

Sussex Spaniel Association Committee Code of Conduct

Introduction

The Sussex Spaniel Association recognises the contribution made by volunteers who sit on the Committee. The purpose of this Code is to maintain high standards of conduct, assist individuals in their voluntary role and to protect the best interests of the Sussex Spaniel Association (the Association/SSA). Committee members should hold their position primarily for their knowledge, skill set and experience and their ability to actively contribute to the running of the Association. Committee members are appointed or elected by the members of the Association to represent their collective interests.

Committee Members will:

- promote the values and aims of the Association by acting as its ambassador and advocate always presenting it and its members in a positive light
- act only in the interests of the Association as a whole, not as individuals or small groups
- listen and respect the views of others and always use appropriate and respectful language and behaviour
- manage Association funds to maximise value for money in all Association financial dealings
- champion equality and respect the rights, dignity and worth of all people involved in the Sussex Spaniel Association, regardless of gender, race, marital status, colour, disability, sexuality, age, occupation, religion or political opinion
- actively contribute to the effective work of the Committee by:
 - a) preparing for meetings by reading all papers which have been circulated prior
 - b) being positively involved through regularly attending, participating and contributing to SSA events (e.g., shows, fun days etc.) and meetings including constructively challenging when appropriate
 - c) dealing with issues of agenda clarification before meetings and maintaining a focus on agenda items in meetings so that time is used effectively
 - d) respecting the office of the “Chair of the meeting” to ensure the orderly conduct of meetings
 - e) attempting to reach decisions by consensus and always publicly supporting group decisions even if their opinion is different
 - f) actively listening to the views of other Committee members with an open mind, seeking advice or clarification where needed, expressing their own views, and coming to their own decisions in good faith
 - g) accepting decisions made by the Committee even if he or she disagrees with it, and voted against it if a vote was taken
 - h) ensuring timely responses to, and completion of, agreed actions
 - i) supporting fellow Committee members in their leadership of the Association
 - j) attending the AGM and any other meeting(s) as and when required (sending apologies when necessary)
 - k) behaving in public and on all Association business with integrity and in a way which is appropriate for a Committee member of such an organisation
 - l) keeping to the agenda, raising other issues under “any other business” and not engaging in discussions during the meeting which are misleading or not relevant to the issues discussed

Standards of Behaviour

In addition to fulfilling their duties, Committee members are expected to show high standards of behaviour in carrying out their responsibilities. This is necessary in order that the Committee can function properly to ensure that it plays its part appropriately in the running of the Sussex Spaniel Association, and that its good name and reputation is maintained. The Committee member must not bring the Association into disrepute or prejudice its general good standing in any way.

Committee Members will not

- become inflexibly caught up in promoting their own views at meetings or through digital means
- gossip or act with bias or prejudice towards others
- use offensive or discriminatory language or behaviour, during meetings, at SSA events, dog shows, through digital means online or on social media
- resort to behaviour that could be considered bullying, harassment, aggressive, or intimidating whether in person or through digital means e.g. email, social media
- fail to deliver on their commitments as a Committee member
- publicly disagree with decisions that the Committee takes as a group, even if they have a different personal view

Confidentiality

Committee members will keep meeting details and decisions confidential as required, not disclosing information to others publicly or privately that might undermine the committee process or the credibility of the SSA. They will only disclose information regarding the business of the SSA if it is in the public domain or it has been authorised for publication or disclosure, or to disclose information when legally required to do so or if they are specifically authorised by the committee to do so e.g., when seeking views from the wider membership.

Use of Social Media

Committee members must not use any social media or social networking communications that could damage the SSA's operation or reputation. This includes any posted content that could still be construed as relevant to their membership of the Committee even if they do not directly identify themselves as a member.

Committee members must not post any messages or comments that may directly or indirectly cause serious offence, or would be discriminatory, defamatory, or potentially damaging about the SSA, the Committee, or its members. They should also ensure nothing is posted on the internet or on social media that could bring the SSA into disrepute or break the law e.g., data protection law.

Breaches of Conduct

In the unlikely event of a Committee member not meeting the high standards of behaviour expected, misconduct action may follow which could result in that Committee member being asked to resign. Misconduct is not limited to physical appearances at shows, SSA events or during meetings. Breaches of conduct will also include communication through digital means (e.g., email, social media), failure to regularly attend meetings or at any point a Committee member is acting for or representing the Sussex Spaniel Association.

Rule 5 of the Sussex Spaniel Association Rules (2005) states that members of the Committee who have not attended three or more consecutive meetings held during their term of office, without a satisfactory reason, shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and shall not be eligible for re-election during the next three years.

Seeking Resignation

If a Committee member's conduct or behaviour is deemed to be unsatisfactory, if they have not attended meeting as detailed above, or they have committed an act of gross misconduct the Chair will seek the approval of other members of the Committee to request the voluntary resignation from the Committee of said member. If such resignation is not forthcoming, formal procedures will be taken to remove the Committee member.