

KNIGHTS OF TRINITY

Complaints Procedure

ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE

This procedure explains how to go about raising a complaint about something that happens at the Knights of Trinity. It should be read in conjunction with the Conduct & Behaviour Policy.

PROCEDURE

Rather than allowing an issue or concern to fester it is strongly advised that any person suffering a complaint should raise it promptly as soon as the issue manifests itself. It is anticipated that the following stages be followed in sequence although it is understood that in some circumstances the first stage may be omitted where the aggrieved party considers it to be inappropriate or potentially inflammatory.

STAGE 1 - INFORMAL REVIEW

This stage applies only to complaints against Councillors; under no circumstances ought members air complaints with or against other members other than directly with Councillors.

As soon as an aggrieved party is clear about their concerns they ought, wherever reasonably possible, approach the Councillor they believe to be the principle source of the complaint for an informal discussion. Such discussions must not be held in open forum if there is any reason to consider that discussion might become prolonged or disruptive.

All Councillors are charged with making themselves available to listen to such concerns objectively and, where the concerns are legitimate and appear to be in breach of club policy, to remedy the issue as soon as is reasonably practicable. Should the concern not be considered legitimate for good reason and such reasons are clearly stated to the aggrieved party who accepts the explanation then no further action is required.

In the event the parties are unable to reach such an agreement the procedure will proceed to stage 2.

STAGE 2 - FORMAL REVIEW

Any formal complaint must be submitted in writing to the Council, in the first instance using the complaints@knightsoftrinity.net e-mail address, or if that is impossible by a letter handed to a member of the Council at a club meeting.

All received complaints will be registered by the receiving Councillor and become a matter of record (subject to appropriate confidentiality being maintained). Upon receipt of a written complaint the recipient (Responder) will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 7 days of its receipt;
- Consider the significance of the complaint (with other designated responders where appropriate) in order to determine an appropriate course of action.
- Where a decision is made to progress the complaint within the club the Responder will inform the person(s) against whom the complaint is made and provide detail of the allegations or complaint. The accused person will be invited to provide a signed written statement in response to the allegations within 7 days of receipt.
- Upon receipt of the accused person(s) statement the Responder may request written statements from other relevant persons/witnesses to obtain corroborative evidence.
- Then, depending on the nature or significance of the complaint, the Responder may either:
 - Attempt to resolve the situation by implementing an action which is fair, reasonable and proportional to the complaint, or
 - Escalate the matter for resolution by decision of the full Council.
- Responders will aim to respond fully to all complaints within 15 days of receipt of the original complaint or, where that is not reasonably practicable, to provide an alternative timescale within that timeframe.
- Once an action has been determined the accused person(s) will be notified in writing of the course of action to be taken and the aggrieved party will be informed about the outcome of the enquiry.

- In the event the complaint is upheld and action is taken against the accused person(s) they will have the right to appeal within two weeks of receipt of the letter describing the course of action and Stage 3 of this procedure will then be implemented.
- Should a complaint not be upheld, the aggrieved party will have the right to appeal within two weeks of receipt of the letter describing the outcome and Stage 3 of this procedure will then be implemented.

STAGE 3 – ESCALATION OR APPEAL

Appeals will be made in writing to the Inner Council, in the first instance using the complaints@knightsoftrinity.net e-mail address, or by letter handed to an Executive Officer at a club meeting. Such appeals must include the original complaint, the documented response and clear justifications for the basis of the appeal explaining why the outcome was flawed.

Appeals become a matter of club record (subject to appropriate confidentiality being maintained) and will be acknowledged within 7 days of receipt. Such appeals will be submitted on the basis that the outcome will be binding on all parties; should appellants not wish to be bound by this then the Inner Council may decide that the appeal cannot proceed. In such an instance then the original decision will stand, and both parties will be informed within 7 days of that decision.

Upon receipt of an appeal the receiving Executive Officer (Moderator) will:

- Review the submission and determine whether there is a clear case of error or not. In the event the appeal is considered frivolous or argumentative the appeal may be rejected at this stage without further review. Where the Moderator considers the appeal may have merit he/she will:
- Appoint two other Councillors to review the appeal in a closed meeting with the Moderator (hereafter the “Appeal Committee”).
- Following such meeting the Appeal Committee will arrange a formal review with the appellant, the accused Person(s) (should they not be the appellant), any witnesses the Appeal Committee consider necessary and any person(s) the appellant/accused person(s) may wish to represent or assist them. The date of such review will not be set so early as to prevent adequate preparation, nor so late as to incur inappropriate delay. Normally such reviews will take place behind closed doors.
- Chair the Appeal Review inviting submissions from all relevant parties, directing discussions and summarising the events/issues as described by the parties present.
- Wherever possible, following such review, the Appeal Committee will either uphold the original decision or reject it. Exceptionally they may consider it appropriate to modify the original determination in which case such ruling may itself become subject to Appeal.

APPROPRIATE REMEDIES

A Councillor may consider the following remedies as being appropriate to the resolution of a complaint.

- A formal reprimand
- Temporary exclusion from club activities
- Indefinite suspension from club activities
- Termination of membership

The outcome of this procedure will be recorded against the record of the aggrieved party and the accused party. The outcome and any related information will be held for a period defined in the Data Protection & Privacy Policy.

In determining an appropriate remedy as part of this procedure, a Councillor will take into consideration the outcomes of any complaints that are on record.