



## Loughton AC Complaints Procedure

### Scope

This document outlines how Loughton AC will manage complaints made by both members and non-members.

For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint is any written expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Loughton AC which is directed to Loughton AC as a complaint.

Complaints regarding the potential misconduct of club members are out of scope of this policy, and should be managed under the Loughton AC Club Discipline and Appeals Process.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Loughton AC Complaints Procedure is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To document how members and non-members can contact Loughton AC to make a complaint.
- To direct concerns around misconduct to the correct Process.
- To make sure the relevant volunteers at Loughton AC know what to do if a complaint is received.
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To gather information which helps Loughton AC improve.
- To ensure confidentiality is maintained.

### Where complaints come from

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in Loughton AC.

### How complaints can be made

Complaints should be made by email to the Secretary at [loughtonacsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:loughtonacsecretary@gmail.com).

Complaints about the Secretary should be made by email to the Welfare Officers at [loughtonacwelfare@gmail.com](mailto:loughtonacwelfare@gmail.com)

### Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, informing only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

The decision of Stage One and Stage Two complaints processes shall be recorded and retained in confidential records for a period of six years by the Club. Supporting documentation shall also be retained in the same fashion.

## **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Chair and the Committee of Loughton AC.

## **Complaints process - Stage One**

On receiving the complaint, The Secretary records the complaint in the complaints log.

Complaints should be acknowledged by The Secretary within ten working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. A copy of this Complaints Procedure should be attached.

If the complaint is relating to the potential misconduct of a club member, the Loughton AC Club Discipline and Appeals Process should be followed.

The Secretary will appoint an appropriate person to investigate the facts of the complaint and provide an informal written (usually email) outcome to the complainant. The written outcome should inform the complainant of their right to request an escalation to Stage Two within four weeks of the outcome being sent, outlining how this request can be made.

Ideally complainants should receive an outcome within four weeks of the investigation commencing. If this is not possible because an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when the informal outcome will be given.

For complaints about the Secretary, a Welfare Officer will lead the Stage One process.

## **Complaints process - Stage Two**

If the complainant feels that the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, the complainant can request that the complaint is reviewed at Committee level. This request must be made within four weeks of the Stage One outcome being sent. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Committee.

The request for Committee level review should be acknowledged within two weeks. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Committee will appoint a suitable person to investigate the facts of the case. The Stage Two investigation may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. Where appropriate, Terms of Reference of the investigation will be agreed between the complainant and the investigator.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed.

Ideally complainants should receive an outcome within four weeks of the Stage Two investigation commencing. If this is not possible because an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when the informal outcome will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken or

recommendations made as a result of the complaint. The Committee should be provided with a copy of this communication.

No sanctions or warnings can be imposed as an outcome of an investigation under this Complaints Procedure.

The decision taken at this stage is final.

### **Potential misconduct of club members**

If during any stage of an investigation under the Loughton AC Complaints Procedure it becomes apparent that there are concerns around the potential misconduct of club members, the investigator should recommend to the Committee that an investigation is commenced under the Loughton AC Club Discipline and Appeals Process. When initiating an investigation under the Loughton AC Club Discipline and Appeals Process, the Committee may choose to close, continue or suspend open investigation under this Complaints Procedure.

### **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The Committee may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

### **Monitoring and learning from complaints**

The outcome of all complaints are reviewed by the Committee to identify whether there is a need to make changes.