Barkston Ash Beekeepers Association

Code of Conduct

Our Purpose

Barkston Ash Beekeepers Association (BABKA) will not tolerate bullying or harassment. These behaviours can damage people's wellbeing, harm, relationships, and discourage volunteering.

Our Commitment

We are dedicated to creating a fair, respectful, and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, we support and protect all individuals--regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Any reports of bullying, harassment, or other unacceptable behaviour will be taken seriously and fully investigated. If not addressed, these behaviours can cause further harm and lead to serious problems for everyone involved.

Member Responsibilities

Each member plays a part in building a positive, inclusive environment and can help to do this by:

- being mindful of how their actions affect others--and being willing to adjust if needed
- treating everyone with fairness, equality, and respect
- listening to others and valuing their ideas
- supporting one another in completing tasks
- encouraging and celebrating diversity
- staying calm and respectful, even under stress
- speaking up if witnessing unacceptable behaviour, and setting a good example; and
- helping by cooperating and keeping things confidential if someone makes a complaint,

Unacceptable behaviours

The following behaviours are not acceptable:

Bullying:

Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour that undermines, humiliates the target. It may include any or all the following:

- Persistent unjustifiable criticism or exclusion
- Public humiliation
- Abuse of authority or power

Harassment:

Unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic as defined in the Equality Act 2010 (see above). Includes offensive jokes or comments, use and sharing of inappropriate materials, exclusion or intimidation, intrusive questions about their personal life or unwanted touching.

Third-Party Harassment:

Any form of bullying or harassment by someone external to the local association e.g. event attendees, suppliers or external speakers.

Victimisation:

Unfair treatment of someone who raised or supported a complaint. Retaliation will not be tolerated.

Other Unacceptable Behaviour:

Any behaviour which an individual or group knows, or ought reasonably to know, could have the potential effect of humiliating, intimidating, or isolating an individual or group. If unacceptable behaviour is not challenged, it is likely to cause harm or distress to the recipient(s) and escalate into bullying or harassment

Raising a Concern

The first step for a member in relation to a potential breach of the policy should always be to resolve any concerns - even if not directed at the member - informally. Advice to members is therefore to:

- Speak to the person - explain the effect of the behaviour. Get support if needed.
- Speak to the Chair or a committee member for informal resolution.
- If the Chair is the cause of the potential breach or appears to be compromised or otherwise regarded as inappropriate to address the matter, the member should contact another trustee or a trusted member
- Keep notes of what happened, when, and any steps taken

Formal Complaints

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the association will form a complaints committee of two or three people who were not involved in the situation.

- The committee will confirm they've received the complaint within 14 days.
- The people involved will have a chance to respond--both in writing and in person.
- Each person can bring a support person or witness to any meeting.
- The committee will review both sides, keep a record, and meet to discuss everything within six weeks of the original complaint.
- The outcome will be shared in general terms with the association committee and with those involved in the complaint.

Sanctions for unacceptable behaviour

If a member has been found to have displayed unacceptable behaviour, the complaints committee may recommend one or more of the following actions. These must be reviewed and agreed upon by the association's committee* before being implemented:

- Suspension from local association events and activities, for a period of up to one year
- Loss of club privileges, such as voting rights, committee roles, training opportunities, or access to social groups (e.g., WhatsApp), for up to one year
- Expulsion from the association in cases of serious or repeat misconduct where no improvement or remorse is shown. (Note that an expelled member may still choose to join the BBKA as a direct member)

*Assuming there is no conflict of interest within the association committee. In this case, a neighbouring association or YBKA may be asked to review the complaint and proposed sanctions. In the event it is one or more Trustees who have committed the unacceptable behaviour, those trustees will recuse themselves from any discussion or decision about sanctions to be implemented.

Appeals

Appeals against the actions determined by the Complaints Committee following a complaint must be made in writing within 28 days by contacting the association Chair or Secretary. If an appeal cannot be considered by the association, e.g. due to a conflict of interest, YBKA may act as an independent reviewer.