Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators:

Complaints Policy

1. **Types of complaint:**

Informal

Complaints made in person or by phone, to be dealt with informally and on the spot if possible. The formal procedure will not be used unless specifically requested by the complainant, or the incident is considered to be sufficiently serious to warrant it.

Formal

Complaints by email and in writing - to be dealt with under the formal procedure, unless the tone of the complaint does not warrant it.

2. **Formal Procedure**

- Any Conservator, representative of the landowner, or officer receiving a written or serious complaint that cannot be dealt with on the spot by them should forward it to the Clerk and inform the complainant that the Clerk will respond to the complaint.
- The Clerk will acknowledge the complaint within three working days of receipt by them.
- The complaint will be thoroughly investigated and replied to within ten working days of receipt by the Clerk. If this cannot be achieved, a further acknowledgement will be sent explaining why the reply has been delayed and giving a date by which a reply can be expected.
- The Clerk will conduct the investigation and send a formal reply unless the complaint concerns her.
- The office will collect all evidence as soon as possible after the incident including (where appropriate): statements by employees; photographs; statements by witnesses; letters; emails.
- The Chairman and any Conservator who has been involved in the complaint (or who has a special interest) will be kept fully informed.
- In cases where the complaint concerns the Clerk, the Chairman will conduct the investigation and send the formal reply.
- The Conservators will be informed of written or serious complaints at the next Conservators' meeting unless there is a reason to inform them sooner.

3. **Action**

All complaints of whatever level of seriousness will receive a verbal, telephone, email or written reply and will be recorded.

Where the complaint is found to be without foundation, a polite response will be sent firmly refuting the allegations. All further correspondence from the complainant will be acknowledged, but further points will not be addressed.

Where the complaint is justified, depending on the seriousness, the Clerk (or Chairman) will use their discretion to decide whether to raise the matter at the next Committee meeting and the Committee will decide whether all the Conservators should be consulted. No

restitution or settlement, except by the insurance company, will be offered without the full agreement of the Conservators.

Date of review: October 2026

Date of next review: October 2029