

Friends of Gipton Wood

Equality and Diversity Policy



Version 1.0 | Adopted: 22/06/24

Friends of Gipton Wood is committed to the Equality Act 2010, and seeks to make itself as inclusive as possible so that anyone may feel welcome and able to support its objectives and participate in its mission, as set out in Clause 8.1 of its Constitution.

In line with our Constitution, this Policy sets out how we intend to be an Association in which everyone is included and valued, and which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination.

Terminology

‘Association’ - Friends of Gipton Wood.

‘Committee’ - the Officers of the Association as set out in our Constitution.

‘Constitution’ - the Constitution of Friends of Gipton Wood.

‘Friends of Gipton Wood’ - a collective of individuals (volunteers) brought together for the conservation, restoration, management and improvement, and activities therein, of Gipton Wood and for the achievement of its objectives and vision.

‘Friend’ - Any person willing to join the Association for the benefit of the Woodland, the Association’s mutual benefit, and/or to undertake activities of and with the Association, shall be known as a Friend of the Woodland (‘a Friend’ or collectively ‘the Friends’). The Friends may also be understood as members of the Association. There is no charge for being a Friend nor is there any compulsion for any level of activity with the Association.

‘Gipton Wood’ - a Local Nature Area in Oakwood, Roundhay, Leeds, LS8, bounded by Roundhay Road, Oakwood Boundary Road and Copgrove Road, owned by Leeds City Council.

‘Policy’ - this Equality and Diversity Policy.

‘Woodland’ - Gipton Wood.

1. Aims

Friends of Gipton Wood is open to any person willing to join for the benefit of the Woodland, the Association’s mutual benefit, and/or to undertake activities of and with the Association, as set out in our Constitution.

This Policy covers all activities carried out by Friends of Gipton Wood, including (but not limited to) Volunteer Action Mornings and public events in Gipton Wood, educational stalls, committee meetings and public meetings.

This Policy aims to remove unfair and discriminatory practices within the Association and to encourage

full contribution from its diverse community. Friends of Gipton Wood is committed to actively opposing all forms of discrimination.

Friends of Gipton Wood also aims to ensure that all the activities which we organise are open and accessible to all. Friends of Gipton Wood believes that all Friends and users of Gipton Wood are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity, and to feel included and valued.

Our goals are to:

- Conduct all our activities and events in a spirit of friendship, respect, and care for one another.
- To reduce, stop and prevent all forms of discrimination in Friends of Gipton Wood activities.
- Treat everyone who engages with Friends of Gipton Wood activities equally, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.
- To actively encourage practices and ways of interacting with people that make everyone involved with Friends of Gipton Wood feel included and valued.
- Inform all members of this Policy.

2. Accessibility

- All our volunteer action days and events are held in locations within Gipton Wood that are as accessible as possible, including for wheelchair users. However, parts of the Wood have steep slopes or rough ground, which may limit access.
- Planning for improvements for Gipton Wood include making paths more accessible for wheelchair users.
- Volunteer Action Mornings will have a variety of activities, and will always include a physically gentler activity to enable younger children and those with more limited mobility to equally contribute.
- Leaders of Volunteer Action Mornings and other relevant activity leaders will ask participants at the beginning of activities if they have any access needs that should be accommodated and then discuss options to make the activity accessible. For example, if someone attended a guided walk and had hearing loss then the walk leader could make sure they stand near that person when speaking.
- We are committed to ensuring that anyone who uses Gipton Wood can attend our activities. We will reassess our access requirements as necessary, to meet the needs of new Friends and people who engage with future Friends of Gipton Wood activities.

3. Diversity

- Our Association belongs to everyone who uses Gipton Wood. We aim to organise a range of volunteer activities and events to suit the interests and meet the needs of a wide variety of people.
- The group should be open to new ideas, especially opportunities that:
 - Include those who experience societal marginalisation;
 - Enable our community to share their cultural heritages with others through Friends of Gipton Wood activities.

4. Inclusion and Respect

- Friends of Gipton Wood will ensure that its ways of working and its methods and styles of interaction enable everyone involved with our Association to feel they belong and feel engaged and connected to the extent that they want to be.
- Friends of Gipton Wood aims for everyone to feel equally welcome and included at all Volunteer Action Mornings and Friends of Gipton Wood events.
- Sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks and behaviour are not acceptable. Such actions constitute harassment and are not tolerated within Friends of Gipton Wood.
- Friends of Gipton Wood understands that inclusion must be proactive in removing barriers to involvement as well as removing discrimination.

5. Dealing with Discrimination and Harassment

- If any Friend or participant feels they have been discriminated against or harassed at a Friends of Gipton Wood event, they should contact the Committee at: friendsgiptonwood@gmail.com.
- The Committee will investigate complaints thoroughly, listening to all parties involved. If the complaint involves a Committee member, that member will not participate in the investigation.
- Individuals accused of discriminatory or harassing behaviour will have the opportunity to express their point of view, accompanied by a friend if desired. The complainant will also have this opportunity.
- If a complaint is against the Friends group as a whole, the Committee will investigate and implement measures to ensure that such discrimination does not recur, and will inform the Friends of their proposed actions.
- Any decision to exclude a person from the Association due to discriminatory or harassing behaviour will be made in accordance with our Constitution.
- The Association will support individuals who feel harassed or discriminated against and will ensure they are not victimised for raising concerns.

6. Conduct

- At all times, people's feelings will be valued and respected. Offensive language or humour, such as sexist or racist jokes, or derogatory terms, will not be tolerated.
- No one will be harassed, abused, or intimidated based on any protected characteristic.
- Incidents of harassment will be taken seriously.

7. Review

- This Policy will be reviewed every two years.
- Changes must be adopted by a majority vote at a meeting of the Friends of Gipton Wood.

Signed:

Thomas Thorp

Chair

Friends of Gipton Wood

22/06/2024