

FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

The objects of the Friends are to provide financial support for church buildings in Kent and to encourage people interested in such buildings to study and visit them. The first object is achieved through the Friends' grants programme to churches and chapels for repairs, funded by the annual Kent Ride and Stride, donations and legacies. The second is met through a regular programme for members of lectures and church visits.

The Friends aspire to a fair, open and positive culture in which the dignity of every individual is respected. We are committed to treating all people equally regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religious belief or any other characteristic. Although we support historic buildings belonging to Christian churches, we are not a religious organisation and membership is open to people of any religion or none.

Membership

Membership is open to anyone who shares our aims and wishes to support our work, on payment of a small annual subscription. We welcome all membership applications and there are no selection criteria. Most of our members join as a result of picking up one of our membership leaflets, which are widely distributed across churches in Kent; we therefore do not target a particular group but rather attract people who have already demonstrated their interest in the county's historic churches.

All members receive newsletters about our activities and are most welcome to attend our annual general meeting, lectures and visits. Meetings are generally held at the Lenham Community Centre which has good facilities for the disabled.

The charity is led by an Executive Committee of about a dozen volunteer members. All members are eligible to serve on the committee, which has the power to co-opt, subject to formal election at the following annual general meeting. If new committee members are needed, the committee may issue an invitation to all members of the Friends to put their names forward if they are interested. There is also a grants sub-committee with a more expert membership, again chosen from among the members of the charity.

Grants

The congregations of all Christian denominations (including free churches) may apply for a grant to repair their church or chapel or to install facilities if the building is of architectural merit or historic interest. The facilities which we will support include access for the disabled: 'access' is widely defined so as to include facilities such as hearing loops.

Kent Ride and Stride

This fund-raising event, in which people are sponsored to cycle or walk between churches to raise money both for their own church or chapel and for the Friends to distribute through their grants programme, is open to anyone wishing to take part. All are welcome, whether

they are able to contribute a small amount of sponsorship or a larger sum. The object is as much that participants have an enjoyable day as to raise money. Though allied to the Friends, Ride and Stride has its own officers and organising committee (it has no membership) and all who are willing to serve are welcome to put themselves forward when there are vacancies.

Conclusion

Any member who has concerns about this policy or the charity's implementation of it is encouraged to contact the chair of the Executive Committee or any of the committee's members.

This policy statement will be reviewed in the light of experience and, in any event, at intervals no longer than 5 years.

September 2020