Malvern Community Forest

Equality and Diversity Draft Policy

1. Our aim

As a Charitable Trust, Malvern Community Forest is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all. We aim to ensure that the values of equality, diversity, and respect for all are embedded into everything that we do.

2. About our policy

2.1 We recognise our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, and are committed to meeting them in full.

2.2 We seek to create an environment in which diversity and the contributions of all are recognised and valued. We wish to provide an example of good equality practice.

2.3 We seek to create an environment in which no form of bullying, harassment, disrespectful or discriminatory behaviour is tolerated by anyone towards anyone. This particularly applies in relation to the 'protected characteristics' named in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, income, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (see Appendix for explanations).

2.4 We believe that a culture that values diversity and embraces equality will help everyone to feel involved and included in our plans, programmes and activities and that this will promote community cohesion.

3. Our responsibilities

3.1 Malvern Community Forest understands that for equality to be achieved:

a) all procedures and activities must demonstrate the values of this policy; and

b) all Trustees, volunteers, suppliers, and partners have a responsibility to ensure that their own language and actions are consistent with the spirit as well as the contents of this policy.

3.2 Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with Malvern Community Forest's Trustees.

4. Implementing the policy

4.1 To ensure that we are meeting the aims and the spirit of this policy we will:

a) embed equality and diversity into our development plans;

b) assess new or revised policies and procedures for their impact on equality;

c) inform suppliers, contractors and any other individual or organisation working on behalf of Malvern Community Forest of our equality and diversity policy and request them to comply with it.

4.2 For our events and meetings, wherever reasonably practical, we will use accessible venues.

4.3 We will communicate in Plain English, and offer accessible written communications, as far as it is within our means to do so.

4.4 We recognise that many people are unfamiliar with the ways in which discrimination and disadvantage affect people's health, well-being and quality of life. We will take actions to develop equalities' awareness and understanding.

5. Review process

5.1 We will regularly review this policy to ensure that it reflects up to date equality legislation and best practice. We will endeavour to implement any actions or changes that are needed and we will present a report at our AGMs.

This policy was adopted by the Trustees of Malvern Community Forest on (24th March 2016) and will be reviewed on or before (24th March 2017)

Signed:



Mike Goodfellow-Smith (Chair of Trustees)

Appendix: Equality Act 2010 – Explanation of the Protected Characteristics

Age: An age group includes people of the same age and people of a particular range of ages. Where people fall in the same age group they share the protected characteristic of age.

An age group would include "over fifties" or twenty-one year olds. A person aged twenty-one does not share the same characteristic of age with "people in their forties". However, a person aged twenty-one and people in their forties can share the characteristic of being in the "under fifty" age range.

Disability: A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment as a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This section replaces similar provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and provisions in secondary legislation made under that Act.

Gender reassignment: A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

Marriage and civil partnership: A person has the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership if the person is married or is a civil partner.

- A person who is engaged to be married is not married and therefore does not have this protected characteristic.
- A divorcee or a person whose civil partnership has been dissolved is not married or in a civil partnership and therefore does not have this protected characteristic.

Race: Race is defined as

a. **Colour:** includes being black or white.
b. **Nationality:** includes being a British, Australian or Swiss citizen.
c. **Ethnic or national origins**: include being from a Roma background or of Chinese heritage. A racial group could be "black Britons" which

would encompass those people who are both black and who are British citizens.

This section replaces similar provisions in the Race Relations Act 1976. However, the power to add caste to the definition of race is a new provision.

Religion or belief: Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion.

- **A religion** must have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered to be a religion or belief, such as Protestants and Catholics within Christianity.
- **A belief** means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief. **A "philosophical belief"** must
    - Be genuinely held;
    - Be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on the present state of information available;
    - Be a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour;
    - Attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance;
    - Be worthy of respect in a democratic society, compatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.

Any cult involved in illegal activities is not covered. Beliefs such as humanism and atheism would be covered.

This section replaces similar provisions in the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 and the Equality Act 2006.

Sex:

a. a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a man or to a woman;
b. a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons of the same sex.

Sexual orientation: is a person's sexual orientation towards:

- people of the same sex as him or her (in other words the person is a gay man or a lesbian)
- people of the opposite sex from him or her (the person is heterosexual)
- people of both sexes (the person is bisexual).

The definition is designed to replicate the effect of similar provisions in the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and the Equality Act 2006.

Source: Equality Act 2010 and Explanatory Notes to the Equality Act 2010

Acknowledgement

Malvern Community Forest would like to gratefully acknowledge Equality South West/Big Lottery Fund as the underlying source of this policy for small-scale charities on:

southwestforum.org.uk/sites/default/files/sitefiles/docs/eq_**policy**.pdf.

We have edited it to meet the needs of Malvern Community Forest.