

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **1. OUR AIM**

Lansdown Tennis, Squash and Croquet Club is committed to providing a great experience for our members and their guests. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve that experience is by listening and responding to the views of our members and, in particular, by responding positively to complaints.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible
- we welcome feedback and suggestions
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our offering which calls for a timely response
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, wherever possible, confidentially
- we respond appropriately - for example, with an apology where we have got things wrong, with an explanation where there has been a misunderstanding or by taking steps to remedy the situation and/or to avoid any recurrence
- we learn from complaints and use them to improve the experience for members and their guests
- we review our complaints policy and procedures annually.

This policy provides guidelines for dealing with complaints from our members about the quality of our services and facilities and the behaviour of staff, coaches, volunteers and other members.

### **2. DEFINITION**

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction, however it is expressed. This includes complaints expressed face-to-face, in writing, over the telephone, by email or by any other method.

### **3. INFORMAL COMPLAINTS**

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and we aim to resolve these quickly and, wherever possible, in confidence. Any concerns that you have as a member about the Club, including concerns about the services, facilities, staff, coaches, volunteers

or other members, should normally be raised in the first instance with the **General Manager**, who will endeavour to resolve them quickly, and effectively.

The General Manager will record details of your complaint and the outcome, including any action taken.

#### 4. FORMAL COMPLAINTS

Where the General Manager has not been able to resolve your informal complaint to your satisfaction or the matter is more serious, you may wish to make a formal complaint.

Formal complaints should be raised as soon as possible and, preferably, within **four weeks** of the issue arising.

They should be submitted in writing to the **Committee**, setting out as clearly as possible the nature of the complaint, including any relevant facts, dates and the names of any individuals involved, so that the matter can be investigated fully and without delay.

Receipt of your formal complaint will be acknowledged in writing within **ten days** (sooner if the matter appears to be urgent).

Upon receipt of your complaint, the Committee will promptly delegate the handling of it to the appropriate **Sub-Committee**. The Sub-Committee will then carry out an investigation in order to ascertain the facts. Your complaint will be handled sensitively and, wherever possible, in confidence. However, it may be necessary to discuss your complaint with other people, including those you have named in your complaint.

Whilst your complaint is being investigated you (and anyone else interviewed) will be asked to refrain from discussing it with other members and to allow the investigation to proceed without interference. Once the investigation is completed, you will be informed of the outcome.

#### POSSIBLE FINDINGS AND OUTCOMES

- Where the Club is responsible, you will receive an apology in writing. The Club will also take appropriate remedial action (where possible) and take all reasonable steps to ensure that there will be no recurrence.
- Where another member of the Club is responsible, the Club may initiate disciplinary proceedings against that person.
- Where no-one is at fault but there has been a misunderstanding, the Club will provide an explanation.

- Where the complaint cannot be dealt with at Club level, the Club will refer it to the appropriate organisation, such as the LTA.
- Where the complaint has not been substantiated, the Club will dismiss the complaint.
- Where the complaint is vexatious or malicious, the Club will dismiss the complaint and may initiate disciplinary proceedings against the complainant.

Every effort will be made to complete this process within four weeks. Where circumstances dictate that it will take longer than this, you will be informed of the delay and the reasons for it. Full details of your formal complaint and the outcome will be recorded, including any action taken.

## 5. APPEALS

If you are dissatisfied with the findings of the Sub-Committee charged with the handling of your formal complaint, you may appeal to the **Committee**.

Your appeal must be submitted to the Committee in writing, within ten days of receipt of the Sub-Committee's decision. The Committee may consider the appeal itself or delegate it to a different Sub-Committee.

The Appeal will consist of a review of the process and findings of the Sub-Committee to ascertain whether a proper investigation was carried out and whether the original decision was reasonable in all the circumstances. Where appropriate, the Committee/Sub-Committee charged with hearing the appeal may decide to investigate the matter further.

The review should be concluded within **four weeks** but, if it is going to take longer than that, you will be informed of the delay and the reasons for it.

You will be notified of the outcome of your appeal in writing. The Committee/Sub-Committee's decision will be final.

**This policy is reviewed every three years (or earlier if there is a change in national legislation).**

**Committee Approved**

**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

**Committee Review Date**

**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2028**