



# PITSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

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## Pitstone Community Car Scheme

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The Pitstone Community Car Scheme is committed to implementing and promoting equal opportunities in its activities, services and practice. It realises that discrimination exists in society (whether protected by law or not) and believes that this prevents potential and ability from being realised in young people and others.

The car scheme will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of:

- Race
- Colour
- Gender
- Sexual orientation or identity
- Ethnic or national origin
- Disability
- Partnership status or home responsibility
- HIV or AIDS status
- Age
- Political or religious belief
- Trade union activity
- Socio-economic background
- Refugee or asylum seeker status

As a provider of a service to the community, the Pitstone Community Car Scheme accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

Our Community Car Scheme recognises that some users of its services may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with the Equal Opportunities Policy. The scheme will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible a gentle approach will be adopted which aims to alter attitudes and behaviour while maintaining support for the distressed client.

The scheme reserves the right to open its membership to any organisation who supports our aims and objectives. However, it will exclude from membership those organisations that actively work against the development of an equal opportunities policy over time, despite encouragement from the car scheme.

A genuine commitment to equal opportunities must operate on all levels:

- The scheme will prevent unfavourable treatment, directly or indirectly, upon individuals from any group facing discrimination in its recruitment and deployment of human resources. Where discrimination does occur, it will be dealt with through the agreed procedures. This will be achieved by following the Equal Opportunities Policy.
- The scheme will seek to prevent discrimination and ensure equal representation in the services it provides, the structures that it facilitates and the practice through which it carries out its volunteering.
- We encourage a diversity in volunteering membership, to ensure a genuinely wide representation.

### **Responsibility**

- 1.1. The scheme has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with the scheme to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice. Those responsible for recruiting volunteers are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the Equal Opportunities Policy and adhere to it while working as volunteers.
- 1.2. The scheme will bring to the attention of all volunteers and service users the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.
- 1.3. If any service user or volunteer feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter, and should in the first instance speak to the co-ordinator. If the allegation relates to the co-ordinator, the individual should speak to the parish council safeguarding officer.
- 1.4. All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.
- 1.5. Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious.

### **Disabled Access**

- 1.6. The Pitstone Community Car Scheme will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all the premises it uses eg for any meetings have disabled access.
- 1.7. We will try and accommodate requests from disabled clients, as far as is practicable, and achievable given the limitations of transport owned by volunteers.

### **Use of Language**

- 1.8. Volunteers and service users should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles anyone.
- 1.9. Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it or further bookings from such a client may be declined.
- 1.10. All materials used or developed by the scheme will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

### **Sexual Harassment**

- 1.11. No volunteer or service user should be subject to sexual harassment.
- 1.12. This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:
  - verbal sexual abuse
  - physical contact
  - repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive

- 1.13. If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the service user or volunteer who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

No volunteer or client should be put to a disadvantage either, directly or indirectly. It is the responsibility of every individual to eliminate discrimination and to ensure the practical application of this Policy.

**Review**

This Policy was adopted by Pitstone Parish Council on .....

minute reference ..... and will be reviewed on at least an annual basis.

Signed on behalf of Pitstone Parish Council by:

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Chairman