

# BRIGHTON & HOVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

Brighton & Hove Archaeological Society aims to act legally, safely and respectfully at all times. Complaints will help us identify problems and put them right, so we welcome critical views.

Most concerns can be dealt with informally by talking to the BHAS member you have been dealing with, or a committee member. We will listen to your views, make a record of what happened, discuss with committee members if appropriate, and ensure action is taken where possible. We encourage you to raise concerns in this way in the first instance, if you can.

Often we will be able to give you a response straight away. When the matter is more complicated, we will give you at least an initial response within 7 days.

If you feel that your concern cannot be dealt with in this way, we also have a formal complaints procedure, as outlined by the Charity Commission.

### 1. Legal Framework and Trustee Duties

- Trustees must ensure their charity operates effectively and in the public Interest
- Serious incidents arising from complaints may require reporting to the Charity Commission within 15 working days
- The Commission expects charities to have "appropriate procedures" for handling complaints
- Failure to handle complaints properly can lead to regulatory intervention.

### 2. What constitutes a complaint:

- Expression of dissatisfaction about service quality, member conduct, or charity decisions
- Concerns about how the charity operates or uses its resources
- Allegations of discrimination, harassment, or safeguarding issues

### 3. Dealing with a complaint

- 3.1 The complainant should be asked to put the matter in writing (including email) to the secretary, wherever possible. If this is not possible, the BHAS member receiving the complaint should make a written note and ensure the complainant is satisfied with its accuracy.
- 3.2 This record should detail the specific issue with dates, times, names as relevant, and give the name and contact details of the complainant. It will be kept confidential apart from sharing with the Trustees, and in extreme cases with the Charity Commission.
- 3.3 The complaint will be referred to the full committee of trustees within 7 days of receipt. The complainant will be informed by the secretary when this has happened. Further information may be sought. The committee will determine by whom and how the matter will be investigated. A response will normally be given, in writing, within 6 weeks; the complainant will be informed of a revised timescale if this is not practicable..
- 3.4 If not satisfied with the response, the complainant may ask for the complaint to be reassessed. Such an appeal should be presented in the same way as the initial complaint. The Chair and trustees will then investigate to ensure that the process and decisions were fair and addressed the issue properly. Decisions made as a result of the appeal are final.
- 4 We will keep a record of the complaints we receive, the outcomes of investigations and the reasons for our decisions.