



Complaints Policy

Approved: 14th July 2026

1. Purpose of this Policy

Ipswich Gilbert & Sullivan Society is committed to providing a welcoming, respectful, and well-run environment for all members, volunteers, and participants. We recognise that concerns or complaints may occasionally arise, and this policy sets out a fair, transparent, and timely process for handling them.

This policy aims to:

- Ensure complaints are taken seriously and addressed promptly
- Resolve issues as informally as possible where appropriate
- Provide a clear escalation route when informal resolution is not suitable
- Protect all parties involved by ensuring fairness and confidentiality

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Members of the Society
- Trustees
- Volunteers
- Anyone otherwise participating in Society activities (e.g. at rehearsals, performances, social events)

It covers complaints relating to:

- Behaviour or conduct of members, trustees, or volunteers
- Decisions, actions, or omissions by the Society
- The running of rehearsals, performances, or Society activities

This policy does **not** cover:

- Matters that are purely artistic judgments, unless conduct or fairness is involved

3. Principles

All complaints will be handled in line with the following principles:

- **Fairness** – all parties will be treated impartially
- **Confidentiality** – information will be shared only where necessary
- **Proportionality** – the response will match the seriousness of the issue
- **Timeliness** – complaints will be handled as quickly as reasonably possible
- **No retaliation** – anyone raising a complaint in good faith will not be treated adversely

4. Informal Resolution

Where possible and appropriate, individuals are encouraged to raise concerns informally in the first instance. This may involve:

- Speaking directly to the person concerned, if comfortable doing so, or
- Raising the issue with a Trustee or the Chair

Many minor issues can be resolved quickly through open discussion and mutual understanding.

5. Formal Complaints Procedure

If informal resolution is not appropriate or does not resolve the issue, a formal complaint may be made.

5.1 Making a Formal Complaint

Formal complaints should:

- Be made in writing (email or letter)
- Set out the nature of the complaint clearly
- Include relevant dates, individuals involved, and any supporting information

Complaints should be sent to:

- The Chair of Trustees, or
- If the complaint concerns the Chair, to another Trustee.

5.2 Acknowledgement

The Society will acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint within **7 days**, confirming:

- Who will handle the complaint
- The next steps in the process

5.3 Investigation

The complaint will be reviewed by:

- The Chair and one other trustee, or
- A small sub-group of trustees, excluding anyone directly involved in the complaint

The investigation may include:

- Reviewing written information
- Speaking to the complainant
- Speaking to others involved or witnesses

All parties will be given a reasonable opportunity to present their views.

5.4 Outcome

The complainant will normally receive a written response within **28 days**, setting out:

- Whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld;
- Any actions the Society proposes to take.

Possible outcomes may include:

- An apology;
- Mediation or facilitated discussion;
- Changes to procedures or practices;
- No further action, if the complaint is not upheld.

Should an outcome not be reached within 28 days, the trustees will contact the complainant within this time period to explain a reasonable timeline for the process.

6. Appeals

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a review by the full Board of Trustees (excluding anyone previously involved).

The appeal should:

- Be submitted in writing within **14 days** of the outcome;
- Explain why the complainant believes the process or decision was flawed.

The decision of the Board of Trustees will be final.

7. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

The Society is committed to considering all complaints fairly and respectfully. However, there may be occasions when a complaint, or the behaviour of a complainant, becomes unreasonable.

A complaint may be considered unreasonable or vexatious if, for example, the person:

- Continues to pursue a complaint after the Society's complaints procedure has been fully completed and all reasonable responses have been provided;
- Repeatedly raises the same issue without providing new evidence or relevant information;
- Makes allegations which are demonstrably false;

- Refuses to engage with the complaints process while continuing to demand a particular outcome;
- Pursues the complaint in a manner that is abusive, threatening, harassing, or intimidating towards volunteers, members, trustees, or others involved;
- Makes excessive or unreasonable demands on the Society's time and resources.

A decision to classify a complaint as unreasonable or vexatious will only be made by the Board of Trustees and only after careful consideration of the circumstances. The Trustees will explain the reasons for their decision in writing.

Where a complaint is found to be unreasonable or vexatious, the Trustees may decide to:

- Limit further correspondence on the matter;
- Decline to reconsider issues that have already been fully addressed;
- Require future communication to be made in writing;
- Bring the complaints process to a close.

This section will not be used to dismiss genuine complaints simply because they are challenging, critical, or difficult to investigate. The Society recognises that people may feel strongly about matters affecting them and will always seek to distinguish between persistent complainants and genuinely unresolved concerns.

8. Serious or External Matters

Where a complaint involves:

- Safeguarding concerns;
- Serious misconduct;
- Potential legal issues

The trustees may seek external advice or refer the matter to an appropriate authority.

9. Record Keeping

The Society will:

- Keep a confidential record of formal complaints and outcomes;
- Use anonymised information, where appropriate, to improve Society governance and practices.

10. Review of Policy

This policy will be:

- Reviewed periodically (typically every **three years**);
- Approved by the Trustees.