

THRELKELD VILLAGE HALL TRUST

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

General

The Threlkeld Village Hall Trust believes in a society in which there is equality of opportunity for all, but recognises that we live in an unequal society which is still unequal in terms of access, resources, support and power.

In its engagement with others, and in its own internal business, the Village Hall Trust will aim to demonstrate respect for diversity between people but challenge any discrimination or oppression.

The governing document of the Village Hall Trust has an "equal opportunities" component in its statement of aims. It states that

the object of the charity is the provision and maintenance of a village hall for use by the inhabitants of the area of benefit without distinction of political, religious or other opinions.

Use of the Village Hall

We seek to ensure that in the arrangements made for use of the Village Hall, there is equality of opportunity for all people, and no-one will be treated less favourably than any other person or group of persons because of their age, gender, marital status, race, class, colour, ethnic or national origin, mental or physical ability, political or religious belief.

Staff and Volunteers

All those who are appointed or accepted by the Village Hall Trust as employees or volunteers must be fit and proper persons to undertake the functions and duties concerned. All who offer themselves as volunteers or apply for employment will be considered equally. No-one will be treated less favourably than any other person because of their age, gender, marital status, race, class, colour, ethnic or national origin, mental or physical ability, political or religious belief.

Harassment and discrimination

The Village Hall Trust guarantees to deal quickly and firmly with all forms of harassment or discrimination (ie sexual, racial etc) including physical attacks on persons, damage to property, oral or verbal abuse; whether this is by groups and individuals using the Village Hall, taking part in activities organised by or on behalf of the Trust, members of staff, committee members or volunteers.

Implementation, monitoring and review

Implementation of the policy will be undertaken by the Village Hall Trust Management Committee.

The policy and its implementation will be monitored and reviewed regularly, normally once per year.

A copy of the policy will be displayed in the Village Hall and made available on the Village Hall website.

All those hiring the Village Hall will be expected to confirm that they are aware of this policy and that their own activities and use of the Hall are in conformity with it.

Reviewed 5th November, 2019

Threlkeld Village Hall Equal Opportunities Policy - some notes on implementation

These notes are based on those produced when the Village Hall Trust was applying to the Big Lottery for a grant. They supplement its general policy on equal opportunities.

Hall users

The equal opportunities policy and the necessity of observing its provisions are drawn to the attention of people using the Village Hall and this will continue to be the case. The policies also apply to the Community Coffee Shop and any other organisation directly linked to the Village Hall Trust.

Accessibility

Accessibility has been built into the design, which meets or exceeds full modern standards and is DDA compliant. Particular features ensure safe and easy access for all, including

- an automatic folding entrance door and hall, protected from the the main road, providing safe access from the road
- separate disabled toilet and shower
- wheelchair access lift at the rear with an automatic sliding rear door and entrance to the Coffee Shop area
- a dry sound floor, to avoid slips etc by those who have unsure footing
- doors and accesses wide enough for wheelchairs, pushchairs etc
- a disabled parking bay with a level access from it to the wheelchair lift

Engagement with the community

Community engagement is a feature of the way the Hall s managed. Contact is maintained via the village newsletter, a Village Hall website, regular communication with users and supporters, a Facebook page. This ensures that activities taking place in the Hall and where relevant elsewhere meet the needs of the various groups in the local community.

The Trust Management Committee has been actively engaged in encouraging use of the Hall by potentially excluded groups such as young people, young mothers and the elderly. This will be developed by conducting specific surveys of potentially excluded groups, establishing focus groups to ascertain their special needs etc.

Promotion

Promotion involves drawing the attention of people in the local community to the provision on offer in the revitalised Village Hall. When promotion is taking place, care is taken to target any groups or individuals who might otherwise be excluded.

Service modification

This involves making arrangement where necessary to facilitate participation by people otherwise potentially excluded (eg carers, disabled people, young parents) by, for example, modifying the times when activities take place, the type of activity involved etc. The Trust Management Committee is encouraging this consideration as it works in conjunction with groups using the Hall, in its oversight f the Coffee Shop CIC, and in its own activities.

Monitoring

Monitoring arrangements are being put in place at the outset which aim to get reliable information on the characteristics of Hall users and other beneficiaries of the project, so that the Trust Management Committee will be able to assess the extent to which specific groups are or are not proportionately benefiting. It is appreciated that an intention to provide equal opportunities is not necessarily translated into reality, something which monitoring should highlight.

The Trust has already appointed a specific Monitoring Officer who is overseeing a monitoring process and who is invited to all Trust Management Committee meetings. It has already carried out (Autumn 2012) a systematic survey of Hall use prior to the revitalisation scheme, to use in future for comparative purposes.

Future plans

Specific note has been taken of the advice and suggestions on the Big Lottery website. In our particular situation, where there beneficiaries and management of the project overlap, some of the advice does not apply. However, it is easy to be complacent. Therefore our equal opportunities plans include:

- carefully assessing communication and publicity mechanisms
- reviewing and discussing with beneficiaries any specific barriers to participation
- contacting relevant organisations to review our practices in relation to potentially excluded people where appropriate
- assessing very specific access needs, dietary specifications, security arrangements etc in relation to potential Hall users.

Threlkeld Village Hall Trust Management Committee
17 July 2013