



WANA



WITHERLEY & ATTERTON
NEIGHBOURS ASSOCIATION

Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

Witherley & Atterton Neighbours Association (WANA) recognises the importance of operating a complaints system that is effective, fair and accessible to all.

WANA regards complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

Our policy on complaints is:

- To provide a complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at WANA knows 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 us to improve what we do

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether ultimately found to be justified or not, about any aspect of WANA's work. Complaints may come from any person or organisation that has had dealings with or has a legitimate interest in WANA.

3. Confidentiality

All information provided in connection with a complaint will be handled sensitively. Information will only be shared with those who need to know and in line with relevant data protection requirements.

4. Submitting Complaints

Complaints are best made in writing with supporting evidence so that the details are recorded in the complainant's own words and we can more easily review the facts and supporting evidence. Written complaints should be sent to the Complaints Manager. Ordinarily we will deal with non-written complaints only

where the complainant has legitimate reasons that prevent them from submitting a written complaint. Once we have received the complaint in writing, we will contact the complainant to provide details of the complaints procedure. In some cases we may want to clarify with the individual that he/she has made a complaint rather than provided feedback.

5. Handling and Resolving Complaints

We expect that complainants will engage with our procedure as set out below. A complaint sent to the Chair or a specific WANA member will usually be dealt with through the same process as any other complaint.

5.1 Handling Complaints: Stage One

- In many cases a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If that person has received the complaint, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.
- If we cannot resolve a complaint in this way, the Complaints Manager will contact the complainant within **five working days** to advise how we intend to proceed. The Complaints Manager will record the complaint in the complaints log, acknowledge it and coordinate with the appropriate person at WANA to investigate it and to take appropriate action. The acknowledgement to the complainant will say who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. A copy of the complaints procedure should be enclosed with the acknowledgement.
- If the complaint relates to a specific person, that person should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.
- If the complaint relates to a WANA member or a matter of governance, the Complaints Manager will refer it to the Secretary to investigate it: the Secretary will then involve other WANA Steering Group members and or statutory bodies as appropriate.
- Ideally, complainants should receive a **definitive reply within 28 working days**. If this is not possible, a progress report will be sent to the complainant with an indication of when a full reply 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 as a result of the complaint.

5.2 Handling Complaints: Stage Two

- If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, he/she can request that the complaint is reviewed by the Chair of WANA. An escalation of a complaint should be based on the facts and not simply that the complainant did not get the outcome he/she wanted. Ordinarily

new evidence will be considered only if it was unavailable when the initial complaint was made or investigated. A request for a review must be made within three months of the complainant receiving the initial response.

- A Stage Two complaint will be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement will say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.
- If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed that the complaint has reached Stage Two and given a further opportunity to respond.
- The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One will be kept informed of what is happening.
- Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within five weeks. If this is not possible, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply 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 as a result of the complaint.

6. Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Complaints Manager may vary the procedure in cases where the specific circumstances justify this. For example, a variation of the procedure may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest in a particular case.

7. Equal Opportunities and Complaints

WANA will make reasonable adjustments for complaints where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. We will keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a complainant has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments will be kept under review.

8. Complaints outside of the scope of the policy

We are committed to handling all complaints directly relating to WANAs work. Some incidents fall outside of the policy which include, but are not limited to:

- Complaints that are being dealt with through a legal process
- Complaints that are more than 12 months old

9. Vexatious complainants

We define unreasonably persistent and vexatious complainants as those complainants who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with WANA, hinder our work. If we believe we have exhausted the options in handling their complaints, the Complaints Manager may terminate our response.

10. Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

The Complaints Manager reviews, records and reports complaints to the WANA Steering Group by the Complaints Manager to identify any trends, that may indicate a need for further action.

11. Ownership of Policy and Frequency of Review

The Chair, supported by the Complaints Manager has overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Contact details:

Complaints Manager:

Name: Lynne Lainé

email: secretary@wana.org.uk

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