



## **Berkshire Ornithological Club**

### **Safeguarding & Equality Policies**

#### **Background**

The BOC promotes interest and education in birds, their habitats and conservation. Membership is open to people of all ages and the Club holds events (e.g. indoor meetings, walks/field trips and visits to major fairs) in which members and non-members of any age may participate. Family Members may include the partner and children of the named member.

#### **Safeguarding Policy**

The Club ensures the protection of young people under 18 and vulnerable adults who participate in its activities by following the procedures set out below. This includes not only protecting the wellbeing of young people and vulnerable adults but also protecting them from risks to their health or safety.

The BOC consider that it is best if a young person under 18 at any BOC event is accompanied by their parent or Guardian, but accepts that this may not always be possible.

These procedures are based on the principle that the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults is paramount. Any suspicion or allegation of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

#### **Procedure: People Under 18**

1. If anyone under 18 wishes to join the Club as a Junior member, their parent or Guardian must provide written approval by signing the application form.
2. Anyone under 18 can attend an indoor meeting or a field trip, providing:
  - they are accompanied by a parent or Guardian or someone authorised by them, or
  - at least two adult members of the Club are present at all times.
3. It is the responsibility of anybody wishing to bring or send their children under 18 to an outdoor meeting to contact the event organiser and agree any safeguarding requirements at least two weeks in advance. Failure to do this will mean that the young person will not be able to take part in the event.
4. The parent/guardian is responsible for making sure that their children travel safely to and from BOC events.
5. Anybody organising or leading an activity for the Club must ensure that the safeguarding of any under 18 participant has been determined, reviewed and agreed with the young person's parent or Guardian before the event.
6. All the Club's Officers, members or other people who organise or lead any of its activities are responsible for avoiding any inappropriate behaviour, including being alone with a young person.
7. Nobody organising or leading any of the Club's activities requires a DBS check as their role does not include regular unsupervised contact with people under 18.

#### **Procedure: Vulnerable Adults**

1. If the Club becomes aware that an existing member or someone who wishes to join the BOC is a vulnerable adult, suitable steps will be taken to identify their needs. This will include seeking information from the vulnerable adult and/or their representative or advocate (e.g. their support worker).

2. The Club will endeavour to meet the individual needs of vulnerable adults to allow them to safely participate as much as possible in the Club's activities.
3. The steps taken to safeguard vulnerable adults and to enable them to participate in activities will depend on their needs. Where applicable, this will include providing information to those organising or leading the Club's activities.
4. Anyone organising or leading one of the Club's activities attended by a vulnerable adult will ensure that they are safeguarded and their needs are met as far as possible.

### **Procedure: Responding to Safeguarding Concerns**

1. The Club expects its Officers and members to report any concerns relating to the safeguarding of any young people or vulnerable adults taking part in any of the Club's activities. This includes any inappropriate behaviour towards them by members or other people. All concerns should be reported to one of the Executive Officers (Chair, Secretary or Treasurer) without delay.
2. Any concerns that are reported will be:
  - reviewed within two weeks by two Officers (i.e. any two of the three Executive Officers and the Membership Secretary), but excluding anyone who is the subject of the complaint
  - reported to the appropriate authority if necessary (e.g. the police)
  - treated confidentially and all reported information recorded in writing.
3. This policy is available on the Club's website, and given to the parent or Guardian of any members under 18 and family members and the representatives or advocates of vulnerable adult members. It is reviewed at least annually.

### **Equality Policy**

The Club complies with the Equality Act 2010. The Club ensures that it treats everyone fairly and does not discriminate against anyone because of the nine protected characteristics covered by the Act: age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

Membership of the Club is open to all who comply with the Club's Constitution and policies.

**Accessibility:** the Club endeavours to make its activities and services available to everyone. This includes making reasonable adjustments where possible to allow people with disabilities to attend indoor and outdoor meetings.

Indoor meetings are held in accessible venues, usually with a PA system to ensure that people with impaired hearing can participate.

Accessibility on field trips and mid-week walks varies by location. Further information is available from the relevant leaders, as listed in the annual programme and on the website.

Further information on accessibility of indoor meetings and field trips is available from the Indoor and Outdoor Programme Secretaries respectively.

This policy is available on the BOC's website and is reviewed at least annually.