

Geograph Project Ltd
Charity No 1145621

Complaints and comments by website users

A number of channels are available for feedback of all kinds between users, the membership and the Trustees. Dealing with complaints will usually be done by a moderator, usually by email.

Contact Us

On most pages of the website there is a 'Contact Us' link in the sidebar. If the user clicks on it, they will reach a support page, OSTicket, where the user can select a topic and post their comment or complaint and their contact details. A moderator or a Trustee will respond, after consultation if need be. This channel is available to all users of the website.

Harmful content

A "Report a concern" link is provided at the foot of most web pages. This is primarily intended for the reporting of concerns about potentially harmful content in the context of the Online Safety Act. Messages submitted here will be directed to a Trustee within OSTicket, who may alert the Board to any harmful content and take immediate steps for its removal, or may transfer the issue to another member of the team as necessary.

Direct contact

Any viewer of a photo page may send an email to the photographer via the 'Contact contributor' link on the page. It is likely to be a comment, information or request rather than a complaint. Contributors are advised to transfer complaints to the 'Contact Us' channel - see above. Advice about this is given on our Information pages.

Email

An email address specifically for feedback Trustees@geograph.org.uk is given in the newsletter we publish following each meeting of the Trustees (every two months currently). All website users can view the newsletters. Emails are forwarded to the Trustees, who may agree the nature of the response, usually by the chairman. Many site users know who the Trustees are; they can and do contact individual Trustees directly with any thoughts or concerns via the Trustee's profile page. A Trustee will respond, sometimes after consultation, or the comment will be noted and acknowledged.

Forum

A moderated online forum is available to all registered site users through the 'Discussion' link on the main site menu. Comments and queries are often answered satisfactorily by fellow-users. Trustees will respond to any criticisms and concerns as long as they are not deliberately provocative or abusive.

There is a dedicated forum thread 'Contributor/Trustee dialogue' for structured policy discussions. The thread is for a topic which requires the attention of the Trustees and is capable of being brought to a conclusion. Ideally a conclusion that results in action by the Trustees or results in a vote of the company members.

Links

'About Geograph' is an article reached via the 'FAQ' or the 'Help' links on the main menu. From links in the text anyone can contact a trustee directly by email from the trustee's profile page. The registered office address is given and there is a link to the company's Articles of Association.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM provides an opportunity for comment by company members. A formal response, or more often an informal discussion, will be recorded in the minutes. Procedures are set out in the Articles of Association for a resolution to be put to any general meeting. The Articles are linked to on the 'About Geograph' page, see above, and the Company mini-site, accessible to any company member from their profile page.

Registered address

The postal address of the registered office, is displayed at the bottom of the Home page. Correspondence will be forwarded from the registered office to the Company Secretary, who will respond after consultation with other Trustees if required.

Suggestions

Some contributors query photo moderation decisions or propose amendments to information in published content. These are referred to as suggestions, not complaints or comments. There is a dedicated channel for this correspondence called the Suggestions or Ticket system, operated by moderators. It may be reached from any photo page by clicking on the 'Update information' link.

Grievance procedure

- a. A volunteer (or any site user) who has a grievance about the conduct of another volunteer (whether contributor, moderator or Trustee) should draw the matter to the attention of the Trustees either by e-mail to trustees@geograph.org.uk or using the osTicket system ('contact us' link on the website). The suggestions system (Geograph's internal 'tickets') and the Forum are not appropriate ways to raise a grievance.
- b. A grievance, for the purpose of this policy, includes an allegation that a member has knowingly and repeatedly failed to abide by the terms of the Code of Practice (issued January 2024), for example by consistently submitting mislocated or very poor quality images, or making inappropriate comments in the forum. A 'honeymoon period' may be allowed for new contributors in which mistakes are corrected and lessons learned.
- c. Potential grievances should be reported in a timely manner, ideally within three months of the action that is being reported.
- d. Many potential grievance issues can often be resolved informally. An investigation into the grievance will usually start with an informal discussion between a Trustee and the complainant. What action is reasonable or justified will depend on all the circumstances of the particular case. Where this is not sufficient to resolve the issue, the following paragraphs will apply.
- e. In general, a complainant will not be expected to remain anonymous but the subject of the complaint will be warned not to attempt any form of retaliation and not to contact the complainant directly. Failure to observe this could result in immediate sanctions. However there may be circumstances in which it is deemed appropriate for the subject of the complaint not to be told the identity of the complainant. If a request for anonymity is made and declined, then the complainant has the right to withdraw the complaint. Any allegations made with anonymity need to be specific and supported with examples.
- f. If the complaint is about the way the moderation process has been implemented, rather than the words or attitude of a Moderator, the Chair may appoint another Moderator who is not the subject of the complaint to investigate.
- g. Otherwise, if formal investigation is considered appropriate, the Chair or their nominated representative on the Board will carry out an investigation, except when the person

complained about is the Chair or other Trustee, in which case the Chair (or Company Secretary if the Chair is the subject of the complaint) will appoint another company member (not necessarily a Trustee) to take on the investigation.

- h. Possible actions or sanctions resulting from an investigation may include (but are not limited to):
- i. an invitation to the complainant and the subject of the complaint to take part in a facilitated discussion (conciliation process). If this is not accepted by either party or does not result in agreement, further actions may be taken as below.
 - ii. a reminder to adhere to this code of conduct, possibly with an indication of what further sanction may be applied if they fail to do so;
 - iii. vaulting of offending images (i.e. removing them from public view for a fixed or indefinite period);
 - iv. prevention for a fixed or indefinite period from performing some volunteer roles (e.g. image submission or moderation);
 - v. the requirement to stand down as a volunteer Moderator or Trustee;
 - vi. removal of status as a Company member;
 - vii. suspension of the member's Geograph account.
- j. Actions (i) to (iii) above may be applied without prior notice. Except in the case of gross misconduct or action that results in criminal prosecution, warning will be given and the subject of the complaint be given chance to amend their behaviour, before applying any of the above sanctions (iv) to (vii).
- k. Appeals against the findings of the initial investigation, or actions that result from the investigation, should be made to the Chair (if they have not previously been involved), or the Company Secretary. If the appeal finds that the investigation has not been completed thoroughly or conducted fairly, then a further investigation by the Chair (or Secretary) will take place. If the appeal is deemed to have been properly investigated, the original decision will stand. The Chair's (or Secretary's) decision is final. Consideration may be given to involving an independent external party, such as a conciliation service, in the rare event that none of the Trustees are considered to be the appropriate person to hear the appeal.

Approved by the Board of Trustees

Signed



Chair
September 2025