St Mary's Church, Bitton
Equality and Diversity Policy

Overarching Statement

Within the Diocese of Bristol, the Church of St Mary, Bitton seeks to serve and support parishioners, volunteers, paid staff and all users of its services and facilities with impartially, fairness and respect.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the church's *Safeguarding Policy*.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), as a body of trustees, is opposed to any form of discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics as defined in the Equalities Act 2010 as:

1. age
2. disability
3. gender reassignment
4. marriage or civil partnership
5. pregnancy and maternity
6. race
7. religion or belief
8. sex
9. sexual orientation

Nothing in this policy should be construed to suggest any divergence from the policy and practices of the Church of England, as established through General Synod or Statute.

Aims

Our aim is to ensure that all church members, supporters of activities, committee members, paid staff and volunteers are given equal opportunity and that our organisation is representative of all sections of society. Each member will be respected and valued and able to give their best as a result.

This policy reinforces our commitment to providing equality and fairness to all and not provide less favourable facilities or treatment on any unlawful grounds. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful discrimination.

All persons acting on behalf od the church, no matter whether they are paid or voluntary, will be treated fairly and with respect. When the clergy, officers and PCC. select and appoint candidates for specific roles and areas of responsibility they will do so on the basis of their aptitude and ability.

Intention and Commitments

The PCC of St Mary, Bitton – commits:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and contributions are recognised and valued.
- To create an inclusive environment that promotes dignity and respect for all.
- Not to tolerate any form of intimidation, bullying, or harassment, and to address and manage those that breach this policy.
- To promote equality in the day to day workings and activities of the church and encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination to raise their concerns with the Vicar (or other member of the clergy) and Churchwardens in the first instance.
- To be mindful of the manner in which our history and heritage may be perceived by people of differing backgrounds and experiences.
- To encourage all volunteers, members of the congregation and any users of the church, church hall and other facilities, to treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Publication & Review

A copy of this policy will be published on the church website and will be on display in the church porch. It will be subject to annual review.