



Stafford and Stone Canoe Club (SSCC)- Grievance Procedure

Introduction

Stafford and Stone Canoe Club (SSCC) is a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC). Our CASC registration no is CASC 00302. Our SSCC address is Stafford and Stone Canoe Club, West bridge Park, Stafford Road, Staffordshire ST15 8QW. Stafford and Stone Canoe Club (SSCC) is run via an elected voluntary committee.

For the protection of the Club and individual members, and the fair treatment of all members, Stafford and Stone Canoe club (SSCC) aims to provide a transparent, robust and fair procedure for dealing with any issues raised as a grievance or complaint.

For the purpose of this procedure, the word 'grievance' will be taken to mean either a grievance or complaint.

When a situation, or issue cannot be addressed and resolved with the other person/coach/parent/club directly, or if this is inappropriate due to the nature of the grievance, reporting to the Club's designated Welfare Officer(s) will be the first point of contact for registering a grievance (unless it would be inappropriate for them to be involved, in which case another member of the general committee may be preferred).

What should your grievance include?

Wherever possible, the details reported on the grievance should include:

- An explanation of the grievance
- Details of any events that have taken place that form part of the grievance - what, when, and where the event(s) took place
- The names of any witnesses and/or fellow grievant along with their statements
- Names of any others who are known to have been treated in a similar way
- Details of any known issues of a similar nature raised previously
- A preference for how the grievance should be resolved.

Grievances should be raised within a reasonable timescale not exceeding three months from the event that has led to the grievance.

The officer receiving a grievance should consider carefully the most appropriate method to deal with the matter:

- Through informal discussions with the parties concerned; or,
- Through a formal hearing procedure; or,
- By referring the matter to an appropriate external authority.

They should clarify for all the parties likely to be involved the procedure that is to be followed and the timing of key events within the procedure.

If appropriate, an informal procedure will be pursued in preference to, and/or before a formal hearing procedure is implemented. However, if it becomes apparent that a matter is of such level of seriousness that it needs to be referred to an outside body (e.g. a criminal matter) the committee of SSCC should be informed immediately and the appropriate outside bodies contacted without unnecessary further delay.

Informal Procedure the Welfare Officer(s) will appoint a suitably qualified person, who has not previously been involved in the matter, with the agreement of the grievant, who will look into the background and circumstances, clarify the facts, and may serve to resolve the issue or recommend another appropriate formal course of action.

If the matter is not resolved informally the information gathered during the procedure may be referred to in any subsequent hearing or appeal as may any failure or refusal to participate in such proceedings. A record will be kept of the grievance and its outcome.

Formal Hearing Procedure If the grievant is not satisfied with the outcome of informal discussions (or such a stage has not been pursued) they may request a hearing.

This should be requested in writing and contain the details of the grievance. The request for the formal hearing, or the grievance if no informal procedure has taken place, should be sent to the Welfare Officer unless the grievant feels it inappropriate to do so. In such exceptional circumstances the grievant should contact a suitable other member of the general committee.

The Welfare Officer will appoint a panel to hear the grievant's case. As a minimum, the panel will comprise of where possible a chairperson and two members one of whom may have relevant 'expert' knowledge. All panel members must be independent of the matter to-date where possible.

For any complaint or grievance involving a child protection issue the Club's designated Child Welfare Officer will be one of the two panel members.

Where the Welfare Officer is not a member of the panel, they may advise the panel on procedure.

- Before the panel proceeds, the grievant should signify their agreement to the constituted panel.
- The panel must give a fair and independent hearing to all sides of any dispute within an appropriate and agreed timescale.
- A grievant has the right to be accompanied and/or represented.
- A written record of the panels' discussions should be kept.
- If either party chooses not to attend the hearing, the panel has the right to proceed with the hearing based on written submissions.
- The panel will adhere to all relevant aspects of the Club's Constitution and Articles of Association in conducting its business and deciding upon the outcome of the grievance/complaint.
- The outcome of the hearing and an explanation of the outcome must be communicated to all parties within 14 days. If the outcome of the hearing is unacceptable to one or more parties they have the right to appeal.

Appeal procedure

If one party wishes to appeal against the outcome of the hearing they should set out the grounds on which they wish to appeal in writing. This letter should be sent to the Welfare Officer within 14 days of the outcome of the initial hearing being known.

The valid grounds for an appeal may include:

- relevant information was ignored or not considered by the original panel; or
- the procedure was tainted by unreasonable bias or conflict of interests; or
- the provisions of the procedure were not adhered to; or
- the original panel exceeded its jurisdiction; or
- the findings of the original panel were inconsistent with previous similar cases or with the Constitution and Articles of SSCC.

If the Welfare Officer(s) considers that there are sufficient grounds for an appeal, they will appoint an independent appeal panel to consider the appeal. No member of the appeal panel can have been involved as a party in the previous consideration of the grievance.

- The appeal panel should be constituted along the same principles as an original hearing panel
- The chairperson of the appeal panel should convene a hearing of the appeal panel in a timely manner
- The panel will decide the conduct of the proceedings so as to best gain an effective and fair outcome in accordance with the nature of the appeal
- If appropriate, the chairperson may request written submissions

- The appeal panel may or may not require the parties to the grievance to be in attendance
- If invited to attend, a grievant has the right to be accompanied at an appeal hearing
- A written record will be kept of the panel's discussions
- The outcome and sufficient reason to explain the outcome of the appeal panel will be communicated to both parties within 14 days of the appeal panel hearing. The outcome of the appeal will be final.

This procedure was last updated on 12/09/2023/ 2024

Next review- 2025 yearly, or in line with British Canoeing standards updates.

Please also see British Canoeing and Appeals policy for further guidance templates.