

## Poulshot Village Trust

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## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement – Bullying and Harassment Policy

This document sets out the Poulshot Village Trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement and its policy on Bullying and Harassment.

Version	Status	Originated by and date	Approved by and date
0.1	First Draft	Secretary 13 June 2022	
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### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

#### Introduction

The Poulshot Village Trust Executive Committee acknowledges that the United Kingdom is diverse in culture, race, beliefs, and religion and believes that no individual or group of people should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, age, colour, race, nationality, racial or national origins, cultural heritage, disability, marital status, social background, sexual orientation or geographical location. The Committee acknowledges that individuals whose identities and lived experiences are underrepresented, can be exposed to prejudice and stereotyping, and suffer various disadvantages with our society. The purpose of this Policy Statement is to set out clearly and fully the positive action that Poulshot Village Trust Executive Committee intends to take to combat direct and indirect discrimination in the management of the organisation, relationships with other bodies, and the services it provides to the community, community organisations and individuals.

The Poulshot Village Trust Executive Committee is committed to providing equality of opportunity in all areas of its work, valuing diversity and seeking to be inclusive of all identities and lived experiences. It aims to overcome discrimination on the grounds mentioned above. The Committee recognises that positive steps need to be taken to ensure equality of provision in areas of representation, service provision, membership and access and will take action to make this policy effective.

#### The Aims of the Executive Committee

Our aim is to ensure that we become aware of discrimination and the problem it causes.

Poulshot Village Trust Executive Committee:

- Will challenge practices, legislation and institutions, which seek to discriminate against or deny the rights of individuals or groups in any form.
- Will seek to take positive action to address the inequalities in our society.
- Is committed to the equal opportunities policy set out in this document and will work to develop, improve and monitor it through valuing diversity and seeking to be inclusive.

#### Legislation

The Poulshot Village Trust Executive Committee acknowledges the definitions of various groups of people who are vulnerable to discrimination as set out in the relevant legislation. The Committee will support and implement the legislation and will work to ensure that no person protected by the legislation is discriminated against unlawfully, and that any positive obligations and duties are performed.

In relation to the protected characteristics under legislation, the Committee gives the following specific commitments:

#### **Disabled**

- The Committee recognises that the legislation applies equally to persons who are not apparently disabled or ill. It will endeavour to ensure that its events and activities are accessible to those with disabilities wherever it has the resources and knowledge of how to do so appropriately.

#### **Age**

- The Committee believes that people of all ages have skills experiences and ideas, which are equally valid, and have valid needs, expectations and aspirations.

#### **Race Including Colour, Nationality, Ethnic or National Origin**

- The Committee will be alert to any implications of its services and actions for potential unlawful discrimination. The Committee will challenge racism and actions which exclude others on the basis of colour, ethnicity or origin in any form and will encourage its members to do the same.

#### **Gender and Sexual Orientation**

- Sexist policies, practices and attitudes (including policies, practices and attitudes which may relate to sexual orientation and gender re-assignment) will be challenged, and members will be encouraged to do the same.

#### **Religion and Belief**

- The Committee endorses the right of each individual to his or her own religious beliefs or the absence of a belief.

#### **Marriage or Civil Partnership**

- The Committee believes that how people consent to share their lives should not be the basis of any discrimination and challenge any actions or attitudes which counter this approach and encourage its members to do likewise.

#### **Pregnant or on Maternity Leave.**

- The Committee will be alert to the needs of pregnant mothers and those on care leave, where possible within the resources and knowledge of its members it will ensure provision for pregnant or nursing mothers and those on care leave are able to be included in Trust events and activities.

### **Code of Conduct**

Poulshot Village Executive Committee (and Volunteers) undertake that:

- People will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of the group to which they belong or identify.
- People's feelings and views will be valued and respected. Language or humour that people find offensive will not be used or tolerated, e.g. racist jokes or derogatory terminology.
- No one should be harassed, abused or intimidated on the ground that they belong to a vulnerable or minority group. Incidents of harassment will be taken seriously, and the Poulshot Village Trust Executive Committee will undertake investigations of any complaints quickly, impartially and thoroughly.

## **Bullying and Harassment Policy**

### **Introduction**

The Trustees are committed to having a village trust organisation which is free from harassment and bullying. Also, to make sure that all members, contractors and others who come into contact with the Trust in the course of its work, are treated with dignity and respect. As stated earlier, this is without regard to gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, marital or family status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, creed, culture, religion or belief, age, or disability.

Striving to make sure that the work of the Trust is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is central to valuing members and those participating in Trust activities and events.

This policy and procedure are intended to support this commitment in practice and to provide guidance to members and participants on how to deal with concerns of bullying or harassment.

## Policy

The Trustees will not tolerate bullying or harassment in the Trust and Trust-related events and activities. This is regardless of whether the conduct is a one-off act or repeated course of conduct, and whether done purposefully or not.

Neither will they tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. Retaliation or victimisation will also constitute a breach of this policy.

Members should also be aware that if a court or tribunal finds that they have bullied or harassed someone, in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

The Trustees will take appropriate action if any members, participants or contractors are bullied or harassed by others associated with the Trust.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. If, after an investigation, it is decided that member, participant or contractor has harassed or bullied another member, participant or contractor, then the member, participant or contractor may be dismissed from the Trust, its events or contract.

Those who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result. False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Members and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations. False allegations made in bad faith will be dealt with under this policy.

### **The type of treatment that amounts to bullying or harassment**

Bullying or harassment is something that has happened that is unwelcome, unwarranted and causes a detrimental effect. If members, participants or contractors complain they are being bullied or harassed, then they have a grievance which must be dealt with regardless of whether or not their complaint accords with a standard definition. For further information, please refer to ACAS' guidance (<https://www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-bullying-and-harassment> ).

It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable. All members, participants and contractors must, therefore, treat others with respect and appropriate sensitivity.

Bullying does not include appropriate criticism of an individual's behaviour.

## Reporting concerns

### **What you should do if you witness an incident you believe to be harassment or bullying**

If you witness such behaviour, you should report the incident in confidence to a Trustee. Such reports will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.

### **What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a participant or contractor (as opposed to a member)**

If you are being bullied or harassed by someone with whom you come into contact at a Trust event or activity, please raise this with a Trustee in the first instance. They will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you.

### **What you should do if you are being bullied or harassed by a member**

If you are being bullied or harassed by another member, participant or contractor, in the context of Trust business there are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal.

#### *Informal resolution*

If you are being bullied or harassed by another member, participant or contractor, you may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to our policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask another member or Trustee to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator(s).

If the above approach does not work or if you do not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being bullied by a Trustee, you should raise the issue with another Trustee. They will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by telling the alleged perpetrator(s), without prejudging the matter, that:

- there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a fellow member, participant or contractor.
- such behaviour is contrary to the Trust's policy.

- the continuation of such behaviour could amount to an offence.

It may be possible for a Trustee to have this conversation with the alleged perpetrator without revealing your name, if this is what you want. They will also stress that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances the Trustee may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The Trustee will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not usually be subject to sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as a serious allegation of sexual or racial harassment or in cases where a problem has happened before) the Trustees may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. They will consult with you before taking this step.

#### *Raising a formal complaint*

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you can make a formal complaint about the harassment or bullying to a Trustee. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to action against the perpetrator(s).

The Trustee will first investigate the complaint. You will need to co-operate with the investigation and provide the following details (if not already provided).

- The name of the alleged perpetrator(s).
- The nature of the harassment or bullying.
- The dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred.
- The names of any witnesses.
- Any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

The alleged perpetrator(s) would need to be told your name and the details of your complaint in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible.

After the investigation, we will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation. At the meeting, you may be accompanied by a fellow member or representative.

After the meeting (and normally within five working days), we will write to you to inform you of our decision and to notify you of your right to appeal if you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with our decision.

You should submit your appeal within five working days of receiving written confirmation of our decision. If you submit an appeal, you will be invited to attend a meeting to consider it. Once again you may be accompanied by a fellow a fellow member or representative. We will write to you afterwards to confirm our final decision.

#### **Disclosure and confidentiality**

We will treat personal data collected during this process in accordance with data protection legislation.

#### **Use of the disciplinary procedure**

Harassment and bullying constitute serious misconduct. If, at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and an offence might have been committed, we may have to refer the matter to the police. Any member found to have harassed or bullied a fellow member, participant or contractors whilst engaged in trust activities or events will be liable to dismissal from the Trust membership.

#### **Review**

This policy will next be reviewed as necessary but at least annually.