. They will try to gather all information that may be relevant to handling your complaint

Where felt appropriate we will invite any individuals affected by the complaint to respond to the matters raised. This is because we believe in fairness and openness. We will not share information if we think that this will endanger someone's safety or welfare.

How will you know what is happening?

You will be given the details of the person who will be your point of contact. That person will make sure that you understand the process and will help to answer any questions or concerns that you have. You will be given regular updates on the progress of your complaint. If there are delays in handling your complaint for any reason, your point of contact will keep you informed. If your complaint leads to formal disciplinary action against someone, we will usually inform you about the outcome.

What are the possible outcomes or results of my complaint?

In most cases, we hope to be able to resolve problems informally. This might include:

- A change in arrangements for particular activities
- An explanation and/or apology
- An agreement to communicate or act differently in future
- A review of the Clubs Procedures, where they may have contributed to the issue

If an informal resolution is not possible, then the Complaints Committee might decide to take the following action:

- Formal disciplinary action under the rules of the Club
- Closure of your complaint without action.

In the unfortunate event that a complaint not only breaches the Clubs Rules but, in the view of the investigating team, constitutes a breach of Civil or Criminal law then the Complaints Committee reserves the right to escalate the complaint to the appropriate authority. The Complainants support to this action will be sought but, if sufficient evidence is found to support this action the absence of that support would not preclude an appropriate report being made

What to do if not satisfied with the response of the Complaints Committee

If after receipt of the Complaints Committee's decision you remain aggrieved then you are at liberty to appeal their decision to the Chair, who will form a second group of committee members to review the case.

In such cases the Chair's decision will be final and the case closed as required.

What to do if you remain unsatisfied.

As a member of the club you have the right, subject to the terms of our Constitution, to call for an Extraordinary General Meeting. At this meeting you will be able to put your complaint before the assembled members. The Chair, or another delegated Officer, will provide details of their Complaint Committee's investigation and the basis of their conclusions.

The full complaint and the potential actions can then be voted on by the assembled members, subject to the restrictions contained within the Constitution.

Nothing contained in these rules restricts your rights to independently report your concerns to the appropriate authorities

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