Whitsand Harmony

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

1. Introduction

Whitsand Harmony is a four-part harmony choir open to all. We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, we will not discriminate in relation to these protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin),
- religion or belief,
- sex
- sexual orientation

The choir is committed to promoting equality of opportunity regardless of class and socio-economic background.

This policy applies to everyone connected to the choir including individuals applying to volunteer or work with the choir, supporters, and members of the public accessing our services or attending our events

2. Aims

Whitsand Harmony aims to:

- Provide and promote equality of opportunity and equitable treatment for everyone.
- Make activities accessible and inclusive by removing barriers to entry.
- Encourage, celebrate and value diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure every member feels respected and able to give their best.
- Eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

3. Responsibilities

The chair is the EDI lead and responsible for providing advice and guidance on equality, diversity and inclusion issues, and to ensure the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is kept up to date.

4. General practice

The choir will treat everyone equally regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, class and socio-economic background.

The choir will promote equality of access to membership and musical activities and opportunities within the membership criteria: no audition required, membership follows informal conversation with musical director and continues by mutual discernment.

We will ensure no one receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by the criteria and characteristics set out in the introduction. This includes but is not limited to:

- Individuals accessing membership [within the membership criteria].
- Individuals accessing musical activities and opportunities
- Volunteers, employees or people engaged to provide a service (e.g. freelancers)
- Individuals applying to volunteer or work with us

We acknowledge our responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to our activity to enable access under the Equality Act 2010
We will select candidates for volunteering or paid opportunities based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

Our commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to all kinds of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination, where someone is treated less favourably than another because they have a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination, where a requirement or a condition is applied that has a detrimental effect on a particular group or individual. This applies even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate.
- Associative discrimination, where direct discrimination against someone occurs because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.
- Perceptive discrimination, where direct discrimination against someone occurs because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic.
- Harassment, where unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic occurs that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic.
- Third party harassment, which recognises potential liability for the harassment of someone connected to the group by external contacts.
- Victimisation, when someone is treated badly because they have made or support a complaint, or it is thought that they have done so.

5. Inclusion and respect

The choir will:

- treat everyone in a respectful manner and ensure they are made to feel equally welcome and included in all activities.
- provide an environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised.
- All members, staff, freelancers, volunteers, supporters and those representing the choir are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity and ensure activities are welcoming and inclusive for all.
- Inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks and behaviour are not acceptable. These constitute harassment and have no place in our choir

We will support our members, volunteers, staff, freelancers and supporters in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from other group members, volunteers, colleagues, freelancers, other organisations or customers.

6. Removing barriers

The choir is committed to making sure its activities are accessible and inclusive.

We recognise that there may be a range of barriers that could stop individuals accessing our activities or feeling included in them. These barriers may not always be obvious or visible and could be:

- Physical
- Practical
- Cultural

We will work to identify any such barriers and take reasonable measures to remove them.

7. Dealing with Complaints

- If any member, volunteer, staff, freelancer or supporter feels they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised, they should raise it with the chair. If the complaint is regarding this person, it should be raised with another committee member.
- The committee will take complaints of discrimination and harassment seriously.
- The committee will investigate the complaint, listening to all parties involved:
    - If the complaint is against a committee member, that member will not be part of conducting the investigation.
    - If the complaint is against an individual, that individual will have the opportunity to express their point of view in a safe environment and accompanied by a friend.
    - The person making the complaint will have the same opportunity.
- If a complaint is found against the choir the committee must work to ensure that such discrimination, harassment or victimisation is not repeated in future, and must inform the members of how they propose to do this.
- If a complaint is found against the choir the committee should work to resolve the complaint in a manner which is acceptable to the person who was subject to discrimination.
- If a complaint is against the choir is not upheld, the committee might wish to address issues which might have led to the complaint in the first place, e.g. lack of communication, to prevent similar situations in future

8. Policy review

The policy will be reviewed every three years by the committee. Members of the choir will be informed of any changes to the policy.

Approval Date: __12th October 2026

Next Review Date: _October 2029

Signed: 