



Feb-26

Gressenhall Community Enterprise Limited ("GCE") – Complaints Policy

1. Purpose of this Policy

GCE is committed to handling complaints fairly, proportionately, sensitively and in a timely manner. This policy sets out how complaints relating to the Society, its officers and its Management Committee will be received, considered and resolved, in line with GCE's Rules and good practice for Community Benefit Societies.

This policy should be read alongside the Society's Rules. Where there is any inconsistency, the Rules take precedence.

2. What is a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the actions, decisions or conduct of the Society, its officers or its Management Committee, where the complainant is seeking a response or resolution.

This policy does not prevent informal feedback or discussion. Wherever possible, concerns should be raised and resolved informally in the first instance.

3. Who Can Use This Policy

This policy applies to complaints raised by:

- Members of GCE;
- Former members (within six months of cessation of membership);
- Members of the public, customers or other stakeholders.

Where a complaint is raised by a Member or recent former Member and cannot be resolved under this policy, the dispute resolution provisions in Rules 9.12 and 9.13 may apply.

4. Types of Complaint and How to Raise Them

4.1 Operational or Service Complaints (The White Swan)

For complaints relating to service, facilities or experiences at The White Swan Gressenhall, complaints should in the first instance be directed to the pub's General Manager:

- In person or in writing; or
- By email to: pub@thewhiteswangressenhall.co.uk

GCE encourages complainants to raise operational issues directly with the pub management wherever possible. GCE will only consider such complaints where the complainant feels unable or uncomfortable doing so, or where the issue relates to matters beyond day-to-day operations.

4.2 Governance, Conduct or Decision-Making Complaints (GCE)

Complaints relating to:

- the conduct of a Management Committee member or officer;
- decisions of the Management Committee; or
- the governance of the Society

should be made in writing to the Society.

Complaints may be submitted:

- by email to: communitypubgressenhall@gmail.com; or
- by contacting a Management Committee member directly.

Alternatively, complaints may be addressed to:

- Chairperson: Leigh Howard – leighchoward@gmail.com
- Vice-Chairperson: Andy Bush – andy.bush@dashsundials.co.uk

5. Complaints Handling Process

Stage 1 – Acknowledgement

All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 72 hours of receipt.

Stage 2 – Initial Consideration

The complaint will be considered by an appropriate officer or member of the Management Committee who has no conflict of interest in the matter.

The Society will normally aim to provide a written response within one month of acknowledgement. Where this is not possible, the complainant will be informed of the reason for delay and given an indicative timescale.

Stage 3 – Management Committee Review

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they may request that the matter be reviewed by the Management Committee (excluding any member with a conflict of interest).

The Management Committee may:

- uphold the complaint in full or in part;
- reject the complaint; or
- propose actions to resolve the matter.

The outcome of the review will be communicated in writing.

6. Disciplinary Matters and Rule 3.8

Where a complaint relates to the conduct of a Member and may lead to suspension or expulsion from membership, the procedures set out in Rule 3.8 of the Society's Rules will apply and take precedence over this policy.

7. Escalation and External Resolution

If a complaint raised by a Member or recent former Member cannot be resolved under this policy, the Society's dispute resolution procedure under Rules 9.12 and 9.13 may apply, including referral to arbitration as provided for in the Rules.

The use of external mediation or arbitration will normally be a last resort.

8. Conflicts of Interest

Any person involved in handling a complaint who has a personal, financial or other material interest in the matter must declare that interest and take no further part in the process.

Where the Chairperson is conflicted, the Vice-Chairperson will assume responsibility. Where both are conflicted, the Management Committee may appoint another suitable person or an external adviser to oversee the process.

9. Confidentiality and Records

Complaints will be handled confidentially and information will be shared only where necessary to investigate and resolve the matter.

A written record will be kept of complaints received, actions taken and outcomes, in accordance with data protection legislation.

10. Vexatious or Repeated Complaints

The Society reserves the right to decline to consider complaints that are vexatious, abusive, or which repeat matters that have already been addressed, unless new and material information is provided.

11. Review of this Policy

This policy is approved by the Management Committee and will be reviewed periodically, or sooner if required following a significant complaint or change in the Society's Rules.

Approved by the Management Committee of GCE: 16/02/26