



**WELSH PONY AND COB SOCIETY,
AFRICA**

**WALLIESE PONIE EN COB
GENOOTSKAP, AFRIKA**

**CODE OF CONDUCT
GEDRAGSKODE**

August, 2016

CODE OF CONDUCT

A GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL MEMBERS

All members must meet the following requirements in regard to their conduct and behaviour:

- 1 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others
- 2 Be fair, considerate and honest in all dealings with others
- 3 Be professional in, and accept responsibility for your actions
- 4 Be aware of and maintain the rules and regulations of the Society and operate within those rules
- 5 Preserve and protect the standing and reputation of the Society
- 6 Never use your position or role for personal gain, to avoid your responsibility or to unjustly prevent an individual from exercising their rights
- 7 Be aware of your legal responsibilities and the legal rights of others
- 8 Do not use your involvement with the Society to promote your own beliefs, behaviour and practices where these are inconsistent with those of the Society's rules
- 9 Be a positive role model and demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility especially when dealing with those persons less than 18 years of age as your words and actions are examples
- 10 Ensure actions with persons under the age of 18 years is appropriate and that unaccompanied and unobserved activities are avoided wherever practical
- 11 Refrain from any form of harassment or intimidation of others
- 12 Refrain from using any behavior that may bring the Society into disrepute
- 13 Provide a safe environment for the conduct of the activity
- 14 Show concern and exercise due caution towards others who may be sick, injured or disabled in a way in which is not immediately visible
- 15 Understand the repercussions if you breach one of the Code of Conduct of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society, Africa
- 16 Members who are also Councillors must promise to abide by the fundamental values that underpin all the activity of this organization

B SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET POLICY

Good conduct and discipline: No members of the Society shall conduct him or herself in a manner or be guilty of behaviour which is derogatory to the character or prejudicial to the interests of the Society, and in particular (but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing) no member shall behave in an abusive or unpleasant manner to any person at any show or at any other location where Society business is being transacted or via social media or the internet or via any publication in whatever format of via any other written or electronic format

You should be aware that the Society will fully co-operate with any law enforcement authorities or court order requesting or directing the Society to disclose the identity or locate anyone posting any material in breach of this policy. If we are requested by the police or any other regulatory or government authority investigating suspected illegal activities to provide your personal information, the Society is entitled to do so.

In using social media –

- 1 You should be aware that the Society may from time to time carry out internet searches to identify postings which include references to the Society and its members
- 2 Images produced by the Society are the subject of copyright or trademark and should not be copied or used in social media
- 3 You should ensure that any material that you transmit or post to social media is clearly stated to be your personal view and is not held out to be, or could be mistaken as, the view of the Society
- 4 You must not post or transmit any material which could damage the name or reputation of the Society, its members or former members, or which is derogatory to the character of, or prejudicial to the interests of the Society
- 5 You must not post or transmit any material relating to the Society, members or former members or their horses or ponies, or their business or private lives or which could otherwise be associated with or which may reasonably be attributed as coming from the Society
 - a. That is threatening, defamatory, obscene, indecent, seditious, offensive, pornographic, abusive, liable to incite racial hatred, discriminatory, menacing, scandalous, inflammatory, blasphemous, in breach of confidence, in breach of privacy or which may cause annoyance, distress or inconvenience; or
 - b. Which constitutes or encourages conduct that would be in breach of the Society's rules, or constitutes a criminal offence, or which could give rise to civil liability, or otherwise be contrary to the laws of, or infringe the rights of any third party in any country in the world
- 6 Any breach of this policy may constitute a breach of the Society's rules and could also lead to civil and/or criminal proceedings being brought against you

C CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COMPETITORS AND EXHIBITORS

In addition to the Society's General Code of Conduct as above, the following requirements must be met by competitors and exhibitors during any show/activity held or sanctioned by the Society.

Members should –

- 1 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of fellow competitors, judges, stewards, officials, volunteers and spectators
- 2 Refrain from any acts of aggression as this will not be tolerated
- 3 Respect the talent, potential and development of fellow competitors
- 4 Conduct themselves in a professional manner relating to language, temper and punctuality, be courteous and kind and set a good example in dress and behaviour. Blue denim is not acceptable
- 5 Maintain high personal behaviour standards at all times
- 6 Abide by the rules and accept the decision of the official, making all appeals through the formal process and respecting the final decision

Bullying is an issue in many sports today. The Society impresses on members, organisers and officials that bullying is not acceptable at any Society event

- 1 The Society recognises that bullying is unacceptable and will deal with this under the Society's rules

- 2 Bullying is inappropriate behaviour which uses force or power to undermine another person's self-esteem and confidence
- 3 Reports of bullying will be handled promptly and confidentially
- 4 We need the knowledge and experience of our volunteers. We cannot afford to lose good people through bad behaviour
- 5 Every official, competitor and volunteer has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and the Society has the responsibility to ensure that this occurs at all shows/activities
- 6 However, the Society can only discipline an appropriate person if the intimidation is reported under the Society's procedures
- 7 Any person who feels they have been intimidated should put it in writing to the Society's Secretary
- 8 In Criminal Law, any threatening behaviour, intimidation or bullying is assault

D COMPLAINTS: POLICY

This document sets out the procedure for dealing with complaints made against members of the Society.

The Society and its members endeavour to work to the highest standards in every regard. The Society considers its members to be a valuable resource in achieving its aims and does not envisage that it will receive many complaints. However, the Society wants to ensure that in the event that a complaint is made against a member of the Society, there is a procedure in place which ensures that

- a) The complaint will be dealt with fairly and without prejudice; and
- b) The procedure and potential outcomes are clear for all parties involved

Dealing with issues under formal complaints and disciplinary procedures is a legalistic and potentially expensive route for all concerned. In consequence, the Society hopes that the majority of complaints that are received can be resolved informally by mediation. This particularly applies to poor behaviour in and around the show ring

If mediation or informal resolution is not possible or if it is more appropriate for the matter to be dealt with formally, then the Complaints Procedure as set out below should be followed

If the complaint is against a judge, official, an exhibitor or organizer of a show or event and the complaint relates to the rules of a particular show or event, the complaint should be made to the show secretary in accordance with the rules of the show or event

E COMPLAINTS: PROCEDURE

- 1 Complaints made against members
 - a. If a person has a complaint against a Society member, they should contact the Secretary of the Society at the contact details recorded on the website www.wpressa.com. If the complaint is sent by post, then it should be by registered post. A delivery receipt for emailed complaints or any hand deliveries should be obtained. Should the complaint be about the Secretary then the complaint should be addressed to the President of Council and marked 'strictly confidential'
 - b. A complaint should be in writing marked 'Private and Confidential' and signed by the complainant
 - c. Save where a complaint is made by a judge in relation to an issue arising from his/her duties as a judge, a complaint must be accompanied by the

complaint fee of R200. Failure to pay the fee will mean that the complaint will not be investigated under the Complaints Procedure. In respect of emailed complaints, the complaint will not formally be investigated until the appropriate fee is received.

- d. The complainant can also submit a separate letter or email from an independent person confirming the facts and basis of the complaint
- e. The complaint, independent letter(s) and fee should be received within 14 days of the complainant becoming aware of the subject of the complaint. Complaints received outside this timescale will only be investigate at the discretion of Council
- f. Evidence in support of the complaint should be provided along with the letter of complaint
- g. Any complaint which involves an allegation of breach of the Society's Social Media policy, arising from the posting, message or other communication, will not be considered until the complainant has reported the concern over the communication to the moderator of any social media site, where available, requesting that the communication be removed from the particular forum or site. The Society reserves the right to request that evidence that these steps have been taken is provided
- h. The Society will then send a letter acknowledging the complaint and, if necessary, may ask for further details. If the Society believes that the matter should be addressed by mediation it will invite the complainant to participate. If the matter is resolved by mediation, the complaint fee will be refunded
- i. In the event that medication is not possible, or subsequently, if it has failed, the letter will set out the name(s) of the person(s) assigned to investigate the complaint (the Investigating Officer(s)). If the complaint relates to a councillor or former councillor, the Investigating Officer will be an independent person who may or may not be a member of the Society. If the complaint relates to any other member of the Society, the Investigating Officers will be a panel of three, consisting of three councilors or three independent persons, who may not necessarily be members of the Society, or a combination of not more than three in total
- j. Any request by the Society for further details should be provided by the complainant within 10 working days otherwise the complaint will not be processed any further and the fee shall be returned
- k. The investigation of the complaint will be carried out by the Investigating Officer(s) within a reasonable timescale barring issues outside their control. The Investigating Officer(s) will undertake all necessary investigations which may include obtaining a response to the complaint from any member who is the subject of the complaint. This will usually involve sharing the full details of the complaint with that member, which in certain circumstances may include the identity of the complainant
- l. If necessary the complainant may be invited to a meeting to discuss the complaint and/or the response to the complaint further. In the event that this is not possible or practical, the complainant may be asked to expand upon the complaint in writing or by telephone

- m. Once the investigation has been concluded, a determination will be made by the Investigation Officer(s) who will notify the complainant in writing of the decision together with the reasons for this decision and any action that it is recommended is taken. The Investigating Officer(s) will either:
 - i. Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part; or
 - ii. Uphold the complaint in whole or in part which may include a determination that all or part of the matter be dealt with under the Society's disciplinary procedures
- n. In the event that the complaint is upheld in full by the Society, then the complainant will be repaid the complaint fee. Should the complaint not be upheld, then the sum will be retained by the Society

F DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

1 Disciplinary Proceedings

- a. Where an Investigating Officer(s) has determined, following the conclusion of an investigation, that there is a case to answer which requires further investigation, the outcome of which means that disciplinary action may be taken against a member, the President and Vice-President of Council acting together will appoint a disciplinary panel made up of three people who may not necessarily be members of the Society (the Disciplinary Panel). The Disciplinary panel may be made up of individuals who are members or non-members of the Society or a combination of the two. The Disciplinary panel should be appointed within 14 days of the decision by the Investigating Officers(s) that the matter should be dealt with under this Disciplinary Procedure.
- b. Within 7 days of being appointed, the Disciplinary Panel will inform the member of the allegations against him/her, the basis of those allegations, that there will be a disciplinary hearing convened and what the likely range of consequences will be if it decides after the hearing that the allegations are true. Where appropriate, the following will be included:
 - i. A summary of relevant information gathered by the Investigating Officer(s) during the investigation;
 - ii. A copy of any relevant documents which will be used at the disciplinary hearing; and,
 - iii. A copy of any relevant witness statements, except where the witness's identity is to be kept confidential, in which case the member will be given as much information as possible while maintaining confidentiality
- c. Within a further 14 days the member must inform the Disciplinary Panel whether they admit the allegations or not and indicate whether they wish to attend the hearing. If no response is received, the disciplinary procedure shall continue
- d. Within a further 14 days, the Disciplinary Panel will give the member written notice of the date, time and place of the disciplinary hearing. The hearing will be held as soon as reasonably practicable, but the member will be given a reasonable amount of time to prepare their case based on the information given to them by the Disciplinary Panel

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Disciplinary Hearing

- a. The disciplinary hearing will be held in front of the Disciplinary Panel. At the disciplinary hearing, the Disciplinary Panel will take the member through the allegations and the evidence that has been gathered. The member will be able to respond and present any evidence
- b. The member may ask the relevant witnesses to the evidence at the hearing to appear at the hearing, provided the member has given the Disciplinary Panel sufficient notice to arrange their attendance. Should the members wish to call his/her own witnesses to verify his/her version of events, it is the responsibility of the member to arrange their attendance
- c. Written statements may be introduced only if previously produced to and/or with the consent of the Disciplinary Panel
- d. The Disciplinary Panel may make a finding, following the disciplinary hearing that the allegations are:
 - i. Proved, in whole or in part; or
 - ii. Unproved, in whole or in part
- e. The decision of the Disciplinary Panel and its reasons, along with any disciplinary penalty, if appropriate, will be communicated to the member within 14 days of the date of the disciplinary hearing

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Disciplinary Penalties

- a. If the Disciplinary Panel finds the conduct alleged to be proved, in whole or in part, it shall impose such of the following actions as deemed appropriate given the circumstances of the case:
 - i. Take no action (only if there are strong mitigating circumstances)
 - ii. Give a reprimand or caution
 - iii. Impose a fine up to a maximum of R5000
 - iv. Expel a member from membership on either a temporary or permanent basis
- b. In the event of a fine being imposed, payment of the stipulated sum must be made within 28 days of receipt by the member of the communication of the decision of the Disciplinary Panel. Failure to make payment within the required time will lead to consideration being given to the expulsion of the member from membership on either a temporary or permanent basis
- c. If in relation to an offence dealt with by a court of law relating to an animal welfare offence, if a member is found guilty, the Society will take reciprocal action to that imposed by the Court, i.e. if the Court issues a warning or reprimand, the Society will similarly warn or reprimand the member
- d. In the case of a Court banning a member from keeping/owning animals for a period of time the Society will revoke the membership of the member found guilty and ban him/her from membership for the full period of the ban imposed by the Court

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Appeal

- a. If a member feels that disciplinary action taken against him/her is wrong or unjust, then he/she should appeal in writing, stating the full grounds of the appeal, to the Secretary within 14 days of the date on which he/she was informed of the decision of the Disciplinary Panel. The member will also be required to deposit with the Society the sum of R500. If the Appeals

Committee ultimately revokes the original decision then the sum deposited will be re-imbursed to the member

- b. Upon receipt of an appeal and appropriate fee, the President and Vice President of Council acting together, will appoint an Appeals Committee comprising three members who may not be members of the Society, of whom one shall be a practicing Attorney
- c. Appeals may be dealt with by written representations or at an appeal hearing. The Appeal Committee will give the member written note of the date, time and place of any appeal hearing. This will normally be 14 days after the written notice
- d. The Appeal Committee will consider all the evidence and make its decision which may be to:
 - i. Confirm the original decision;
 - ii. Revoke the original decision; or
 - iii. Substitute a different penalty, which will not be a more serious penalty than the one imposed by the Disciplinary Panel
- e. The Appeal Committee will inform the member in writing of the final decision as soon as possible, usually within 14 days of the date of the appeal hearing. There will be no further right of appeal

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