



Complaints, Investigation procedure and Disciplinary procedures.

Complaints guidance: All complaints relating to potential breaches of WPCS rules must first be lodged with the Show Secretary, within the rules of the show. If, following the conclusion of those procedures, the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, the complaint may be referred to the Welsh Pony & Cob Society. All complaints should be in writing and addressed to the Company Secretary. Proof of complaint to the show secretary must be provided when a complaint is submitted to the WPCS.

20. GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT

All members must meet the following requirements in regard to their conduct and behaviour.

Members must:

- a) Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others.
- b) Be fair, considerate and honest in all dealings with others.
- c) Be professional in and accept responsibility for your actions.
- d) Be aware of and maintain the rules and regulations of the Society and operate within those rules.
- e) Preserve and protect the standing and reputation of the Society.
- f) Never use your position or role for personal gain, to avoid your responsibility or to unjustly prevent an individual from exercising their rights.
- g) Be aware of your legal responsibility and the legal rights of others.
- h) Do not use your involvement with the Society to promote your own beliefs, behaviour and practices where these are inconsistent with those of the Society's rules.
- i) Be a positive role model and demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility especially when dealing with persons less than 18 years of age as your words and actions are examples.

- j) Ensure interaction with persons under the age of 18 years is appropriate and that unaccompanied and unobserved activities are avoided wherever practical.
 - k) Refrain from any form of harassment or intimidation of others.
 - l) Refrain from using any behaviour that may bring the Society into disrepute.
 - m) Provide a safe environment for the conduct of the activity.
 - n) Show concern and exercise due caution towards others who may be sick, injured or disabled in a way in which is not immediately visible.
 - o) At all times abide by the Defra Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69389/pb13334-cop-horse-091204.pdf - and the Land Transport of Horses.
 - p) Understand the repercussions if you breach one of the Codes of Conduct of The Welsh Pony and Cob Society.
 - q) Members who are also Trustees must promise to abide by the fundamental values that underpin all the activity of this organisation.
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21. SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET POLICY

No Member of The Welsh Pony and Cob Society shall conduct him or herself in a manner or be guilty of behaviour which is derogatory to the character or prejudicial to the interests of The Welsh Pony and Cob Society and in particular (but without prejudice to the generality to the foregoing) no Member shall behave in an abusive or unpleasant manner to any person at any show or at any other location where Welsh Pony and Cob Society business is being transacted or via social media or the internet or via any publication in whatever format or via any other written or electronic format.

21.1. Introduction

The Welsh Pony and Cob Society acknowledges the importance of the internet and social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, home web-pages, chat rooms, messaging services and all other forms of electronic communication and the role that “social media” plays in the day to day lives of members. This policy note is to remind members that the Rules of The Welsh Pony and Cob Society apply to members when using social media and the internet. Failure to adhere to this policy note could lead to disciplinary action being taken against a member.

21.2. Using social media

21.2.1 You should be aware that The Welsh Pony and Cob Society may from time to time carry out internet searches to identify postings which include references to The Welsh Pony and Cob Society and its members.

21.2.2 Images produced by The Welsh Pony and Cob Society are the subject of copyright and should not be copied or used in social media save as provided in The Welsh Pony and Cob Society website user terms and conditions.

21.2.3 You should ensure that any material that you transmit or post to social media is clearly stated to be your personal view and is not held out to be, or could be mistaken as, the view of The Welsh Pony and Cob Society.

21.2.4 You must not post or transmit any material which could damage the name or reputation of The Welsh Pony and Cob Society, its members or former members, or which is derogatory to the character of or prejudicial to the interests of The Welsh Pony and Cob Society.

21.2.5 You must not post or transmit any material relating to The Welsh Pony and Cob Society, members or former members or their horses or ponies, or their business or private lives or which could otherwise be associated with or which may reasonably be attributed as coming from The Welsh Pony and Cob Society:

a) that is threatening, defamatory, obscene, indecent, seditious, offensive, pornographic, abusive, liable to incite racial hatred, discriminatory, menacing, scandalous, inflammatory, blasphemous, in breach of confidence, in breach of privacy or which may cause annoyance, distress or inconvenience; or

b) Which constitutes or encourages conduct that would be in breach of the WPCS rules, or constitutes a criminal offence, or which could give rise to civil liability, or otherwise be contrary to the laws of, or infringe the rights of any third party in, the UK or any other country in the world.

21.2.6 Any breach of this policy may constitute a breach of The Welsh Pony and Cob Society rules and could also lead to civil and/or criminal proceedings being brought against you.

21.3. Disclosure under law or regulation

You should be aware that The Welsh Pony and Cob Society will fully co-operate with any law enforcement authorities or court order requesting or directing The Welsh Pony and Cob Society to disclose the identity or locate anyone posting any material in breach of this policy. If we are requested by the police or any other regulatory or government authority investigating suspected illegal activities to provide your personal information, The Welsh Pony and Cob Society is entitled to do so.

22. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COMPETITORS AND EXHIBITORS

In addition to The Welsh Pony and Cob Society General Code of Conduct, the following requirements must be met by competitors and exhibitors during any show/activity held or sanctioned by the Society.

Members should:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of fellow competitors, Judges, stewards, officials, volunteers and spectators.
- Acts of aggression will not be tolerated.
- Respect the talent, potential and development of fellow competitors.
- Conduct yourself in a professional manner relating to language, temper and punctuality, be courteous and kind and set a good example in dress and behaviour. Blue denim is not acceptable.
- Maintain high personal behaviour standards at all times.
- Abide by the rules and respect the decision of the official, making all appeals through the formal process and respecting the final decision.
- Bullying is an issue in many sports today. The Welsh Pony and Cob Society wants members, organisers and officials to know that bullying is not acceptable at any Society event.
- The Welsh Pony and Cob Society recognise that bullying is unacceptable and has a clear policy in dealing with bullying under the Society's rules.
- Bullying is an inappropriate behaviour using force or power. Bullying undermines another person's self-esteem and confidence.
- Reports of bullying will be handled promptly and confidentially.

- We need the knowledge and experience of our volunteers. We cannot afford to lose good people through bad behaviour.
 - Every official, competitor and volunteer have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and the Society has the responsibility to ensure that this occurs at all shows/activities.
 - The WPCS can only discipline the appropriate person if the intimidation is reported under the correct Society Procedures.
 - Any person who feels they have been intimidated should put it in writing to the WPCS Company Secretary.
 - In Criminal Law any threatening behaviour, intimidation or bullying is assault.
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23. FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS POLICY

This sets out the procedure for dealing with feedback and comments made in relation to the Welsh Pony and Cob Society and its services. For complaints against members of the Society, or about the identity or pedigree of an animal, please refer to the relevant appendixes of this policy.

Staff and Services

The Society and its staff endeavour to work to the highest standards in every regard. However, it recognises that there will be times when its customers will wish to comment upon its staff and services. The Society welcomes feedback as part of a culture of seeking continuous improvement to its services, practises, policies and procedures.

Should you or someone you represent, have a complaint or comment please verbally address it in the first instance to the member of staff with whom you are dealing. Should you feel that your complaint or comment has not been satisfied the following procedure should be followed.

Stage 1

Contact the manager of the service with which you wish to raise the complaint in writing either by letter or by e-mail. All correspondence should be marked "Private and Confidential". The manager will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and will respond to you within an additional ten working days. Where the complaint is about a manager then stage 2 should be followed.

Stage 2

Should your complaint not be satisfied by the manager please write to the Company Secretary by letter or by e-mail. All correspondence should be marked "Private and Confidential". The Company Secretary will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and will respond to you within an additional ten working days. Where the complaint is about the Company Secretary please write to the Chair of Council care of Bronaeron, Felinfach, Lampeter, Ceredigion, SA48 8AG and marked "Private and Confidential".

In respect of both stages the Society will always aim to respond in writing and in full to your feedback within one month of receiving the initial contact in writing.

However, if the issue is complicated, or if relevant staff are absent, any delay will be explained, and you will be kept informed of progress.

Review of Your Complaint

If you are not satisfied following receipt of the Society's Stage 2 response you can request a review of your complaint. The review will be conducted under the direction of the Chair of Council. Please write to the Chair of Council care of Bronaeron, Felinfach, Lampeter, Ceredigion SA48 8AG. All correspondence must be marked "Private and Confidential".

The Chair will nominate three trustees to form a panel to review the complaint and the Society's response. If necessary, further information will be sought from the complainant and this should be provided within ten working days of a request. The panel will review the complaint with the information as provided and will respond to the complainant within one month of the review being requested. If the issue is complicated, any delay will be explained, and you will be kept informed of progress.

Should the Society fail to address your complaint or concern, as a last resort, you are able to write directly to the Charity Commission. Please follow the links on the Charity Commission website at www.charitycommission.gov.uk.

Should you suspect illegal activity, for example terrorism or abuse, please contact the police on 101.

Appendix A

1. COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST MEMBERS

Making a complaint

1.1 If a person wishes to raise a complaint against a Society member, they should do so by contacting the Company Secretary, at Bronaeron, Felinfach, Lampeter, Ceredigion, SA48 8AG or by email on gemma@wpcs.uk.com.

1.2 A complaint should be in writing, marked “private & confidential” and signed by the complainant.

1.3 If the complaint is sent by post, then it should be sent by recorded delivery.

1.4 A delivery receipt for emailed complaints or any hand deliveries should be obtained.

1.5 If the complaint is about the Company Secretary, then the complaint should be addressed to the Chair of Council and marked “strictly private & confidential”.

1.6 Save where a complaint has been made by a trustee, honorary officer or Judge in relation to an issue arising from his or her duties, a complaint must be accompanied by the complaint fee of £150. The complaint will not be considered to have been made until the appropriate fee has been received. Failure to pay the fee may mean that the complaint will not be investigated under this Complaints Procedure, save for at the entire discretion of the Council. If the complainant wishes for further witness evidence to be sought in relation to the matter(s) raised, the names of the individuals whom the complainant wishes to provide such evidence should be referenced in the body of the complaint. If deemed appropriate and necessary, the individuals will be contacted and asked if they are willing to provide witness testimony. Witness testimony may be sought either in writing, via telephone interview or during a face-to-face meeting. The extent of and manner in which witness evidence is sought will be at the entire discretion of the Council.

1.7 The complaint, any additional supporting evidence and the appropriate fee should be received within 14 days of the complainant becoming aware of the subject

of the complaint. Complaints received outside this timescale will only be investigated at the discretion of the Council.

Responding to a complaint: informal

1.8 Within 5 working days of the receipt of a complaint, the Society will send a letter acknowledging the same and, if necessary, asking for further details relating to the matters brought to light.

1.9 Where it is considered that the complaint may be resolved by way of an informal discussion, the relevant parties will be informed of the complaint and invited to resolve their complaint in an informal setting. This may include a meeting or other facilitated discussion. In cases where informal resolution has not previously been successful, the complaint will automatically be dealt with under the formal process set out below.

1.10 If the Society believes that the matter would be best addressed by mediation (a more structured approach to an informal meeting) it will invite the complainant and the person(s) complained of to participate in a mediation process. If an informal meeting has not achieved resolution the parties may still be invited to attend a mediation session in cases where the Council determines, at its discretion, that mediation may still prove to be successful. If mediation is unsuccessful this will not be offered for a second time in respect of the same complaint.

1.11 If mediation is determined to be an appropriate course of action:

- All concerned parties will be invited to attend the mediation. We will provide you with a date, time and location leaving reasonable time to allow you to prepare for the meeting. We aim to hold all mediation meetings within 30 days of the date of the original complaint.
- Each party will be asked to sit in separate meeting rooms and wait until the mediator is ready to speak with them. Typically, the complainant will be spoken to first and the person(s) complained about spoken to thereafter.
- The mediator will attempt to facilitate a resolution. This may involve the mediator speaking with each of the parties on further occasions following the initial discussion.
- Where deemed appropriate all parties will ultimately be asked to meet in the same room to discuss possible resolution.

- A summary of the discussion, agreements/outcome reached, and any agreed actions will be summarised and provided to all parties, in writing, within 5 working days of the meeting.

1.12 If the matter is resolved by mediation the complaint fee will be refunded their full complaint fee.

Responding to a complaint: formal

1.13 In the event that informal action or mediation is not appropriate or has been attempted and not resulted in resolution, we will write to you setting out the name of the person(s) assigned to investigate the complaint (the Investigating Officer(s)). The Investigating Officer will be an independent person who will not have previously been involved in the matter being heard. He or She may or may not be a member of the Society. If the complaint relates to a member of the Society other than a Trustee or former Trustee, the Investigating Officers will be a panel of three, consisting of three trustees or three independent persons, who may not be members of the Society, or a combination thereof with not more than three in total.

1.14 If, having been advised of the name of the intended Investigating Officer, any party realises that they have a personal association or other relationship with the Investigating Officer that would preclude the Investigating Officer from maintaining an objective, unbiased view, this should be alerted to the Council immediately.

1.15 At no point following confirmation of the name of the Investigating Officer or Investigating Company should any parties involved in the investigation attempt to contact the Investigating Officer or Investigating Company with a view to discussing the investigation or any other associated or related matters. If the Council become aware of such action, the complaint fee will be withheld, and the complaints procedure suspended.

1.16 The designated individual/panel will:

- i) Treat every complaint as confidential
- ii) Not discuss any matters with anyone outside of the committee other than to request expert advice
- iii) Declare immediately if they have a conflict of interest

- iv) Treat each reported incident fairly and equitably.

1.17 If we require further information from the complainant in order to process the complaint and this can be provided in writing or in the form of other documentary evidence, this will be requested when we write to confirm the details of the Investigating Officer(s). Any further details/information requested by the Society should be provided by the complainant within 10 working days of the date of the written request (unless otherwise agreed) otherwise the complaint may not be processed any further. If the complaint is not processed the fee shall be returned within 30 days of the decision not to proceed.

1.18 The investigation of the complaint will be carried out by the Investigating Officer(s) within a reasonable timescale barring issues outside their control.

1.19 The Investigating Officer(s) will undertake all reasonable investigation.

1.20 If necessary, the complainant may be invited to a meeting to discuss the complaint and/or the response to the complaint further. In the event that this is not possible or practical the complainant may be asked to expand upon the complaint in writing or by telephone. The format, date, time, location and attendees of any meeting/telephone call will be notified to the complainant in advance.

1.21 If deemed necessary, the investigation may also include obtaining a response to the complaint from any member who is the subject of the complaint. This will usually involve sharing the full details of the complaint with that member, which in normal circumstances will include the identity of the complainant.

1.22 If necessary, further witnesses included the subject(s) of the complaint will be invited into an investigatory meeting to discuss the matter raised. Witnesses will be given reasonable notice in advance of the format, date, time, location and attendees of any meeting/telephone call. 1.23 Once the investigation has been concluded, a determination will be made by the Investigating Officer who will notify the complainant and the person complained of or against in writing of the decision together with the reasons for this decision and any recommended actions. This document will also be sent to the Society who will retain a copy on file. The Investigating Officer will either:

- (a) Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part; or

(b) Uphold the complaint in whole or in part which may include a determination that all or part of the matter be dealt with under the Society's disciplinary procedure (which can be found at Appendix 3).

1.23 In the event that the complaint is upheld in full by the Society, then the complainant will be repaid the complaint fee. Should the complaint not be upheld or partially upheld, then this sum will be retained by the Society.

Appendix B

COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE IDENTITY OR PEDIGREE OF AN ANIMAL

2.1 Any complaint regarding the identity or pedigree of an animal must be submitted in writing to the registered office of the Society and the steps set out in paragraphs 1.1 to 1.6 above should be followed.

2.2 Within 5 working days of the receipt of a complaint, the Society will send a letter acknowledging the same and, if necessary, asking for further details. The Society will inform you of the name of the person(s) assigned to investigate the complaint (the Investigating Officer(s)).

2.3 In investigating a complaint which relates to the identity or pedigree of an animal, the Investigating Officer(s) carrying out the investigation will obtain expert evidence in the form of DNA profiling from an independent expert nominated by the Society. In order to obtain this evidence, the complainant will be required to pay to the Society the costs of obtaining the evidence to include the cost of the DNA profiling. The complainant will usually be asked to pay such sums to the Society, prior to the DNA profiling being instigated.

2.4 Once the investigation has been concluded, and DNA evidence obtained, a determination will be made by the Investigating Officer(s) who will notify the complainant and the Society in writing of the decision together with the reasons for this decision and any action that it is recommended is taken. The Investigating Officer(s) will either:

- (a) Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part; or
- (b) Uphold the complaint in whole or in part which may include a determination that all or part of the matter be dealt with under the Society's Disciplinary Procedures set out in Part 3 below.

2.5 In the event of a DNA profiling states that the parentage previously stipulated by the breeder is not correct the breeder may nominate one or other sires for profiling and that DNA evidence will be submitted to the Investigating Officer(s) for consideration before making their decision pursuant to paragraph 2.4 . Any fees required for the additional DNA profiling will be the sole liability of the breeder.

2.6 Should the additional DNA profiling sought state that the parentage previously stipulated by the breeder is not correct, this will be deemed conclusive proof with no right of appeal.

2.7 In the event that the complaint is upheld in full by the Society, then the complainant will be repaid the complaint fee. Should the complaint not be upheld or partially, then this sum will be retained by the Society

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2.8 If a complaint is not upheld, in relation to the identity or pedigree of an animal there is no right of appeal.

Appendix C

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

Disciplinary Proceedings

3.1 If, following the conclusion of an investigation, an Investigating Officer(s) determines that:

- (a) there is a case to answer; and
- (b) further consideration by a disciplinary panel could result in disciplinary action being taken against a member,

the Investigating Officer will recommend that the matter be dealt with formally under the Disciplinary Procedure, as set out below.

3.2 Within 14 days of the recommendation by the Investigating Officer, the Chair and Vice Chair of Council (acting together) will appoint a disciplinary panel.

3.3 The disciplinary panel will be comprised of three people who may or may not be members of the Society (the Disciplinary Panel) but who will not have previously been involved in the matter being heard and who are therefore able to act in a fair and impartial manner, basing their decisions on only the evidence before them.

3.4 Within 7 days of being appointed, the Disciplinary Panel will inform the member of the allegations against them, the basis for those allegations, that there will be a disciplinary hearing convened and what the possible range of consequences will be if it decides after the hearing that the allegations are true. Where appropriate, the following will be included:

- (a) The composition of the panel
- (b) A summary of relevant information gathered by the Investigating Officer(s) during the investigation.

(c) A copy of any relevant documents which will be used at the disciplinary hearing; and

(d) A copy of any relevant witness statements, in which case the member will be given as much information as possible while maintaining confidentiality.

3.5 Within 14 days of receipt of the above information in writing, the member must inform the Disciplinary Panel whether they admit the allegations or not and indicate whether they wish to attend the hearing.

3.6 If the allegations are admitted, the Disciplinary Panel may resolve the matter by considering the written facts as provided by the complainant(s) and/or other witnesses, without calling oral evidence.

3.7 The Disciplinary Panel will consider any written submissions made by the member with regards to the matter in question as well as any details or mitigating circumstances surrounding the alleged conduct or misconduct.

3.8 The Panel may also rely on the written report of the Investigating Officer(s).

3.9 If the allegations are denied, or if no response is received, the disciplinary procedure shall continue in line with the process set out below.

3.10 Within 21 days, from the day the member received notification of the complaint, the Disciplinary Panel will give the member written notice of the date, time and place of the disciplinary hearing. The hearing will be held as soon as reasonably practicable, but the member will be given a reasonable amount of time to prepare their case based on the information given to them by the Disciplinary Panel.

Disciplinary hearing

3.11 The disciplinary hearing will be held in private, in front of the Disciplinary Panel. The member may bring another member or person to the Disciplinary hearing. At the disciplinary hearing, the Disciplinary Panel will take the member through the allegations and the evidence that has been gathered. The member will be able to respond and present any evidence.

3.12 The member may ask relevant witnesses to appear at the hearing, provided they have given the Disciplinary Panel sufficient advance notice to arrange their attendance. The member will be given the opportunity to respond to any information given by a witness.

3.13 Written statements may be introduced only if previously produced to and/or with the consent of the Disciplinary Panel.

The Disciplinary Panel may make a finding, following the disciplinary hearing, to:

- (a) Uphold, in whole or in part; or
- (b) Reject, in whole or in part the allegations made against the member

3.14 The decision by the Disciplinary Panel and its reasons, along with any disciplinary penalty (if appropriate), will be communicated to the member within 14 days of the date of the disciplinary hearing.

3.15 The Chair of the Panel may vary this procedure in his or her absolute discretion if, after discussion with the other parties, he or she is of the opinion that such change would assist the disciplinary procedure in a fair and impartial way.

Disciplinary Penalties

3.16 If the Disciplinary Panel makes a decision to uphold the allegations made against the member, in whole or in part, it shall impose one or more of the following sanctions as deemed appropriate given the circumstances, nature and severity of the case:

- (a) Take no action (only if there are significant mitigating circumstances);
- (b) Give the member a reprimand or caution in respect of the conduct in question.
- (c) Impose a fine up to a maximum of £5000
- (d) Terminate the member's membership with the Society and/or remove the member from their official position on either a temporary or permanent basis

- (e) Require the member to undertake training with the aim of providing further education in respect of the conduct in question
- (f) If appropriate suspend the member from any of the following: membership, selling at WPCS official sales.

3.17 In addition, in the case of a Judge:

- (a) He or she be removed from the panel or panels.
- (b) The asterisk rating against his/her name is removed.

In addition, in the case of an exhibitor:

- (a) He or she be prevented from exhibiting in any capacity at any WPCS affiliated show or event.

In addition, in the case of a member, he or she be prevented from selling at WPCS official sales.

3.18 Any suspension shall normally run with immediate effect from the date of the Disciplinary Hearing. The Disciplinary Panel may take into account any period of suspension served prior to the hearing date.

3.19 In the event that a member fails or refuses to comply in whole or in part with the sanctions imposed, the disciplinary Panel may reconvene at its own discretion and impose additional sanctions as it deems appropriate in the circumstances.

3.20 If in relation to an offence dealt with by a court of law relating to an animal welfare offence, if a member is found guilty the Society will take reciprocal action to that imposed by the Court i.e. if the Court issues a warning or reprimand the Society will similarly warn or reprimand the member.

3.21 In the case of a Court banning a member from keeping/owning animals for a period of time the Society will revoke the membership of the member found guilty and ban them from membership for the full period of the ban imposed by the court.

3.22 There is no appeal against an identity or pedigree complaint proven by the process outlined above.

3.23 There is also no appeal against membership revoked as a result of a welfare issue determined by a Court of Law.

Appeal

3.24 If a member feels that disciplinary action taken against them is wrong or unjust then they should appeal in writing, stating the full grounds of appeal, to the Secretary within 14 days of the date on which they were informed of the decision of the Disciplinary Panel. The member will also be required to deposit with the Society the sum of £500. If the appeal committee ultimately revokes the original decision, then the sum deposited will be reimbursed to the member.

3.25 Upon receipt of an appeal and appropriate fee, the Chair and Vice Chair of Council of the Welsh Pony & Cob Society acting together will appoint an Appeal Committee comprising three members who may or may not be members of the Society and one of whom shall be a solicitor.

3.26 Appeals may be dealt with by written representations or at an appeal hearing in person. If by way of a hearing in person, the Appeal Committee will give the member written notice of the date, time and place of any appeal hearing. This will normally be within 14 days of the written notice. If determination of the appeal will be based on written representations only, the member will be informed of this in writing and of the timescale for any further written representations to be submitted.

3.27 The Appeal Committee will consider all the evidence and make its decision which may be to:

- (g) Confirm the original decision.
- (h) Revoke the original decision; or
- (i) Substitute a different penalty. (which will not be a more serious penalty than the one imposed by the Disciplinary Panel.)

3.28 The Appeal Committee will inform the member in writing of the final decision as soon as possible, usually within 14 days of the date of the appeal hearing. There will be no further right of appeal. (Adopted by the Council of the Welsh Pony & Cob Society on November 2016).

Records of Disciplinary Hearings and Appeals

3.29 The decisions of the Disciplinary Panel shall be recorded and retained in confidential records for a period of time specified by the Panel, but no more than six years from the date of its creation. Supporting documentation may also be retained.

Co-operation of Members and Other Parties

3.30 The procedures described in this policy assume that any complainant, member or other person directly impacted by this policy will cooperate in the interest of resolving the issue in question. In the absence of such cooperation, or if any complaint is withdrawn at any stage, we reserve the right to proceed with a Disciplinary Hearing or Appeal Hearing based on such information and evidence as we are able to obtain.

3.31 In addition, where it is found that a complainant has impeded an investigation in any way the WPCS reserve the right to find that the investigation is invalid and recommend that the process be terminated and the complaint fee withheld by the society.

24. PROCESS TO RAISE CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS

The Society considers the welfare of all Welsh Ponies and Cobs to be of paramount importance and works hard to educate and support owners and breeders of Welsh Ponies and Cobs in this respect. Whilst the Society's role is educational and advisory, the Society's Honorary Welfare Coordinator and Honorary Veterinary Surgeon work closely with the relevant authorities in connection with welfare complaints received.

If a member/person has concerns regarding the welfare of Welsh ponies they should contact the Company Secretary, at Bronaeron, Felinfach, Lampeter, Ceredigion, SA48 8AG or by email on Secretary@wpcs.uk.com If sent by post, then it should be sent by recorded delivery. A delivery receipt for emailed communications or any hand deliveries should be obtained.

What will happen next?

1.1 The Society will send a letter within 5 working days acknowledging the communication and asking for further details where necessary. If a response requested from the complainant is not received within 10 working days, then the complaint may not be processed any further.

1.2 Upon receipt and confirmation of further details, the issue will be referred on a confidential basis by the Company Secretary to the Society's Honorary Welfare Coordinator who will work in conjunction with the Society's Honorary Veterinary Officer appointed by the Council of the Society.

1.3 The Society will always strive to ensure that your details remain strictly confidential. Your personal details will be kept confidential in accordance with Criminal Justice and Data Protection regulations. The National Welfare Coordinator will always seek to manage the disclosure of information during an investigation to prevent the identity of the complainant. The National Welfare Coordinator may need to share some or all of the information when making referrals to other Welfare or regulatory bodies. Although these bodies hold similar confidentiality procedures the National Welfare Coordinator will always seek the complainant's permission before revealing his/her identity.

1.4 The Society's Welfare Coordinator will undertake such investigations as he/she considers necessary. This may include passing any such complaint on to any other welfare organisation including (but not limited to) the local authority, the RSPCA, the police or any other regulatory body, for their own investigation within the Law. Where the Society's Welfare Coordinator has reviewed the substance of the complaint and does not consider that a referral to a welfare or regulatory organisation is necessary, the Society's Welfare Coordinator will inform the complainant of this fact and that no further action will be taken in respect of the complaint.

1.5 Where a referral is made under 1.4 above, then the Society's Welfare Coordinator will adjourn their investigation pending receipt of any report from the welfare or regulatory body notified in accordance with paragraph 1.4 above.

1.6 Upon receipt of any report from a welfare organisation, regulatory body or court, the Society's Welfare Coordinator shall refer such a report to the Council for consideration. Should the report contain an official confirmation of a criminal conviction of cruelty or neglect towards an animal, this matter will be referred to the Council and will then be dealt with as described in the Disciplinary Procedure.

1.7 In the event that the Society's Welfare Coordinator is advised by the welfare or regulatory organisation that no action will be taken, then the Society's Welfare Coordinator will inform the complainant of this fact and that no further action will be taken in respect of the complaint.

25. ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY (MEMBERS)

It is the policy of The Welsh Pony and Cob Society to uphold the right of all employees and members to be treated with respect and dignity.

All members should develop an awareness of the impact of their conduct on others and show courtesy to other members and employees of the Society, referring to people only by their chosen name. Language should be used with care and sensitivity, and members should consider the possible impact of their behaviour on others around them.

Behaviour, which amounts to bullying, harassment or victimisation, will not be tolerated.

Disciplinary action including warnings and suspension of membership for serious offences will be taken against any member who violates this policy in accordance with the procedures laid out in the Disciplinary Procedure.

It is also important to understand that proven cases of bullying harassment or victimisation could involve personal liability for members involved.

Bullying is generally behaviour that amounts to a misuse of power, but that does not necessarily involve being in a position of authority and can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation. It usually, although not necessarily always, involves persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour or misuse of sanctions.

Examples of bullying behaviour could include:

- Persistent and unnecessary criticism
- Physical or psychological threats
- Shouting in public or private
- Deliberate isolation by ignoring or excluding someone
- Withholding information or removing responsibility without justification
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Making inappropriate personal comments
- Setting impossible objectives with the deliberate intention of undermining someone
- “Cyber bullying”; the use of electronic information to deliberately threaten or intimidate an individual or group of individuals via postings on the internet or on social media

This list is not all-inclusive.

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.

It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include, for example:

- unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing.
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content;

- Mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

Victimisation is where an individual is singled out for using any complaints procedure or exercising their legal rights.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation do not necessarily take place face to face but may be by written communication, telephone, email or website postings.

Any member subject to or aware of bullying, harassment or victimisation should report the matter to Council.

In order to ensure the policy is adhered to, the Society agrees to:

- Treat any complaint promptly, sensitively and thoroughly having regard to the rights of both the complainant and the alleged transgressor.
- Take steps to ensure that anyone who, in good faith, makes a complaint of bullying, harassment or victimisation, or participates in any investigation into such a complaint, does not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result.
- Keep discussions as confidential as possible.
- Monitor the implementation of the policy and review it periodically both in terms of its operation and the relationship with the Discipline Policy in cases of bullying, harassment and victimisation and false and malicious complaint.

All members should be aware of their own conduct, avoid colluding in inappropriate behaviour, and co-operate fully in any complaint procedures.

Council has a responsibility to raise awareness of the issues, respond positively to any complaints, and challenge and stop unacceptable behaviour in the workplace or amongst the membership. However, false or malicious complaints of bullying, harassment or victimisation may lead to disciplinary action against the complainant.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy, the Society wishes to monitor the level and kinds of discrimination that occur. To achieve this, a monitoring form will be

completed after any complaint which will be returned to the Company Secretary for statistical analysis. The monitoring form will not contain the name of the complainant or the person complained against.

26. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

This policy aims to provide the means by which the Society can ensure that each individual is treated equally and fairly. The separate procedures which form part of this policy will ensure that all persons involved with the Society are treated with respect, courtesy, integrity and equality of opportunity in all aspects of their contact with The Welsh Pony and Cob Society.

Statement of Commitment

The Welsh Pony and Cob Society acknowledges and respects cultural and religious diversity, and affirms that it will not tolerate any unlawful act of discrimination, any form of harassment (see separate policy on bullying and harassment), or any unjustifiable act of discrimination on any grounds including colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, marital or parental status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs, social class, age and language.

The policy further commits the Society to fulfil its legal duty by challenging all forms of direct and indirect discrimination.

The Society will ensure that there is a sound system of monitoring and progress review to ensure all issues are addressed and a culture of equal opportunities is embedded in all aspects of the work of the Society.

This policy covers all people who have contact with the Society, Council, Staff and Members and those who benefit from the services we provide.
