

ST ALBANS AND HARPENDEN PICKLEBALLERS

Complaints and Grievance Procedure

Version	2.0
Date published / reviewed	18/06/2026
Policy owner	Club Committee
Approved by	[INSERT APPROVING BODY OR COMMITTEE DATE]
Next review due	18/06/2027
Revisions made	Rewritten to reflect current safeguarding, data protection, equality, health and safety and sports club governance guidance.

1. Purpose

SHARP Pickleball aims to deal with complaints and grievances fairly, promptly and confidentially. This procedure gives members, guests, volunteers, parents or carers, visitors and anyone acting on behalf of the club a clear route for raising concerns.

2. Scope

This procedure covers complaints about club administration, conduct, communication, membership issues, session management, volunteer decisions and general grievances. Safeguarding concerns, serious welfare concerns, urgent safety matters and criminal allegations must not be handled only as ordinary complaints.

3. Safeguarding, discrimination and urgent concerns

If a concern relates to a child, young person or adult at risk, the matter must be referred to the Welfare Officer or Deputy Welfare Officer under the Safeguarding Policy. If someone is in immediate danger, call 999. If a complaint involves discrimination, harassment or victimisation, the club will deal with it under this procedure while also considering the Equality Policy and Code of Conduct.

4. Principles

- Complaints will be handled with respect, fairness and confidentiality.
- The club will avoid unnecessary delay and will keep parties updated.
- No person should be treated badly for raising a genuine concern.
- The club will manage conflicts of interest. A person involved in the issue should not decide the outcome.
- Records will be kept securely and shared only with people who need the information to manage the matter.

5. Stage 1, informal resolution

Where appropriate, a person should raise the issue promptly with the person concerned or with the session lead. The aim is to resolve simple misunderstandings quickly and respectfully. Stage 1 is not suitable for safeguarding concerns, discrimination, bullying, harassment, threats, repeated misconduct or any concern where the complainant feels unsafe approaching the person involved.

6. Stage 2, formal complaint

If the issue is not resolved informally, or if informal resolution is not suitable, the complaint should be sent in writing to [INSERT COMPLAINTS CONTACT NAME AND EMAIL]. The complaint should include names, dates, what happened, any relevant evidence, what has already been tried and the outcome requested. The club will acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days where practical.

The Chair, or another committee member without a conflict of interest, will appoint an appropriate person or small panel to review the complaint. The club will normally provide a written outcome within 20 working days of acknowledgement. If more time is needed, the complainant will be told why and given an updated timeframe.

7. Stage 3, appeal

A person who is not satisfied with the Stage 2 outcome may appeal in writing within 10 working days of receiving the decision. The appeal should explain why the person believes the decision was unfair, unreasonable or based on incomplete information. The appeal will be considered by a person or panel not involved in the original decision where possible. The appeal outcome will normally be final within the club.

8. Complaints involving committee members or welfare roles

If the complaint involves the Chair, it should be sent to [INSERT ALTERNATIVE COMMITTEE CONTACT]. If the complaint involves the Welfare Officer or Deputy Welfare Officer and relates to safeguarding, it should be referred to the Chair and Pickleball England safeguarding contact, unless doing so would place someone at risk. If there is immediate risk, call 999 or contact the relevant statutory service.

9. Possible outcomes

- No further action.
- Explanation, clarification or apology.
- Mediation or managed conversation, where appropriate.
- Change to process, communication or session arrangements.
- Training or guidance for volunteers or members.
- Action under the Code of Conduct, including warning, suspension or removal from membership where proportionate.
- Referral to the venue, Pickleball England, police, social care, the Local Authority Designated Officer or other body where appropriate.

10. Anonymous complaints and vexatious complaints

The club will consider anonymous complaints where there is enough information to assess risk or take action. The club is not required to pursue complaints that are malicious, abusive, repeated without new evidence or made to disrupt the club, but any safeguarding or safety risk raised within such a complaint will still be considered.

11. Records and confidentiality

Complaint records will be stored securely by the club and kept only for as long as needed for club administration, legal, insurance, safeguarding or governance reasons. Information will be shared only with people who need it to manage the complaint or fulfil a legal or safeguarding duty.

12. Review

This procedure will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if the law, club structure, venue arrangements or national governing body guidance changes.