Stoke Park Community Group

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

V1.1 Updated January 2023

**1.  Our Policy Aims**

All Members should  familiarise themselves with this policy, behave according to the expectations and support others to do so, particularly new members of the group.

Stoke Park Community Group values and wants to support growing numbers and a greater diversity of people from local neighbourhoods and further afield to visit Stoke Park, share in enjoying its natural beauty and contribute to nature conservation and related activities.

We recognise and value diversity in identity, background and experience amongst volunteers and other people we encounter or engage with when we represent Stoke Park Community Group. The Group aims to support everyone to feel safe and welcome, share in the mental health benefits of being out in nature, enjoy an equally positive experience and have their contribution valued. This includes volunteers as well as people who work alongside the Group, including Bristol City Council staff, members of other voluntary or community groups,  businesses and individuals.

We will be alert to, respectful, and mindful of people’s individual needs, preferences and behaviours, whilst respecting Human Rights, Hate Crime, and Misuse of Substances legislation.

Stoke Park is a Public Open Space. Stoke Park Community Group members will respect and abide by relevant legislation that applies to our activities and use of the park.

**2.  What we will do**

The group takes part in a range of activities and we will take care to support people safely to participate on an equal basis. Where a disability-related barrier is identified that means someone can’t take part in an activity on an equal basis, we will endeavour to identify suitable funding or other solutions  to make reasonable adjustments so they can do so. We will communicate clearly where costs or other constraints prevent us from making reasonable adjustments.

We will communicate clearly where Health and Safety considerations mean that some individuals are not able to undertake certain activities or use certain tools e.g. chainsaws.

A current lack of public toilets in Stoke Park or conveniently close by for use by volunteers during regular weekly or monthly volunteer sessions presents a barrier to some people being able to participate equally in these sessions. We will engage with the council and local businesses and community facilities to explore possible solutions.

We will convene Annual General Meetings at times accommodating to attendees and in fully accessible venues.

We will hold training or other events at nearby venues (e.g. the community centre in Lockleaze) with accessible toilets close to accessible park entrances.

We will provide up-to-date information in response to queries about access issues for potential new volunteers on request and will include links to relevant external sources of information on our website. We do not have the capacity to commit to maintaining up-to-date information on the website.

We will engage via social media,  local networks and with other organisations to promote widened awareness amongst a more diverse audience about the group and its activities so that others feel welcome to get involved.

A standing item for our AGM and for ongoing exploration will be to identify how we can create opportunities for a more diverse range of people to get involved with activities. For example, we will explore any additional arrangements needed for young people (under 18) to take part without parental supervision.

**3. Our Code of Conduct Policy**

**3.1 Our Equality and Non-Discrimination Policy**

Stoke Park Community Group will promote equality of opportunity and will not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment status, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, consistent with the Equality Act 2010. The Committee will take seriously and decide how to address any reported instances of discrimination brought to its attention.

**3.2 Conduct, and Dispute Resolution**

* Discriminatory behaviour or language by members of the community group will not be tolerated.
* Any reports to the Committee of such behaviour or language will be taken seriously. The Committee will meet to decide whether they consider the behaviour or language breaks the non-discrimination policy.
* What happens if the Committee agrees that someone has behaved in a discriminatory way? In the first instance, a member of the committee will provide a brief explanation to the individual of the committee’s conclusion. The individual will be asked to make an appropriate apology and commitment not to repeat the behaviour. They may be asked not to attend group sessions for a suitable cooling-off period. If they refuse to apologise, they may be asked to leave the group. Likewise, if the discriminatory behaviour or language is repeated, they may be asked to resign or may be removed from the group. The individual concerned shall have the right to arbitration by the management committee, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.
* If any discriminatory or Hate Crime behaviour presents a risk to life, serious injury or severe upset or distress , the matter will be reported to the Police.

**4. Reviewing our Equality and Diversity Policy**

This Policy is a partner to our Constitution and will form part of our agreement with volunteers. This Policy will be an agenda item every AGM, and as a minimum will be fully reviewed every two years or whenever changes in UK National Law are made, whichever is sooner.

* We will make sure all new members are aware of our policy, and that we discuss and review it regularly, including to address any identified omissions.
* We will keep it in mind in our day-to-day work and regularly think about how we could improve it to make things in our group run better for everyone.