**Code of Conduct ( Conduct and Behaviour )**

**Disciplinary Guidelines**

The Club was formed to provide the opportunity for like minded people to discover and enjoy the sport of running as a collective, and benefit from the camaraderie and friendship that a club provides. It is essentially a gateway into the running world, and opens up a whole host of opportunites for individuals to develop their running as far as they wish to go.

Membership of a club that is all voluntary brings with it a responsibility to act and behave in such a way that adds to the character of the club and not detracts from it.

Members are therefore expected to act and behave in such a way that is always courteous and respectful to their fellow club members.

If a member breaches the code of conduct in any way, then the Club Management Committee (hereafter referred to as The Committee) has the discretionary power to decide upon that members future membership, should it not be possible to resolve the matter on a personal level, provided it follows the proper due process.

**If the Club feels that a Members behaviour, actions or language is not in the best interests of the Club**

Some basic guidelines on how the Club would proceed,

The Club member has

1. The right to a fair and consistent hearing.
2. The right to adequate notice for meetings/decisions.
3. The right to appeal against any decision made by a disciplinary committee (see section headed “Appeal”)
4. The right to representation, i.e be accompanied by a person of their choice.

There are different levels of misconduct.

**Gross Misconduct** includes violence, threatening behaviour, sexual misbehaviour, cheating in any of its guises, drug abuse, financial foul play.

In any of these cases, subject to investigation by the Committee, the most probable outcome would be immediate expulsion from the Club, with no refund of Club subscriptions. The expelled member would not be permitted to rejoin the Club, and the relevant athletic authorities would be notified.

**Misconduct and Serious Misconduct** covers any behaviour that is not considered compatible with the spirit of club membership. Insulting remarks about any Club Member, be it face to face, on Social media, or by personal email is considered inappropriate and unacceptable and would be subject to review by the Committee. In this case, an apology (written or verbally directly to the member insulted) would be expected from the perpetrator, and if that were not forthcoming within a stated timescale, expulsion from the Club would be considered, depending on the circumstances. There would be no refund of Club subscriptions.

Other examples of misconduct…

1. Any conduct, or behaviour whilst under the auspices of an official Club session, that is deemed unsafe, reckless and likely to be endangering themselves and/or others (Club members or the public) This is seen as bringing the Club into disrepute.
2. Disregard for property or equipment belonging to the Club.
3. Refusal to carry out reasonable instructions by event officials or organisers.
4. Any actions or behaviours, either in public, within a Club event or activity, or in writing, or on Social media that are deemed prejudicial to the interests of the Club.

It would be hoped that the Committee does not have to deal with many such cases, but its role as the elected Managing Committee of the Club, means it is the guardian of the integrity of the Club for the benefit of all its members, and reserves the right to make any decision it sees fit, after following due process.

Due process is subjective, and could be carried out in several forms. The most likely and usual approach would be the formation of an advisory quorum, composing of at least two members chosen by the Club Secretary, who in all cases will lead the process ( Except if the Secretary is the subject of the process, in which case the Chairman will nominate a Committee member as lead ). The quorum is seen as a specialist “sub-committee”, selected by the Secretary to assist him/her in deciding how to proceed and decide a due process. However, the final decision is made by, and emanates from the Secretary. The quorum is accountable to the Committee, via the Secretary but he/she will not be required to report back to the Committee until the quorum has concluded its findings and reached a decision. The Committee, in the spirit of trust, will normally ratify the decision of the quorum. The committee as a whole does not need to know all the details of the quorums deliberations, but can be briefed on the general overview.

The member has the right to appeal against any decisions made by the Secretary, see Appeal section at the end.

**If a Member submits a Grievance or Complaint.**

A grievance or complaint (hereafter called the Grievance) against another Club Member or the Club, should be submitted in writing to the Club Secretary.

As soon as possible the Secretary should acknowledge receipt of the Grievance and arrange to meet personally with the Complainant. The Complainant should be advised to have a friend/colleague attend with them, and the Club Secretary will be accompanied by the Club Welfare Officer, unless the Grievance is against the Secretary or Club Welfare Officer, in which case the Club Chairman will need to appoint a deputy/s. The Chairman should avoid being involved at this stage to preserve neutrality and objectivity.

The meeting should be arranged as soon as possible, in a neutral location, and a discussion should take place with the intention of trying to resolve the matter as quickly as possible in the interests of Club harmony.

Minutes of the meeting should be taken and all parties should agree to the accuracy of those minutes before being added to the Grievance file.

It should be noted that compromise should play a very active part in the discussion, and the aim should be a win/win result.

If, however, no resolution can be reached within the meeting timescale, then any further action is very subjective depending on the circumstances. All scenarios cannot be listed here, but an example would be….

**A Member submits a Grievance against a Club official, fellow Member, or the Club.**

The Club Secretary will lead all matters pertaining to the Grievance, unless implicated in the Grievance, in which case the Club Chairperson and Committee would decide on how to proceed..

The Committee, possibly with advice taken from Oxon AA, or EA, will decide what type of misconduct has taken place and proceed accordingly.

If the Committee deem the matter to be one of simple misconduct, it may be resolved at a meeting between aggrieved parties and/or followed up by a letter from the Secretary.

If however the Committee feel it is Serious or Gross misconduct, it will appoint an Investigating Officer., who will be in charge of researching and collating all the evidence available pertaining to the grievance.

The Secretary will acknowledge receipt of the Grievance and will advise the complainant that a Disciplinary Hearing will be convened, advising date/time and neutral location. The complainant will be expected to attend given reasonable and favourable circumstances and is entitled to be accompanied by someone of their choice.

The Secretary will be in charge of the hearing, attend the hearing, take notes and produce a record of the meeting, and all questions and opinions will be addressed through the Secretary.

The Disciplinary Panel will consist of

1. The Club Chairperson (unless he/she is either the complainant or respondent) in which case a suitable deputy will be appointed by the Committee.
2. A Case Presenter who will normally be the Investigating Officer.
3. The Club Welfare Officer.
4. One other member of the Committee.

All written evidence pertaining to the Grievance will be made available to the members of the panel in advance of the hearing.

No new evidence will be allowed to be introduced at the hearing.

The hearing may be adjourned to consider additional evidence if it considers it fair to do so.

Full confidentiality is expected on both sides.

Once the Panel has reached a decision, all relevant parties will be informed with a reasonable timescale, normally seven days.

Any penalties decided upon, such as required apologies, or expulsion from the Club will normally be with immediate effect, unless subject to appeal. If the requested action is not taken within an agreed timescale, by either side, then the penalty can be upscaled without further representation, unless under appeal., e.g if a written apology is requested from a member within a timescale and that apology is not received, then the Committee has the right to take whatever action it deems necessary, without appeal, if that has not been registered after the initial hearing.

**Appeal**

The complainant has the right to appeal against the decision of the Disciplinary Panel. If the complainant wishes to appeal, it must be done in writing to the Secretary within 28 days of being notified of the decision (A verbal intention to appeal is not sufficient and will not be accepted) Appeals should be made by 1st Class recorded delivery, or via email with electronic receipt. No appeal will be valid or considered after that time has elapsed.

The complainant must detail fully the reasons for the appeal.

The Secretary will then convene an Appeal Hearing as soon as practicable. The Appeal Panel will consist of the Secretary, one member of the Club(not necessarily a Committee member)who has had no involvement in the matter, and another member of the Club nominated by the Complainant who has not been involved in the matter. A member of the Oxon AA who has not been involved with the matter will also be invited .

The decision of the Appeal panel is final, and no further representation can be made after this time.