

## Aims

Membership of the Centre is open to all who are interested in the work of the National Trust, whether or not they are members of the National Trust.

We aim to create an atmosphere of friendship, respect and care for each other.

In particular, we aim to treat every member equally, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

## Accessibility

The Centre provides talks, coffee mornings, meals, walks, coach trips to places of interest, outings and holidays. We strive to ensure that group activities and events are open and welcoming to everybody.

We are committed to helping every member of the Centre attend our activities, so we will reassess our access requirements to meet the needs of new members.

### Talks

We aim to make our talks accessible to all:

- We meet in premises with adequate parking (including disabled spaces), and good public transport links.
- The building is accessible and there is an accessible toilet.
- Our speakers use a microphone and there is an induction loop.
- There is always help available for anyone that needs it; we believe we are very good at recognising those that need assistance.

### Coffee mornings and meals

We aim to make our coffee mornings and meals accessible to as many as possible, although there may be some limitations on access to coffee mornings as these are currently held in private gardens.

- Our current venues have level access (although some parts of the gardens may be less accessible due to uneven surfaces)
- We strive to choose venues that are accessible by public transport; where this is not the case we offer lifts when we advertise the event. There is ample car parking at all venues.
- There are toilet facilities available although for coffee mornings these are not accessible toilets since they are in private homes – they are however ground floor.
- Chairs are available in gardens, with gazebos for shelter. We take refreshments to those who are not able to carry them themselves.

### Walks

We recognise that not all members are able to take part in our walks, but we continue to provide them for the benefit of those that enjoy them.

- Details of the route, stiles, distance, inclines and type of surface (roads, paths etc.) are given in the notice sent out for each amble. The information is repeated before the walk sets out. Members can therefore decide if the walk is appropriate for them.
- Assistance dogs are allowed on ambles, other dogs are not.

## Coach trips and holidays

We try to welcome all members on our trips and holidays, regardless of age and mobility, but we recognise that not all our members will be able to access them.

- Our members are getting older and many are becoming less mobile and we have realised that we may have to suggest to some that they bring a companion with them. Any such discussions will be done sympathetically and with full compassion.
- The companies that we use do not currently offer coaches with hoists and/or wheelchair spaces. To date this has not been a problem. We would consider changing companies if it was an issue. The coaches are happy to take mobility scooters, wheelchairs etc. in the luggage hold, and some members do so.
- In future we will include accessibility information for all our trips and holidays in the form of “is this trip right for you?”
- We will also include information about mobility aids that are available at the destinations, and explain what people need to do to book them in advance if needed.
- For the holiday we will give more background information for each day's visits to enhance the experience for everyone; this will probably be in the form of a daily printed information sheet.

## Carers and companions

We are aware that for a number of our members one of the couple acts as carer for the other; we have happily taken such couples on holidays and coach trips, and many regularly attend talks. In such circumstances we do not offer free places. Family members often accompany our members to talks, coach trips and other events. Again we do not offer any free places.

Our latest newsletter included the following note about companions:

“If you feel that you need a bit of extra help to take part in our events, please feel free to bring a companion with you. As our charges are modest we would ask that you pay for your companion, but if this is a problem please just talk to us.”

We will continue to advertise this policy as appropriate.

## **Code of Conduct**

Every member of the Centre should be made to feel equally welcome and included at all our events and meetings. To this end committee members will act as “meet and greet” at all our events. Specifically:

- People will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability and/or age.
- At all times people's feelings will be valued and respected. Language or humour that people find offensive will not be used, e.g. sexist or racist jokes or terminology which is derogatory to someone with a disability.
- No one will be harassed, abused or intimidated on the ground of his or her race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or age. Incidents of harassment will be taken seriously.

## **Dealing with complaints, discrimination and harassment**

If any member or visitor has a complaint of any nature, or feels that they have been discriminated against, or harassed at any of our events, they should tell any committee member.

The committee will take all such matters seriously, and will investigate, listening to all those involved. This investigation may or may not involve the whole committee, depending on the severity of the complaint.

The Committee will decide the action to take to ensure the continued inclusion and safety of any member who has experienced discrimination or harassment.

The Committee will support people who feel they have been harassed or discriminated against, and will encourage the wider membership to act in the same way.

If we are unable to resolve the situation we will consider terminating membership of the aggressor. This will be done as a last resort, and in line with the constitution, and after consulting the National Trust for advice.

If any complaint is against the Centre as a whole, the Committee must work to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated in the future, and must inform the members of how they propose to do this.

## **Adoption and review**

This policy will be made available to all members of the Centre either by email or by post, and will be available on our website.

This policy will be reviewed every year in August.

Signature (Chair) ..... *Carole Taylor*.....

Signature and position on committee ..... *Gill Cope* ..... *Talks Organiser*.....