



Wadhurst Dramatic Club

Whistle-blowing Statement

Approved by WDC Committee (September 2019)

ANNEX V – WHISTLE-BLOWING AND RAISING CONCERNS

Introduction

WDC officers, associates and volunteers may think there may be something “not quite right” within the Club. However, they may feel uneasy about expressing their concerns because they feel it would be seen as being disloyal or critical of the Club. They may also think that they will be labelled a trouble-maker. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be an uneasiness or suspicion.

The Club is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment we encourage everyone involved with the Club, who may have concerns about any aspect of its operation, to voice those anxieties. This policy is intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise concerns with one of the officers of the Club rather than ignoring the problem, hoping it will go away.

Aims and scope of this policy

This policy aims to:

- (i) provide avenues for you to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
- (ii) allow you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the Club's response;
- (iii) provide reassurance that if you raise a genuine concern, you will be protected from reprisals or victimisation.

This policy is intended to cover anyone who has knowledge or a suspicion/concern that something has happened or is happening that:

- is unlawful, OR
- contravenes the Club's policies and financial instructions, OR
- falls below established standards or good practice, OR
- amounts to improper or inappropriate conduct.

Anonymity and Safeguards

The Club recognises that the decision to report a concern can be difficult. The Club will not tolerate any resulting harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

This policy encourages you to put your name to your concern. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they will be considered at the discretion of the Club, taking into account:

- the seriousness of the issues raised;
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the traceability of the individual raising the concern.

The Club will do its utmost to protect your identity if you raise a concern and do not want your name to be disclosed. It must be appreciated that, based on the seriousness of the allegation(s), a statement from you may be required and a formal investigation may follow.

Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make allegations that are deliberately malicious simply to cause disruption, irritation or distress, you may be asked to leave the Club.



Wadhurst Dramatic Club

Whistle-blowing Statement

Approved by WDC Committee (September 2019)

How to raise concern

As a first step, you should normally raise the concern with the Chair of the Club. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue and who is thought to be involved. For example, if this concern relates to the activities of the Chair, then you should raise the matter with one of the other officers of the Club.

You will be asked to set out the basis of your concern, giving names, dates and places (where possible), and the reason why you are particularly anxious about the situation. You will be encouraged to put your concerns in writing. Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will need to be able to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for your concern. The earlier you express the concern, the easier it is to take action.

How the Club will respond

The action taken by the Club will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:

- be investigated internally
- be referred to the East Sussex County Council (if there is a safeguarding concern)
- be referred to the Police (if it appears that something illegal may have occurred)

In order to protect individuals and the Council, initial enquires will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.

Some concerns may be resolved by an agreed action, policy or new way of working without the need for investigation.

Within ten working days of a concern being received, the Club will write to you:

- acknowledging that your concern has been received and recorded;
- indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter, and how long it will take;
- telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made; and whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.

If necessary, further information will be sought from you and, perhaps, other members who may be able to substantiate your concerns. The Club will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern.

The Club accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, you will receive information about the outcomes of any investigations.

How the matter can be taken further

This policy is intended to provide an avenue for you to raise concerns and to ensure that you will be satisfied with the outcome. If you are not, you are always entitled to take up the matter outside the Club eg a solicitor, the police.

The Responsible Officer

The Club Chair has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. He/she will maintain a record of concerns raised (and the outcomes) in a form that does not jeopardise your confidentiality. He/she will be responsible for reporting the concern to the police, if appropriate.

We are committed to reviewing this policy and our practice annually. The date of the next review is August 2020.