

# **NCS – Complaints Procedure**

## **Introduction**

The Society aims to present high-quality concerts and musical activities for the public, while also, and equally importantly, providing an enjoyable and fulfilling experience for its members. Getting this balance right is not always easy, and it is inevitable that in any large group of people there will occasionally be some differences of priorities and opinions. The Committee believes that we achieve a reasonable balance most of the time and we welcome constructive comments and feedback from members.

From time to time, individual members may have concerns about matters such as committee policy and decisions; the arrangements for individual concerts or other activities; or the behaviour of other members of the Society. In most cases, an informal conversation with the person or persons involved may well be the best way to proceed, and it should also be pointed out that resolving complaints in this way can be kept confidential or at least involve a minimal number of people. If, however, this informal approach fails to resolve the concern, or causes personal difficulty (e.g. in confronting another member about their behaviour) then members may wish to make a formal complaint.

## **Things to consider before making a formal complaint.**

If you feel you have a valid complaint, please take a little time to consider what it is that you hope to achieve. For example, do you want the Society to change its policy or usual organisational practices in some way? If your concern is with an individual, would you be satisfied with an apology or do you want them to modify their behaviour in future? If you simply wish to make your views known to the Committee or an individual, would it be more appropriate to do this in an informal context?

Here are some examples of things that might be cause for formal complaints, particularly if you have already raised the matter informally and feel that your concern has not been addressed:

- Problems arising from the venues or locations in which the Society operates.
- Problems arising from the way in which a specific event is organised, or from Society policy.
- Failure of the committee to implement an agreed policy or decision within a reasonable timescale.
- Problems caused by the behaviour of another member or members such as: bullying; racist, sexist or homophobic remarks; suspected financial irregularity; bringing the Society into disrepute.
- Problems arising from proposed changes to the way in which the Society conducts itself and organises its activities.

## **Formal Complaint Stage One**

If, after consideration of the advice above, you wish to make a formal complaint, please begin by stating your complaint clearly in writing (by letter or email) to the Chairman. If the Chairman is the object of your complaint or temporarily unavailable, then you should contact another elected officer of the committee: a Vice-Chairman, or the Secretary or Treasurer. If it is important to you to have your complaint dealt with in confidence (as far as possible), please make this clear.

Bearing in mind that all members of the Committee are volunteers, your complaint will be acknowledged as soon as possible. Any necessary investigation will be undertaken and a written

response made within 14 days. If this does not resolve the matter, you can then request in writing that the complaint proceeds to Stage Two.

## **Formal Complaint Stage Two**

The Chairman or the committee member who has taken charge of the complaint will organise a meeting of interested parties to discuss the complaint and reach agreement on how to resolve it. The aim would be to hold this meeting within 14 days of notification of a Stage 2 complaint, but this will depend on the availability of the individuals concerned. Written notes will be taken at this meeting and decisions and agreements that are reached will also be noted, subject to approval by all parties as a correct record.

If the agreement or decision reached has implications for the Society's constitution, policies or general operation, then these implications will be discussed at the next following Committee meeting, and a course of action will be agreed and notified to the complainant.

## **Formal Complaint Stage Three**

In the unlikely event that no resolution can be reached at Stage Two, then a suitable independent individual from outside the Society will be found to act as mediator. An example of a suitable person would be the appropriate officer of another local amateur society, or someone with relevant legal or financial experience, but the choice will depend on the precise nature of the complaint and should be agreeable to all parties. Similarly, the timescale of this stage will depend on who is involved, and written records will be produced as for Stage Two.

## **Records of complaints**

Copies of written communications relating to a formal complaint will be kept on file by the Secretary of the Society, as will notes from any meeting that takes place in connection with it.

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