

Market Drayton Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society Complaints and Grievance Policy

Rationale

Grievances can arise from a variety of sources and may be relatively simple in nature or of fundamental importance.

This procedure is designed to enable both the Committee and Members to foster good relations by:-

- discouraging the harbouring of grievances;
- assisting the resolution of individual grievances in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality;
- enabling grievances to be settled as near as possible to their point of origin; and
- ensuring that grievances are dealt with fully, promptly and fairly.

The procedure sets out:

- firstly, an informal process through which most grievances may be resolved without recourse to any subsequent, formal stage;
- secondly, a formal procedure to be invoked in the case that the first stage has failed or is inappropriate.

The Committee accepts the principle that if individuals have a grievance relating to any part of their involvement in the society, they have a right to express it and to seek a solution. It is emphasised that the existence of a grievance procedure is an important part of committee/member relations and the use of such a procedure shall not be held against any individual.

Representation

At all stages, the Members involved are entitled to be accompanied and/or represented by a friend or observer. During the formal procedure, witnesses may be called and questioned by either side.

At all stages a neutral stance will be adopted by those investigating the grievance. Any Committee member must declare any interest or involvement and must excuse themselves from taking any part in investigating the grievance.

At all stages information MUST be restricted to those who 'need to know'.

Informal Stage

(a) Where a Member has a grievance, s/he should first endeavour to resolve it by direct approach to the person(s) with whom they have that grievance.

(b) If considered necessary, the member should then request a **personal** meeting with a member of the Committee and the chair of the Committee. The interview should take place within **five working days** of the request. The person consulted should seek to resolve the problem personally in consultation with any other member(s) involved.

The aim of this consultation is to consider and seek a resolution of the grievance. At this stage, procedures are still considered to be "informal".

(c) Following either (a) or (b), should the Member wish to proceed with the grievance, s/he should advise or consult with the Committee Chair.

Formal Stage

NOTE: All time limits may be extended by mutual consent of all parties, although it is recognised that it is in everybody's interest to resolve a grievance as speedily as possible.

- (a) Where the matter has not been resolved informally as above, the Member should submit a **formal written notice** of the grievance to the Committee Chair, with a copy to any other persons(s) concerned in the grievance. The written notice should:

- include full details of the grievance, together with any supporting documents;
 - set out the steps already taken to resolve the issue;
 - state the resolution now requested; and
 - Should the grievance be against the Committee Chair, the formal written notice will be conducted through the society secretary.
- (b) Any other person(s) concerned in the grievance may make a **formal written response** (together with any supporting documents) to the Committee Chair, with a copy to the Member raising the grievance. This response should normally be submitted within **ten working days** of receipt of the written notice of grievance.

Where the grievance is against the Committee Chair, the formal written notice will be conducted through the society secretary.

- (c) A **hearing** will then be arranged before the appropriate 1st Appeals Committee to consider the grievance. The documents submitted shall be made available to the 1st Appeals Committee in advance. This hearing shall take place after receipt of any written response(s) and/or report, and within **20 working days** of receipt of the formal notice of grievance.

At least **five working days' notice** of the hearing will be given to the parties concerned, who may attend in person and be accompanied and/or represented by a friend as in section 2 above.

All parties concerned may call witnesses at the hearing and may question any witnesses called.

The **decision** of the Appeals Committee and its reasons will be confirmed to the parties concerned in writing within **five working days**.

Appeal

NOTE: All time limits may be extended by mutual consent of all parties, although it is recognised that it is in everybody's interest to resolve a grievance as speedily as possible.

- (a) Any party to the grievance may **appeal in writing** to the Committee Chair within **five working days** of receiving the 1st Appeal Committee's written decision. The notice of appeal should set out the reasons, with a copy to any other person(s) concerned.
- (b) The appeal shall be heard by the **2nd Appeals Committee** comprising only of members who have not previously been involved in any decision making or discussion about the grievance. All documents already submitted shall be available to this committee. This hearing shall take place within **10 working days** of receipt of the notice of appeal.

At least **five working days' notice** will be given to the parties concerned, who may attend in person and be accompanied and/or represented by a friend as in section 2 above.

All parties concerned may call witnesses at the hearing and may question any witnesses called.

- (c) The 2nd Appeals Committee's decision will be confirmed to the parties concerned in writing within **five working days**. This decision will be final.