



Affiliated with the
Royal Horticultural Society



THE RCHS CONSTITUTION

Rules of the Society

1. Title:

The Society shall be called "**The Ruislip Central Horticultural Society.**"

2. Objectives:

The objectives of the society shall be:

- a. The promotion of horticulture and gardening by way of talks, shows, community events and outings.

3. Membership

- a. shall be open to any members of the public.
- b. Honorary Membership is given to those members who have given years of dedicated service to the Society and/or contributed significantly. Honorary Membership is strictly decided by the committee by way of a majority vote of names that can be put forward by any member

4. Subscription

- a. The RCHS membership year runs from 1st September – 31 August
- b. Membership will begin as soon as the membership form and annual payment have been received.
- c. There will be an annual membership fee, agreed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the following year, payable by all members.
- d. The membership secretary will keep a list of all members
- e. You can join the RCHS at any time in a calendar year; however, your membership will expire on the following 31st August
- f. An RCHS annual Membership covers a "Household" (Any Person who resides at the address on the application form)

5. Committee:

- a. The **Executive Committee**, consisting of the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and other members of the Society, shall be elected at the AGM and will remain in office for 1 year
- b. They shall be eligible for re-election at the following AGM.
- c. Five members form a quorum.
- d. The Committee shall have the authority to co-opt other members who shall be eligible to join any sub-committee.
 - i. Any financial matters that the sub-committee discuss need to be passed by the Executive Committee.

6. President:

- a. The President may be nominated by the Committee and elected at the AGM and shall serve for 3 years, after which a new election will take place.

7. Accounts Auditor:

- a. A Professional Auditor who shall not be a member of, or associated with, the Committee shall be nominated by the Committee.

8. Other Sections:

- a. Any Section, for example the Cacti Section, with the approval of the Society, can create their own section under the umbrella of RCHS.
- b. They may hold meetings and events and must nominate one of their officers to report to the main RCHS Committee.

9. General Meetings:

- a. The **AGM** shall be held each year during February, when audited accounts for the preceding year shall be produced
- b. All members will be notified in writing (email) at least 3 weeks before the date of the meeting, giving the venue, date and time.
- c. Nominations for the committee may be made to the Secretary before the meeting, or at the meeting.
- d. The quorum for the AGM will be 20% of the membership or 20 members, whichever is the greater number.
- e. An **Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)** may be called at two weeks' notice by majority vote of the Committee, or by written request, signed by not less than 20 of the members.

10. Society Constitution and rules:

- a. Any alterations to the Rules of the Society shall be made at a General Meeting by a majority of those members present, 14 days' notice of the proposed alterations having been given.
- b. The Constitution of the Society will be permanently available on the Society's website or available upon request.
- c. The Committee shall be the sole authority of the interpretation of these rules
- d. The decision of the Executive Committee upon any question of interpretation or upon any matter affecting the Society and not provided for in these rules shall be final and binding on the members of the Society.

11. Finances and accounts:

- a. The Financial Year of the Society shall end on the 31st December each year.
- b. Any withdrawals from the Society's accounts, on behalf of the Society, shall be signed by 2 Society members – one of which must be the Treasurer – the other can be any other nominated member

12. Code of Conduct

Our Purpose

The Ruislip Central Horticultural Society (RCHS) exists to encourage an interest in gardening, horticulture, and community involvement in a friendly, inclusive, and welcoming environment.

Every member, volunteer, committee member, speaker, exhibitor, and visitor has the right to enjoy Society activities free from intimidation, discrimination, harassment, or unacceptable behaviour.

Our Values....We will:

- Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy, and respect.
- Welcome members and visitors from all backgrounds.
- Promote friendship, learning, and enjoyment.
- Value the contribution of volunteers.
- Act honestly, fairly, and with integrity.
- Protect the reputation of the Society.

Expected Standards of Behaviour

All members and those attending Society events are expected to:

- Always be polite and respectful to others.
- Listen to differing opinions without becoming confrontational.
- Respect committee decisions made in accordance with the Society's Constitution.
- Take reasonable care of Society property and hired venues.
- Follow instructions given by the Committee.
- Help maintain a safe environment for everyone.
- Respect the privacy of other members and handle personal information appropriately.
- Raise concerns constructively through the appropriate channels.

Unacceptable Behaviour

The following behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Bullying or intimidation.
- Harassment of any kind.
- Aggressive, abusive, threatening, or offensive language.
- Discrimination based on age, disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or any other protected characteristic.
- Deliberately disrupting Society meetings or events.
- Being rude, inappropriate, or unnecessarily critical about another member.
- Bringing the Society into disrepute through behaviour either in person or online.
- Misuse of Society funds, equipment, or property.
- Excessive alcohol consumption that affects the enjoyment or safety of others.
- Knowingly making false or malicious complaints.

Social Media

Members are encouraged to promote the Society positively. When using social media, members should:

- Be respectful towards other members.
- Avoid posting offensive or defamatory comments.
- Not present personal opinions as official Society statements.
- Obtain permission before sharing photographs where appropriate.
- Protect confidential information relating to the Society.

Volunteers and Committee Members

Those acting on behalf of the Society are expected to:

- Lead by example.
- Act in the best interests of the Society.
- Declare any conflicts of interest.
- Treat all members fairly and consistently.
- Handle complaints sensitively and confidentially.
- Maintain appropriate standards of governance.

Complaints

If a member believes this Code of Conduct has been breached, they should report the matter in writing only to the current Secretary or another Committee Member.

The Committee will:

- Treat complaints fairly and confidentially.
- Listen to all parties involved.
- Consider available evidence.
- Reach a decision in accordance with the Society's Constitution and relevant policies.

Possible Outcomes

Where this Code has been breached, the Committee may:

- Offer informal advice or guidance.
- Issue a verbal warning.
- Issue a written warning.
- Request an apology.
- Suspend membership while investigations take place.
- Recommend termination of membership in accordance with the Society's disciplinary procedures

Commitment

By becoming or remaining a member of the Ruislip Central Horticultural Society, members agree to uphold this Code of Conduct and contribute positively to maintaining a welcoming, friendly, and respectful Society for everyone.

13. Complaints & Disciplinary Procedures Policy

Our Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure is here to help ensure a fair and respectful process for everyone involved. We're committed to addressing concerns promptly and thoughtfully, creating a safe environment where everyone feels valued and heard.

Purpose

The Ruislip Central Horticultural Society (RCHS- "the Society") is committed to providing a friendly, welcoming and respectful environment for all members, volunteers and visitors.

This procedure sets out how complaints about members, volunteers or committee members will be handled fairly, consistently and confidentially.

The aim is to resolve issues wherever possible while protecting the interests of both the complainant and the subject of the complaint.

Scope

This procedure applies to:

- All Society members.
- Committee members.
- Volunteers acting on behalf of the Society.
- Conduct occurring at Society meetings, events, outings and activities.
- Conduct on social media or elsewhere where it may reasonably affect the reputation or operation of the Society.

Guiding Principles

The Society will ensure that:

- Everyone is treated fairly and with respect.
- Complaints are handled promptly.
- Both parties have the opportunity to present their account.
- Decisions are based on evidence wherever possible.
- Confidentiality is maintained as far as reasonably practicable.
- No individual is prejudged before a decision has been reached

Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, minor disagreements should first be resolved informally. This may involve:

- A private conversation between those involved.
- Assistance from a Committee Member.
- Clarifying misunderstandings.
- An apology where appropriate.

Where the matter is resolved informally, no further action will normally be taken.

Making a Formal Complaint

If informal resolution is inappropriate or unsuccessful, a formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Society Secretary.

The complaint should include:

- The complainant's name.
- Date of the incident.
- Location of the incident.
- Details of what occurred.
- Names of any witnesses.
- Copies of any supporting evidence.

Anonymous complaints will only be considered where there is clear supporting evidence or where there are safeguarding concerns.

Initial Review

The Secretary (or another nominated Committee Member if the complaint concerns the Secretary) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint.

The Committee will decide whether:

- The complaint falls within this procedure.
- Further information is required.
- Immediate action is necessary to protect members or the Society.

Investigation

Where appropriate, the Committee will appoint two impartial Committee Members to investigate.

The investigation may include:

- Interviewing those involved.
- Speaking to witnesses.
- Reviewing written evidence.
- Considering photographs, emails or other relevant information.
- Those involved are expected to cooperate fully

Committee Decision

- Following the investigation, the Committee will consider:
- The seriousness of the conduct.
- Previous incidents, where relevant.
- Any mitigating circumstances.
- The evidence presented.

The Committee will determine, on the balance of probabilities, whether the complaint is upheld.

Possible Outcomes

Depending upon the seriousness of the matter, the Committee may:

- Take no further action.
- Provide advice or guidance.
- Facilitate mediation.
- Request an apology.
- Issue a verbal warning.
- Issue a written warning.
- Remove an individual from a specific event.
- Suspend membership for a specified period
- Recommend termination of membership in accordance with the Society Constitution.

The Committee may also recommend additional measures to prevent similar issues arising.

Appeals

A member who is subject to disciplinary action may appeal within **21 days** of receiving the Committee's decision.

The appeal should:

- Be made in writing.
- State the reasons for the appeal.
- Include any new evidence not previously available.

The appeal will be considered by Committee Members who were not directly involved in the original decision wherever practicable.

The outcome of the appeal shall be final.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled confidentially.

Information will only be shared with those who need it to investigate and determine the complaint.

Committee Members involved in handling complaints are expected to maintain confidentiality.

Record Keeping

The Secretary will maintain confidential records of:

- Formal complaints.
- Investigation notes.

- Decisions reached.
- Actions taken.
- Appeals.

Records will be retained securely in accordance with the Society's data protection obligations.

Review

This procedure will be reviewed periodically by the Committee to ensure it remains fair, effective and compliant with current legislation and good practice.

14. Dissolution

- a. In the event of dissolution of the Society, the surplus funds after discharge of all liability shall be donated to a charity, or charities, chosen by the committee.
- b. It is expected that any recipient charities have a Horticultural or Gardening focus

This constitution was agreed and passed by the Membership on: -

Date: - 15th September 2026

Chairman: Warren Reeves JP

Secretary: Katie Rawlinson