

British Agricultural History Society

Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct has been drawn up to cover:

- The General Code of Conduct for the British Agricultural History Society
- The Complaints procedure for the BAHS
- Our Policy on Prizes and Awards

All members, including ordinary members, co-opted members and officials of the Executive Committee are expected to act in accordance with the principles outlined in this document. The Code is based on seven key principles outlined below:

Responsibility & Accountability

All members should be aware of their ethical, legal and professional responsibilities incumbent to the specific community in which they work, and also to this Society. All individuals should avoid personal and professional misconduct that might bring the Society or the reputation of the profession into disrepute, recognising that, in particular, legal action that reflects on an individual's suitability to operate in the field of agricultural and rural history may be regarded as misconduct by the Society.

Members are encouraged to advance public knowledge and understanding of agricultural history and to counter false or misleading statements which are detrimental to the wider community.

Members shall encourage and support fellow members in their professional development and, where possible, engage with, and mentor, new entrants to our academic community.

Members shall not speak in the name of the Society, its Executive or committees, without the authorisation of the Executive Committee.

Integrity & Honesty

All members should:

Be honest and accurate in representing their professional affiliations and qualifications, including such matters as knowledge, skill, training, education and experience.

Take reasonable steps to ensure that their qualifications and competencies are not misrepresented by others, and to correct any misrepresentation identified. Members must recognise and clarify the limits of their knowledge, skills, training, qualifications, educations and experience.

Be honest and accurate in conveying professional conclusions, opinions, and research findings, and in acknowledging the potential limitations.

Not use their membership as a means of conveying a level of competency or professional standards, as the Society is not an accrediting body, and there is no assessment of competency to attain/retain membership.

Respect & Fairness

The BAHS is committed to maintaining and promoting a professional environment within which its members treat each other with dignity and respect. All members will not discriminate against, bully or harass others on the basis of: cultural and role difference, including (but not exclusively) those

involving: age, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, language, national origin, political beliefs, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital or family status, and socio-economic status. Members should respect the knowledge, insight, experience and expertise of fellow members, (regardless of career stage and length of BAHS membership) relevant third parties, and members of the general public.

The Society recognises as bullying, behaviour that may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying does not need to be deliberate; someone may demonstrate bullying behaviour, which falls within the above definition, without intending to. Whichever form it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual and will often cause embarrassment, fear, humiliation or distress to an individual or group of individuals. Bullying often results from a misuse of individual power derived from status/position, physical strength, or force of personality. It can also arise from collective power arising out of strength of numbers.

The BAHS recognises as harassment any unwelcome verbal or physical behaviour, including sexual advances, when the unwanted conduct has the purpose or effect of either violating another person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Harassment does not need to be deliberate; someone may harass another person without intending to. In some situations, where the unwanted conduct is serious, a single incident may constitute harassment. In other situations, conduct may become harassment if it is repeated or sustained.

The following list provides examples of the types of behaviour that can amount to harassment, although the list is, by no means, exhaustive:

- Unwelcome physical contact or physical interaction: This may range from unnecessary touching or brushing against another's body, physical assault, coercing sexual intercourse, physical threats, insulting or abusive behaviours or gestures. This may also encompass invading someone's 'personal space' by standing very close to him/her where this is unnecessary.
- Unwelcome verbal conduct: This may include the making of remarks and comments about appearance, lewd comments, sexual advances, innuendo and banter, the making or repetition of offensive or stereotyped comments, jokes or songs, the making of threats. or the making of patronising comments.
- Unwelcome written or visual interaction: This may include sending unwelcome emails, notes or pictures, displaying or sending offensive material on any EHS social-media/websites/blogs etc.
- Harassment, bullying and victimisation of members, or by members by electronic/digital methods.

Given the degree of current reliance upon electronic means of communication, it should be specifically noted that harassment, bullying and victimisation by members by electronic means is also unacceptable. For example, this might involve:

- Sending e-mails (with or without attachments) which breach the terms of this Code.
- Inappropriate copying of e-mails to parties not seen as relevant to the discussion, as a way of intimidating or inappropriately gaining leverage over other members, guests, volunteers or staff.

Privacy & Confidentiality

All members should respect the individual and collective rights to privacy and maintain confidentiality in compliance with UK and International law and regulations.

See also the BAHS GDPR & Data Protection Policy.

Avoidance of Personal Gain

All members should neither offer nor accept bribes or inducements, either on a personal basis or on behalf of the Society.

Conflict(s) of Interest

All members should declare to the Society's Executive Committee any competing professional or personal interests that may be pertinent to their activities within the BAHS and its supported events and research groups. This includes any professional/academic disputes, whistle-blowing activity within their academic work, and issues/disputes over the member's research integrity. Any activities undertaken in the Society's name must be consistent with the Society's vision, strategic objectives and the principles outlined in this guide. If a conflict of interest does arise, the individual must inform the Executive Committee and President immediately the matter becomes apparent and must take the following actions:

- Abstain from the activity in question;
- declare the conflict of interest and pass the role to a colleague, or;
- stand down/withdraw from the activity.

Failure to do so, may lead to the imposition of actions, including a ban on attendance/participation at specific events or activities, and ultimately termination of their membership.

Collegiality

Collaboration with external learned societies and organisations is encouraged in order to develop the transfer and sharing of knowledge and to help disseminate learning and good practice. If members put in place barriers or are obstructive to such collaboration or act in a way that brings the Society into disrepute through these collaborations they may be in breach of this Code and may face sanctions or termination of their membership.

Summary

This Code of Conduct establishes the principles for all BAHS members to adhere to, however, it may not cover every issue that may arise. This Code encourages trust and respect from its members and non-members involved in our activities.

Complaints Procedure

The Society has a complaints procedure for any issues that may arise. The Procedure for investigating allegations of a breach of one of the BAHS Codes of Conduct will normally commence with the Informal Procedure outlined below, however, in exceptional cases if the individual feels that the informal process is not workable in their situation, the formal procedure may be used without exhausting the informal procedure. This would normally be done upon the advice of the President of the Society in full consultation with the individual concerned.

Informal Procedure

A complainant who considers that they are a victim of a breach of one of the BAHS Codes of conduct should, if practicable, seek to resolve the matter informally with the person against whom the allegation is made.

If an informal approach under 1(a) is unsuccessful or inappropriate, complainants should raise the matter with the President of the Society. The President should, within a reasonable time (and recognising that the President is a non-stipendiary post with other obligations):

- Discuss with the complainant the complaint (this may be done by e-mail, or by telephone, and a record should be kept).
- Contact the person against whom the complaint has been made, outline the nature of the complaint, and ascertain that person's response to the complaint.
- If appropriate, arrange a joint meeting with the parties to discuss the case.
- Keep a brief written record on file.

If the President is the person against whom the complaint is made, paragraph 1(b) shall be interpreted as referring to the Honorary Secretary of the Society. The same applies to the formal procedure under 2(b).

Formal Procedure

If the informal procedure fails to resolve the matter, or where, because of the serious nature of the alleged behaviour the informal procedure is deemed to be inappropriate, the complainant may bring a formal complaint under this Procedure.

A formal complaint should be made in writing to the President of the Society who will immediately send a copy of the complaint to the person(s) against whom the allegation is made.

The President will initiate an investigation of the complaint.

An investigation shall be undertaken by a sub-committee of the Executive, appointed by the President in consultation with the Officers.

The investigating committee may require the parties and any witnesses (whether or not identified by either party) to present evidence within a reasonable time of the request being made. All evidence will be given in writing (including e-mail). Individuals may also be called to present an oral statement from their written statement. Those who provide evidence should be reminded at the outset that it will be used in order to resolve the matter.

The investigating committee will prepare a report which will review the evidence and:

- recommend that on the basis of the evidence the complaint is dismissed; OR
- make recommendations for informally resolving the matter (without necessarily attributing blame or responsibility) in a way that seeks to establish and promote a professional and respectful working relationship between the parties using any mediation services that may be available; OR
- decide that there is a prima facie case to answer and recommend that the matter be dealt with by a formal resolution discussed at a meeting of the Society's Executive Committee. Notice of 21 days will be given to the subject complained about so they can attend and make their case.

The Executive has the following disciplinary powers:

- to write a formal letter of censure;
- to exclude individuals, either temporarily or permanently, from specific Society organised or supported events or activities
- to temporarily suspend membership;
- to suspend membership permanently.

An appeal may be made against the outcome of the investigation, either by the complainant or by the person against whom a complaint has been made; any appeal should be made in writing to the President (or, if the complaint is against the President, the Honorary Secretary). An appeal can be made only on grounds of procedural irregularity or where the outcome of the investigation is seen to be manifestly unreasonable.

General

A party or witness acting under any stage of this Procedure who knowingly makes a statement that is untrue, malicious and frivolous or in bad faith may be subject to the disciplinary powers of the Executive Committee detailed under 2(f). The investigating committee should investigate any such action and make recommendations as part of its report.

At all stages of this Procedure the complainant, person against whom the complaint has been made or witness may be accompanied by a colleague who does not have to be a member of the Society.

All information gathered under this Procedure will be treated in confidence.

Policy for Prizes and Awards

Members of BAHS prize committees should be BAHS members who honour rigorous scholarship with which they may disagree, and who are appropriately critical of work with which they agree. Historians should evaluate scholarship in a respectful and fair manner. To maintain the prestige of our field, the committees should not confer an award or prize if there are no worthy submissions or candidates.

Individuals who have violated BAHS Professional Standards are not eligible for prizes or awards. The BAHS Executive Committee may choose, at its discretion, to revoke an award or prize should it become known that the recipient has been convicted of a relevant criminal offense or is confirmed to have engaged in professionally unethical behaviour, as a result of which the ongoing association with the recipient is likely to negatively reflect on the BAHS. Confirmation of such behaviour must come in the form of a formal governmental, judicial, or institutional finding, such as an investigation by a university's ethics committee, or an admission by the individual.

Consideration for revocation of a prize requires a direct relationship between the criteria for the prize and the offense in question. The BAHS may revoke an award or prize should it receive confirmation of prior misconduct on the part of the recipient, such as evidence of plagiarism or falsified citations, after the prize has been awarded. Prizes may not be revoked posthumously.

Procedure for Revocation of Prizes and Awards

Any BAHS member who reasonably believes that an BAHS award should be revoked in accordance with this Policy on Revoking Prizes and Awards may make a request in writing to the BAHS Honorary Secretary. The communication should include supporting documentation such as institutional reports, public records, and personal testimonies from those who claim unethical behaviour has transpired. The BAHS Executive Secretary will consult with BAHS Officers (in executive session). The officers will recommend either to:

- Dismiss the revocation request;
- Recommend revocation of the prize (confirmed with a vote of the Executive Committee); or
- In cases of allegations of scholarly misconduct, request that the BAHS President appoint an *ad hoc* committee of three specialists in the relevant field to investigate further. The findings of the ad hoc committee will be submitted to the BAHS Executive Committee, which will then vote to revoke the award, effectively immediately, or will vote to retain the award.

Should steps 2 or 3 be initiated, the recipient of the prize or award will be notified that revocation of the prize is being considered and will be offered the opportunity to submit a written response for consideration by the BAHS Executive Committee. A prize may be revoked at any meeting of the BAHS Executive Committee by a resolution adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Executive Committee. Communication of a decision to revoke a prize will be handled on a case-by-case basis. At a minimum, the prize winner's name will be removed from the BAHS's website and the decision will be recorded in the minutes of the Executive Committee.