

(Model equality and diversity policy for a smaller organisation or community group)

Bitton Village Residents Association

We plan to discuss and adopt this policy at our next committee meeting on 17 June 2015. Thank you for bringing the need for this policy to our attention.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Introduction

Welcome to our *Equality and Diversity Policy*. Our Policy provides details of our **overall aims** and the **underlying principles** which guide our approach to equality, diversity and community cohesion. It also sets out responsibilities for the policy and its implementation, as well as referencing our legal duties and responsibilities.

We consult widely with regard to equality & diversity, monitor our progress and continually review the actions we take, and we proactively revise our approaches where required. We do this so that we can be sure that we are consistently progressing towards the achievement of our aims and principles.

We welcome our legal duties and responsibilities with regard to Equality and Diversity. In particular we have a positive commitment to address our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

This Policy does not exist purely as a paper-based exercise; Bitton Village Residents Association sees Community Cohesion, Equality and Diversity as fundamental considerations underpinning everything that we do. Therefore, this Policy applies to all service-users, staff and all community members.

Aims

Our aim is to provide services for all, acknowledging that the society within which we live is enriched by diversity.

We will strive to ensure that the culture and ethos of Bitton Village Residents Association reflects and celebrates the diversity of ALL members of the community.

We will also seek to ensure that everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect and fairness. Service-users will be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

Our core values are: to encourage mutual respect for all; recognise and work with every diverse group; provide high quality inclusive services and facilities; make sure our policies and practices are fair and challenge harassment and discrimination.

We will proactively seek to review and restructure the cultures, policies and practices that we have in place, so they can be welcoming and responsive to the full diversity of people locally, nationally and globally.

Principles

In working towards the achievement of our aims, we will be guided by the following principles:

- **All are valued equally**

We see all people as of equal value regardless of their age, disability, race, ethnicity, colour, creed, nationality, national origin or status, culture, religion or belief, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic or social status, marriage or civil partnership status or pregnancy and maternity status.

- **Welcoming and celebrating diversity**

Treating people equally (or in other words fairly), does not mean treating them all *the same*. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate, to take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to age, disability, race, ethnicity, colour, creed, nationality, national origin or status, culture, religion or belief, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic or social status, marriage or civil partnership status or pregnancy and maternity status..

- **Fostering positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging**

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote positive attitudes, an absence of harassment, positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other, global citizenship, an absence of prejudice-related bullying and harassment and mutual respect.

- **Bitton Village Residents Association as an employer / place where people volunteer**

Policies and procedures should benefit all employees, volunteers and potential employees and volunteers, for example in recruitment, promotion, and in training/continuing professional development.

- **Proactively reviewing what we do in order to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers**

We proactively plan to ensure that we make progress in regard to ensuring equality of opportunity for all, and we regularly review these plans. We will not simply seek to avoid discriminatory practices, we will take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by actively going about reducing and removing inequalities and barriers to equality and taking positive actions towards promoting and enhancing equality of opportunity for all.

- **Creating Opportunity**

We believe that young people can be disadvantaged because of their age and position in society. We believe in and value young people for themselves - we commit to ensuring that our activities contribute to enabling young people to achieve their full potential. We will ensure that our activities offer opportunities for all young people to be involved. Indeed, these commitments extend to the whole community.

- **Consulting widely**

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies and activities, and in the review of existing ones.

- **Society as a whole should benefit**

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life.

- **Safeguarding**

Everyone involved in Bitton Village Residents Association has responsibility for the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults. We proactively ensure that arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. We will ensure that all involved with Bitton Village Residents Association are protected from any forms of bullying, harassment or any other maltreatment based on equalities issues. (Linked to safeguarding policy see separate document)

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Objectives and Actions

This Policy has so far stated our overall aims and the underlying principles by which we will work. In order to truly deliver on these, we need to ensure that the way in which we *act* proactively contributes to their achievement. Therefore, we will keep all our activities under review in order to ensure that they reflect our aims and principles as previously stated. We will use appropriate data and information to assist us in understanding how well we are doing in respect of all areas of equality.

We respect the diversity of all staff, volunteers, service users and all associated with the organisation comply with reasonable requests relating to a full range of equalities issues.

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all as appropriate.

We ensure that the core principles listed above apply also to the full range of our policies and practices.

Roles and responsibilities

Everybody involved with Bitton Village Residents Association) is expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos.
- deal appropriately with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur.
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping.
- support the diversity of service-users based on individual need.