Complaints, Disputes and Concerns Policy

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Approved: [date]

Next annual approval: [date]

Status: Draft for Management Committee approval

1. Background

The Society seeks to deal fairly, promptly and proportionately with complaints, disputes and concerns involving its activities, Members, Management Committee, employees and volunteers. A Member is a person entered in the Register of Members (Rule 3.2). Complaints may also be raised by non-members where relevant to the Society's activities. Employment grievances and employment disciplinary matters must be dealt with under applicable employment procedures; volunteer-management matters may require separate arrangements.

This policy operates under the Society's Rules (version 3.0, 31 July 2025), especially Rules 1.5, 3.8–3.10, 5.11, 9.12 and 9.13. The Rules and applicable law prevail if inconsistent with this policy. Nothing here creates additional disciplinary powers or removes statutory rights. The Management Committee shall approve the dispute-resolution policy annually under Rule 9.12.

2. How do I Raise a Complaint, Dispute or Concern?

Complaints may be raised in person, by telephone, by email to greatgransdencbsltd@gmail.com, or in writing to the registered office. Contact the Secretary in the first instance; where the Secretary is involved, contact the Chairperson or an unconflicted committee member. A formal allegation intended to invoke Rule 3.8 or 5.11.4 must meet the written-complaint requirements in those Rules. The Society will help a complainant put a verbal concern into writing where reasonably needed.

Please describe what happened, approximate dates, people involved, supporting evidence and the outcome sought. Complaints should be raised promptly, but there is no automatic 30-day bar. Delay may affect what can reasonably be investigated. The Society will consider reasonable adjustments and accessibility needs.

3. Informal Complaint Resolution Process

Where suitable and acceptable to the parties, an unconflicted committee member will offer an informal discussion aimed at clarifying concerns and agreeing practical action. Informal resolution is not compulsory where allegations are serious, involve harassment or safeguarding, or require a Rules-based procedure. A brief confidential record of any agreed outcome will be kept. For disputes falling under Rule 9.13, informal resolution is the first stage specified by the Rules.

4. Making the Formal Complaint

A formal complaint should be addressed to the Secretary, Chairperson or an unconflicted committee member. Complaints alleging conduct detrimental to the Society by a Member must be made in writing to the Secretary, or to the Chairperson if the Secretary as a Member is the complainant (Rule 3.8.1). The equivalent provision for committee-member conduct is Rule 5.11.4.1.

The Society aims to acknowledge formal complaints within 14 calendar days and to conclude ordinary cases within 30 calendar days where reasonably possible. If longer is needed, the complainant will be told why and given an anticipated update date. Statutory complaints, including personal-data complaints, will be handled within applicable statutory requirements.

5. Formal Investigation

The Management Committee will appoint an impartial investigator or arrange a proportionate investigation, with independent assistance where necessary. All materially affected people will have a fair opportunity to explain their position and respond to relevant allegations. Interviews may be in person, by telephone or online. A supporter may attend, subject to reasonable confidentiality and fairness arrangements. Notes and relevant evidence will be retained securely.

Where expulsion or conduct-based committee removal is under consideration, the investigation and decision process in Rule 3.8 or Rule 5.11.4 respectively must be followed, including referral of investigation results to a subcommittee of no more

than three serving committee members together with any independent persons appointed under the Rules.

6. Reporting the Outcome to the Management Committee

For ordinary complaints, the investigator will submit a factual report with findings, relevant evidence and suggested remedies to an appropriately constituted and unconflicted decision-maker. Any person with a material conflict of interest must declare it and must not vote on the matter (Rule 5.19). The Committee will record its decision appropriately, protecting confidential information.

For Rules-based conduct proceedings, the designated subcommittee's functions and any subsequent Management Committee approval required by the Rules must be respected. In particular, Rule 3.8 contains both a two-thirds Management Committee expulsion provision and a subcommittee decision procedure; the Society should obtain advice on their interaction before expelling a Member.

7. Reporting the Outcome to the Person Making the Complaint

The complainant will receive a written outcome, normally within seven calendar days of the relevant decision, explaining the conclusion and any action that can appropriately be disclosed. The person complained about will be notified of any decision affecting them, the reasons and any applicable appeal rights. Confidential personnel or third-party information will not be disclosed unnecessarily. The Society may apologise, correct a mistake, improve a procedure or take another action permitted by the Rules.

8. Internal Appeal Process (Relating to Members)

A Member removed under Rule 3.8 may appeal by written notice to the Society to the next following Management Committee meeting (Rule 3.8.7). No member of the Rule 3.8 subcommittee may take part in the Management Committee's deliberation or decision on that appeal, and the appellant must have the opportunity to put their case. If the appeal succeeds, membership is restored from the conclusion of that meeting (Rule 3.8.8).

A committee member removed on conduct grounds under Rule 5.11.4 may similarly appeal by written notice to the next following Management Committee meeting under Rule 5.11.4.7; the original conduct subcommittee must not determine its

own appeal. If successful, the individual is reinstated from the conclusion of the meeting (Rule 5.11.4.8).

Ordinary complaint outcomes may be reviewed on request where there is material new evidence, procedural unfairness or an apparent factual error, by an unconflicted person where practicable. Such review does not replace or alter any appeal expressly provided by the Rules. A Special Members' Meeting is not the default appeal forum.

9. Formal External Complaint Resolution Process

For a dispute between the Society or one of its officers and a Member (or someone who ceased to be a Member no more than six months earlier), concerning interpretation of or arising out of the Rules, Rule 9.13 applies: (1) informal resolution between the parties; (2) mediation by an agreed mediator; if the parties cannot agree, either may apply to the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution to appoint one; (3) if the dispute remains unresolved 28 days after appointment of the mediator, either party may refer it to the courts.

The Society may seek advice from Plunkett UK, but these Rules do not prescribe binding arbitration by Plunkett UK. Nothing in this policy prevents complaints to competent regulators or exercise of legal rights.

10. Disciplinary Action – Removal of Members

Member conduct allegations and possible expulsion must be handled strictly under Rule 3.8. Any Member may complain in writing as provided by Rule 3.8.1; the Management Committee must arrange investigation and ensure each Member's view is heard. Investigation results go to a subcommittee formed as prescribed by Rule 3.8.3. The Member must have an opportunity to put their case.

If the expected standard has not been met, the Rule 3.8 subcommittee may issue a warning or training requirement, suspend attendance and voting rights at Members' Meetings for no more than 12 months, or remove the Member, subject to the requirements of Rule 3.8 as a whole, including its opening two-thirds Committee resolution provision. A removed Member has the appeal right in Section 8. Re-admission following expulsion is governed by Rule 3.9. The treatment of shares on cessation or expulsion is governed by Rule 8.16; the policy does not authorise confiscation of shares.

11. Disciplinary Action – Removal of Management Committee Members

Conduct-based removal must follow Rule 5.11.4: written allegation under Rule 5.11.4.1; fair investigation; referral to the prescribed subcommittee; opportunity to respond; and decision according to the Rules. The available outcomes include a warning or training, suspension for no more than 12 months from attending committee meetings, acting and voting as a committee member, or removal from committee membership. The appeal in Rule 5.11.4.7 applies.

Separately, Rule 5.11.5 permits removal from office by a simple majority of Members at a Special Members' Meeting whose notice specifies the removal question. Other grounds for vacating office appear in Rule 5.11. This policy does not substitute a Committee vote for a Members' Meeting where the Rules require one.

12. Confidentiality

Complaints will be handled confidentially so far as reasonably practicable, while permitting fair investigation, disclosure to the person complained about, professional advice, regulatory reporting and other lawful disclosures. Records will be held with restricted access under the Society's privacy and data protection arrangements. Relevant minutes will be maintained in accordance with Rule 9.11, subject to duties of confidentiality. The Society will set and periodically review proportionate retention periods for complaint records.

13. Violation, Failure to Take Action, Fraudulent or Malicious Behaviour

No person will suffer retaliation for raising a genuine concern or assisting an investigation in good faith, even if the complaint is not upheld. Knowingly false, deliberately misleading or malicious allegations may be addressed under the applicable Rules or employment/volunteer arrangements, following a fair process. Mere lack of proof is not evidence of malice. Any allegation of a policy breach will be assessed proportionately; disciplinary powers may only be exercised where properly authorised.

14. Refusal of Application for Membership

Rule 3.4 provides that the Management Committee may refuse a membership application at its absolute discretion. Decisions must nevertheless comply with applicable law, including equality legislation, and be recorded appropriately. Applicants may ask the Secretary for an explanation; the Society will respond insofar as it can lawfully and reasonably do so. A complaint about administrative

handling may be considered under this policy, but the policy does not create an automatic right of admission or override Rule 3.4.

15. Review

The Management Committee will review and approve this policy at least annually, in accordance with Rule 9.12, and sooner if legislation, the Society's Rules or operating arrangements change. The Secretary will retain the approved version and record the approval date.

Approved by the Management Committee: [date]

Signed for the Committee: [name/office]

Next review and approval: [date]

Appendix: List of referenced Society Rules.

3.2 The Members of the Society are those whose names are listed in its Register of Members.

, 5.11, 9.12 and 9.13.

1.5 In addition to the Rules, the Management Committee may make other provisions concerning how the Society operates, including having a code of conduct for the Management Committee and other policies necessary to the running of the community business. Such provisions must not be inconsistent with the Model Rules.

3.8 A Member may be expelled by a resolution approved by not less than two-thirds of the members of the Management Committee present and voting at a Management Committee Meeting. The following procedure is to be adopted.

3.8.1 Any Member may complain to the Secretary in writing that another Member has acted in a way detrimental to the interests of the Society. Should the Secretary, being a member, wish to complain, this should be in writing to the Chairperson.

3.8.2 If a complaint is made, the Management Committee shall ensure that the complaint is investigated under this rule, including taking such

steps as it considers appropriate to ensure that each Member's point of view is heard.

3.8.3 The results of that investigation shall be placed before a sub-committee appointed by the Management Committee for the purpose, formed of no more than 3 serving Management Committee members and such independent persons as the Management Committee may appoint.

3.8.4 The sub-committee shall consider whether the conduct of the Member concerned fell below the standard expected of members under these rules, any agreed code of conduct, and the general law.

3.8.5 Before taking any decision, the sub-committee shall ensure that the Member concerned has the opportunity to put their case. If the Member concerned declines to do so, then the sub-committee may proceed to make a decision notwithstanding this.

3.8.6 If pursuant to this rule the sub-committee considers that the conduct of the Member concerned has fallen below the expected standard then the sub-committee may:

3.8.6.1 issue such warning as to future conduct, or requirement for additional training, as it sees fit; or

3.8.6.2 for a period not exceeding twelve months suspend the rights of the Member complained of to attend Members' Meetings and vote under the Rules; or

3.8.6.3 remove the Member from membership.

3.8.7 A Member who has been so removed from membership may by written notice to the Society appeal to the next following Management Committee meeting. The Management Committee shall ensure that:

3.8.7.1 no member of the sub-committee appointed under this rule 3.8 takes part in the Management Committee deliberation or decision concerning the appeal; and

3.8.7.2 the individual concerned has the opportunity to put their case to the Management Committee if they wish to do so.

3.8.8 If the Management Committee resolves to uphold the appeal, the individual concerned shall be deemed to be re-appointed as a Member from the conclusion of the relevant Management Committee meeting.

3.9 No person who has been expelled from membership is to be re-admitted except by a resolution carried by the votes of not less than two-thirds of the members of the Management Committee present and voting at a Management Committee Meeting.

3.10 The Society shall establish and maintain a grievance and complaints policy in accordance with guidance issued from time to time by Plunkett UK.

5.11 A member of the Management Committee shall immediately vacate their office if:

5.11.1 they resign from office in writing to the Secretary or Chairperson;

5.11.2 they cease to be a Member;

5.11.3 they become bankrupt or subject to a disqualification order made under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, or are otherwise disqualified by operation of law;

5.11.4 they are removed from office on grounds of conduct under the following procedure:

5.11.4.1 Any Member may complain to the Secretary in writing that a member of the Management Committee has acted in a way detrimental to the interests of the Society. Should the Secretary, being a member, wish to complain, this should be in writing to the Chairperson.

5.11.4.2 If a complaint is made, the Management Committee shall ensure that the complaint is investigated under this rule, including taking such steps as it considers appropriate to ensure that each individual's point of view is heard.

5.11.4.3 The results of that investigation shall be placed before a sub-committee appointed by the Management Committee for the purpose, formed of no more than 3 serving

Management Committee members and such independent persons as the Management Committee may appoint.

5.11.4.4 The sub-committee shall consider whether the conduct of the member concerned fell below the standard expected of Management Committee members under these rules, any agreed code of conduct, and the general law.

5.11.4.5 Before taking any decision, the sub-committee shall ensure that the individual concerned has the opportunity to put their case. If they decline to do so, then the sub-committee may proceed to make a decision notwithstanding this.

5.11.4.6 If pursuant to this rule the sub-committee considers that the conduct of the member concerned has fallen below the expected standard then the sub-committee may:

a) issue such warning as to future conduct, or requirement for additional training, as it sees fit; or
b) for a period not exceeding twelve months suspend the rights of the individual complained of to attend Management Committee meetings, act as a member of the Management Committee and vote under the Rules; or
c) remove the individual from membership of the Management Committee.

5.11.4.7 An individual who has been so removed from the Management Committee may by written notice to the Society appeal to the next following Management Committee meeting. The Management Committee shall ensure that:

a) no member of the sub-committee appointed under this rule 3.8 takes part in the Management Committee deliberation or decision concerning the appeal; and
b) the individual concerned has the opportunity to put their case to the Management Committee if they wish to do so.

5.11.4.8 If the Management Committee resolves to uphold the appeal, the individual concerned shall be deemed to be re-appointed to the Management Committee from the conclusion of the relevant Management Committee meeting;

5.11.5 they are removed from office by a simple majority of the Members in a Special Members Meeting, the notices for which specified that the question of the Management Committee Member removal was to be considered;

5.11.6 they come to the end of their term of office, unless they are re-elected;

5.11.7 they have absented themselves from three consecutive meetings of the Management Committee (as the case may be) in one rolling twelve-month period without special leave of absence from the Management Committee;

5.11.8 a composition is made with that person's creditors generally in satisfaction of that person's debts;

5.11.9 a registered medical practitioner who is treating that person gives a written opinion to the Society stating that that person has become physically or mentally incapable of acting as a member of the Management Committee and may remain so for more than three months.

9.12 The Society shall maintain and follow an internal policy for dispute resolution as approved each year by the Committee.

9.13 Any dispute between the Society or an officer of the Society on the one hand and a Member or a person who has for not more than six months ceased to be a Member on the other hand, as to the interpretation of or arising out of the Rules shall be dealt with in accordance with the Society's dispute resolution policy referred to in rule 9.12 and the Society's code of conduct as follows:

9.13.1 informally between the parties;

9.13.2 by mediation by a mediator agreed by the parties. If the parties are unable to agree on a mediator then either party may apply to the

Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution to appoint a mediator. The parties shall attempt to settle the dispute through the mediation process;

9.13.3 if within 28 days of the mediator being appointed the dispute has not been settled, then either party may refer the dispute to the courts for determination.