**Chinnor Allotment & Garden Association**

Allotment membership & Committee Safeguarding Policy

Chinnor Allotment Association is committed to safeguarding the welfare/wellbeing of all individuals who visit or participate in activities at the allotment site.

This is defined as protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

We believe that nobody who is involved with Chinnor Allotments in whatever capacity should ever experience abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation.

We believe that we all have a responsibility to promote the welfare of our community and we need to take a collective responsibility that we create a culture in which our members feel safe, and if they have concerns are able to speak up freely without hinderance or intimidation for what they believe in within the context of Chinnor Allotments.

We will undertake this task on a permanent and on-going basis through a number of initiatives which will include, (but will not be limited to) training all Committee members in Beginner Safeguarding principles and techniques, reviewing Safeguarding policy at every Committee meeting with a mandatory inclusion in the Agenda, investigating any Safeguarding concerns raised, reviewing the well-being of plot-holders with the assistance of an appointed Designated Safeguarding Officer (Coordinator/Lead) and finally reviewing practice and progress of policies and initiatives every year at the AGM as a minimum

Within the context of Chinnor Allotments, welfare safeguarding relates principally though not exclusively to personal dignity, respect for the individual and protection from abuse.

It centres around four principal pillars:

* enabling individuals to express freely, safely and unconditionally their wishes and views,
* promoting these welfare objectives, free from recrimination, or retribution,
* ensuring the skills and knowledge are at hand to carry out this policy, and
* reporting and accountability

This policy outlines the responsibilities and procedures for protecting individuals who might be vulnerable to harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation while promoting a safe and inclusive environment.

Vulnerable individuals refer to adults (with care and support needs) or children/young people (who must be accompanied by an adult on CAGA premises) who may be at risk of, or experiencing, harm or abuse on account of age, sex, gender orientation, disability or other factors that may make them more susceptible to abuse or neglect.

The ten most common types of abuse can be summarised as:

***Physical abuse***,

***Domestic violence***

***Sexual abuse***

***Psychological & Emotional abuse***

***Financial or material abuse***

***Modern slavery***

***Discriminatory abuse***

***Organisational abuse***

***Neglect and acts of omission***

***Self-Neglect***

Full details are available to view on the Oxford Safeguarding Adult Board (OSAB) website on the links below:

<https://www.osab.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Working-in-Partnership-Oxfordshire-Procedures.pdf>

<https://www.osab.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/OSAB-Threshold-of-Needs-Matrix-January-2021-MASTER.pdf>

All members of the Committee are responsible for creating and maintaining a safe environment; this includes raising any safeguarding concerns should they become aware of them and cooperating fully with the relevant authorities should this be required.

All plot holders, associated members and visitors/individuals visiting the allotment site are responsible for adhering to this safeguarding policy and reporting any concerns to the Committee.

We will endeavour to communicate this policy (especially knowing what constitutes a violation of the safeguarding principles) by sign-posing the policy on noticeboards, including reference to the policy as a condition of annual membership enrolment and through other visual display mechanisms. By doing this we intend to ensure all key stakeholders understand how to recognise and understand what is a “concern”, that they must assume responsibility for reporting any breeches, and how and to whom to report such breeches in a safe and confidential environment.

The Committee welcomes the appointment of a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) who will act as the primary point of contact for safeguarding concerns and ensure that all Committee members are appropriately trained in safeguarding matters. In principle we believe this coordinator/lead volunteer should not be a committee member, but will report to the Committee on all matters concerning safeguarding

If anyone has a safeguarding concern or suspects abuse or neglect, they must immediately report it to the DSO.

The DSO will follow the established procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns to the appropriate authorities. SODC guidelines will act a primary reference point for this action -see:

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/community-help-and-safety/protecting-vulnerable-people/safeguarding-and-prevention/#:~:text=You%20can%20also%20report%20any,Friday)%3A%200345%20050%207666>

The Committee will cooperate fully with statuary Agencies during any investigation related to safeguarding concerns, including section 42 enquires.

All information regarding safeguarding concerns will be treated confidentially and shared only with relevant individuals on a need-to-know-basis.

The welfare of the individual at risk is of the utmost importance and concerns about confidentiality will not prevent reporting or taking appropriate action.

All Committee members will receive training in safeguarding matters: regular safeguarding awareness sessions will be organised to ensure that new committee members receive appropriate training upon joining.

The Committee will follow safer recruitment practices before accepting members including obtaining references and background checks where there is cause for concern.

Volunteers and allotment plot holders will be provided with a written copy of the CAGA Safeguarding policy which will include links to further resources on identifying risk and how to respond, and receive written guidance in safeguarding, including identifying signs of abuse and the appropriate response.

This safeguarding policy will be communicated to all allotment plot holders, and Associated members and be made available for inspection to all volunteers and visitors ensuring that everyone is aware of their responsibilities.

The Committee/DSO will provide support through signposting to suitable support agencies to individuals who have been affected by issues of safeguarding.

A code of conduct forms an integral part of the CAGA safeguarding policy as it seeks to identify both discriminatory abuse and organisational abuse related to harassment, slurs or similar treatment based on race, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

**Code of Conduct**

A clear code of conduct will be established and communicated to all Committee members, plot holders, associated CAGA members and any volunteers: this will set out acceptable behaviours and standards of interaction for Committee meetings and more general interactions between plot holders

Breeches of the code of conduct may result in action which may include termination of the member from CAGA or exclusion from the allotment site.

A “Meetings” code of conduct will adopt the following requirements

* Be punctual, respect time limits for agenda items if stipulated in advance, and plan to stay for the entire meeting.
* Prepare for the meeting in advance: agendas should be pre-meeting circulated with duration/end timing suggestions
* The Chair should lead the agenda
* Communicate openly and directly.
* Use the power of silence to allow others to contribute
* Be courteous, listen attentively, and be respectful of other points of view.
* Use open question formats whenever possible in order to encourage involvement and solicit information
* Participate fully in the group exchange, and not engage in sideline conversations, cross-talk, or distracting behaviours.
* Mobile phones should remain on silent or be turned off, unless action is requested by the Chair
* Be flexible and open to change and new ideas. Listen to what all parties are saying and consider information that is placed before the committee.
* Don’t bring prejudice and/or pre-conceived ideas to the meeting
* Stay on task and not divert attention to other unrelated topics.
* Assume positive intentions by others, giving them the benefit of doubt.
* Be solution-focused, seeing opportunities, challenges, and possibilities in a positive light.
* Strive for consensus in decision making; if an impasse is reached, a simple majority vote will be used. Respect that decision, even if it is not your preference.
* Make decisions based on what is best for the plot holders of CAGA and the future of the allotments.
* Respect deadlines and action points agreed at previous meetings. Fulfil previous commitments to action points.
* Collective responsibility is a guiding principle and requirement: matters discussed and raised at CAGA Committee meetings must remain confidential, i.e., not discussed with non-committee members or shared in public domains such as across social media until such time as the minutes are officially published and circulated.
* If the Code is not adhered to, the Chair should raise the matter with the offending party and report the incident to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
* If the party persists in conduct that is in breach of either the letter or spirit of the Code, the Chair will exclude the party from the meeting.
* Subsequent beaches of the Code will result in exclusion from the Committee
* Consumption of alcohol or substance misuse is not permitted during a committee meeting

These principles where appropriate will apply equally to general conduct whilst on the allotment site.