

AGENDA ITEM 5b

Misuse of What's App groups

Despite the adoption of the Club Safeguarding, Equity & Diversity Policy there has been criticism and observations that its principles are not being followed, particularly within What's App messages.

Clearly, a reminder of the key policy points and expectations is necessary. The basis underwriting the policy is that :-

1. Shared events and activities for men and women should not be a vehicle and excuse to prompt lewd and unwelcome comments thinly disguised as "banter".
2. Sharing pornographic material on club premises, on What's App and social media is likely to cause offence to many and is certainly not consistent with the values of a Family Club.
3. Hostile comments and/or assumptions about people of colour or people of faith will almost certainly cause offence to other members and /or their families.
4. Humour and laughter are the social life blood of clubs and the reasons for most people joining but "jokes" that depend on prejudice and stereotypes are also likely to cause offence.

The following list includes "categories" where "offence" has been and can be given:-

Equality; Equity; Gender Equality; Gender Equity; Equity; Diversity; Discrimination; Racism; Sexism; Misogyny; Homophobia; Disability Discrimination; Bullying; Harassment; Ageism.

At sometime in the past we **ALL** may have been guilty of some of the above, but Time and Society attitudes change and so must we all.

OUR ABUSE OF WHAT'S APP PLATFORMS MUST STOP. And yes, it can be a useful tool but only when it is not abused as it has been recently.

It is not the job of Gary as Safeguarding Officer or Graham as Chairman to "Police" or "monitor" peoples personal views and [heaven forbid], private unspoken prejudices but to act in the interests "respect" of Members, Guests and Visitors when "offence" has clearly been given.

So what is to be done? This discussion paper has been prepared to enable the Committee to come to a decision on the best course of action to improve the current situation.

Should we take down the Club What's App platform completely? Can we reasonably expect any improvement in member's use of the platform. Should we expect Team Captains to maintain and monitor an individual group app for each team? Should we implement a system of written warnings followed by suspension or removal of membership for persistent and blatant offenders ?

The existing and traditional Club Constitution already provides for the removal of offending members.

Graham S Jackson. Chairman

Gary Nolan. Safeguarding Officer

