



Alconbury Recreation Field Charity. (ARFC)

Whistleblowing Policy

1. Purpose

Alconbury Recreation Field Charity (ARFC) is committed to the highest standards of openness, honesty, and accountability. We encourage all ARFC trustees, volunteers, staff, contractors, and other stakeholders or users of ARFC facilities to raise concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice as early as possible.

This policy provides a clear and safe process for reporting genuine concerns, without fear of victimisation or reprisal. It applies to all aspects of the ARFC's work, including governance, operations, finances, safeguarding, and community engagement.

2. Scope

This policy covers concerns about:

- Criminal offences.
- Failure to comply with legal obligations.
- Miscarriages of justice.
- Endangerment of health and safety.
- Damage to the environment.
- Financial mismanagement, fraud, or misuse of charitable funds.
- Breach of the ARFC's governing document or policies.
- Safeguarding concerns involving children or adults at risk.
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above.

This policy is not intended for:

- Personal grievances relating to ARFC employment, volunteering or trustee roles, which should be addressed in accordance with the Charity's grievance procedure.
- Routine service or facility complaints, which should be handled in accordance with the complaints policy and procedure.

3. Protection for Whistleblowers

Under the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**, whistleblowers are protected from dismissal, victimisation, or detriment, provided their disclosure is:

- Made in the public interest.
- Based on a reasonable belief that wrongdoing has occurred, is occurring or likely to occur.

The ARFC will treat all concerns seriously and will not tolerate retaliation against anyone raising an issue in good faith.

4. Confidentiality

- Wherever possible, the ARFC will make every effort to protect the identity of a whistleblower who raises a concern in good faith.
- In some cases (e.g., criminal investigations or safeguarding investigations) it may not be possible to maintain complete anonymity. Anonymous reports will be considered but may limit the ability to investigate fully.
- All records will be handled in line with data protection law and stored securely.

5. How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should be raised promptly, preferably in writing, and include:

- Details of the suspected wrongdoing.
- Dates, times, people involved.
- Any supporting evidence.
- Whether the concern has been raised before.

Internal Contacts:

1. **Chair of Trustees – Christian Bodley. christian@arfc.org.uk**

If the concern involves a trustee or senior figure, it should be directed to a trustee who is not involved in the matter.

For safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) may also be contacted.

External Contacts (where internal reporting is not appropriate):

- Charity Commission: www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity
- Fundraising Regulator: www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk

- Health & Safety Executive: www.hse.gov.uk
- Police (if criminal activity is suspected)

6. Investigation Process

1. **Acknowledgement** – The concern will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
2. **Preliminary Assessment** – A designated trustee (or panel) will decide if the concern falls within the policy and whether further investigation is needed.
3. **Investigation** – An impartial investigator will be appointed, and evidence will be gathered.
4. **Outcome** – Findings will be reported to the Board of trustees, who will determine actions required.
5. **Feedback** – The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome, subject to legal and confidentiality limits.

Records of all whistleblowing reports, investigations, and outcomes will be kept securely and confidentially by the Secretary or Chair.

7. Malicious or Vexatious Allegations

If a claim is found to be malicious, made in bad faith, or knowingly false, the ARFC may take appropriate action, which could include removal from volunteer duties, termination of hirer or usage agreements, exclusion from ARFC facilities or other measures.

8. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the trustees to ensure it remains fit for purpose and reflects current legal requirements and best practice.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Name: C. Bodley

Role: Chair

Date: 22nd October 2025

Date Approved: 22nd October 2025

Review Due: October 2026 Revision No 1

Signed (Chair): C. Bodley