



Beef Shorthorn Cattle Society

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Issued: August 2020

Introduction

The Society aims to provide an efficient, responsive, and personal service. We recognise that Complaints are an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as an opportunity to put things right for the person [or organisation] that has made the complaint.

Aim of the policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use
- To publicise the existence of the complaints procedure so that people know how to contact the Society to make a complaint
- To make sure staff and Directors at the Society knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated / reviewed fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To actively use complaints in a positive way to help improve the service we provide

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the Societies work or conduct, or the conduct or behaviour of members, staff, or Society representative.

Our policy covers complaints about:

- the standard of service you should expect from us
- the behaviour of our staff in delivering that service
- any action, or lack of action, by our staff or others engaged on business

Our complaints policy does not cover:

- comments about our policies or policy decisions
- dissatisfaction or complaints expressed with our policies or decisions
- matters that have already been fully investigated through this complaints policy
- anonymous complaints

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any individual, volunteer or organisation who has a legitimate interest in the Society including the public if something is perceived to be improper. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to the Society's Human Resource internal policy on such matters.



We do not expect staff or Directors to tolerate unacceptable behaviour by complainants or any service user. Unacceptable behaviour includes behaviour that is abusive, offensive, or threatening and may include:

- Using abusive or foul language on the telephone or face to face
- Sending multiple emails or leaving multiple voicemails
- Make persistent and unreasonable demands or expectations of staff or Directors and/or the complaints process after the unreasonableness has been explained to the complainant

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively. All persons involved in any complaint, including the complainant and the person complained about, must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with any complaint, investigation, or disciplinary matter, including the outcome of that complaint. The Society may determine whether, and to what extent, it ought to publicise the outcome of a complaint having regard to risk (a) to the public or any person(s); and (b) to the reputation of the Society. No person may make electronic recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under this policy and, while those involved will normally be told the names of any witnesses whose evidence is relevant to any complaint, investigation or disciplinary matter, this will not be the case if the Society believes that a witness's identity should remain confidential. We will try to deal with complaints constructively and fairly but there are some issues / situations where it would not be appropriate to provide full information to the person making the complaint.

Responsibility and Review

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Board of Directors who will review and update the Policy as required. Any risks identified from complaints will be considered as part of the overall review of Risk Management.

Abusive, persistent, or vexatious complaints and complainants

The Society recognises that complaints can be made that are vexatious or not founded. The Society will consider all complaints reasonably and in line with the Complaints Policy. Complaints that meet the definition of vexatious or unfounded, will be investigated fully and if found vexatious or unfounded, disciplinary or sanctions may be taken as redress.

Complaints Procedure

Written complaints should be sent to the office at:

Beef Shorthorn Cattle Society
Society Pavilion, Avenue M, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, CV8 2RG

or by e-mail to-

President	Charles Horton	cshorton17@gmail.com
Vice President	Tim Riley	stoneyroyd@icloud.com
Operations Manager/ Breed Secretary	Clive Brown	clive@beefshorthorn.org



Informal complaints

May be made by phone to the President or Vice President, or in person at any of the events.

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have, such as social media. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint.
- Take the complainant's name, address, and telephone number.
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to the Society.
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure and ask if they could send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.
- Advise the Breed Secretary (President/ Vice President as soon as appropriate) of the complaint to ensure the matter is recorded and dealt with in line with this Policy and Procedure.

Resolving Complaints

Informal Complaint

Anyone wishing to make a complaint will be advised in the first instance that the best, quickest and easiest way to sort out a problem or misunderstanding is to contact the Society staff to explain their complaint. If the complaint is directed at the service of a member of staff the President would be the appropriate first point of contact.

Informal complaints will normally be those that can be acted on and where possible resolved without the need for detailed investigation or any delay. Summary details of informal complaints will be recorded for internal monitoring and service improvement purposes, but they will not be recorded in the formal complaints register that is maintained.

Formal Complaint -Stage One

If the complaint is not resolved through the informal process the person concerned (complainant) can lodge a formal written complaint. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the President (or Vice President if appropriate) within five business days.

On receiving the complaint, the President (or Vice President) records it in the complaints Logbook. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this Complaint's Procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation/review, and any action taken because of the complaint.



Formal Complaint -Stage Two -appeal

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by the Board of Directors.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Board of Directors. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Board of Directors may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate suitable person(s) within the Board composite to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation or review has not been completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a reply will be given. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe a summary of the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken because of the complaint. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

As the Society is a Scottish registered charity, the complainant can complain to the Scottish Charity Regulator at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the OSCR can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <http://www.oscr.org.uk/charities/raise-a-concern-about-a-charity>.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the President or Director should not also have the President and/or Director involved as a person leading a Stage Two review.

Last reviewed by the Board - August 2020