

Managing conflict and behaviour policy 09-10-14

Introduction

1. **AIM:** The Sompting Big Local Managing Conflict and Behaviour Policy aims to ensure that everyone in the Partnership and in the community is treated with respect and feels valued when engaged in Sompting Big Local meetings, events, activities and in the Sompting Big Local Hub.
2. This document must be read in conjunction with the Local Trust Memorandum of Understanding, Values and Code of Conduct and the Sompting Big Local Partnership Equality and Diversity Policy.
3. This Policy has been drawn up as a result of a decision made at the meeting of the Sompting Big Local Partnership held on 8th September 2014 and a follow-up conflict and behaviour workshop held with members of the Partnership, the paid Co-ordinator and volunteers in the Sompting Big Local Hub held on Tuesday 16th September 2014.
4. This Policy is a response by the Partnership to conduct and behaviour issues that have emerged during the Big Local programme at meetings, in the Hub and on-line.

Causes of Conflict

5. The main causes of conflict identified at the Partnership meeting held on 8th September included:
 - a. Misconstrued e-mail/s (sent for good reasons – misunderstood)
 - b. Money and control
 - c. Strong beliefs
 - d. Damaging or offensive behaviour
 - e. Different views about 'the problem'
 - f. Politics
 - g. Lack of tolerance
6. Other types of negative behaviour that have been demonstrated at Partnership meetings or experienced (identified at the workshop) include:
 - a. Personalising issues/demonising people
 - b. Demeaning someone
 - c. Paranoid behaviour/exhibiting it publicly
 - d. Sexist behaviour/language
 - e. Tutting and throwing down of pens
 - f. Childish behaviour
 - g. Shouting
 - h. Aggressive manner/body language

- i. Constant negativity [which] is undermining [of individuals or the Partnership]
 - j. Undermining others' efforts, skills or knowledge even if it's not deliberate, or undercover of being mischievous
 - k. Being precious – no member [of the Partnership] is bigger than the group/outcome
 - l. Sabotaging the group's decisions
 - m. Talking over others/being opinionated
 - n. Dominating a meeting
 - o. Deliberately pushing people's buttons/pressure points
7. When and where does this policy apply:
- a. Every meeting of the Partnership (and it's still a meeting until everyone goes home)
 - b. In the Sompting Big Local Hub
 - c. Sompting Big Local events such as the Millfield 'tidy up'
 - d. Applies when Sompting Big Local is represented in a public forum – we want to demonstrate that we're a team
 - e. Facebook, Twitter and other social media (group and individual accounts).

Good Practice and Positive behaviour

8. As well as wishing to tackle negative behaviour, the Partnership also wishes to encourage positive behaviour at meetings etc. Members of the Partnership, its employees and volunteers will conduct all communication, projects and meetings according to the following good practice principles:
- a. Allowing everyone to have a voice and to be heard, not just those who shout loudest or have the most experience
 - b. Keeping calm when raising issues
 - c. Giving and receiving constructive criticism
 - d. Listening with an open mind
 - e. Understanding why/how others have developed their point of view
 - f. Trusting others/giving a hearing
 - g. Going along with the group or democratic decision even if you don't agree
 - h. Being sensitive to the mood or sensitivities of others
 - i. Acknowledging that passionate defence is OK
 - j. Being sympathetic to people's feelings
 - k. Apologising/holding out the olive branch
 - l. Not holding a grudge
 - m. Adhering to the principle of confidentiality at all times about any personal issues disclosed in meetings, at events, activities and in

the Sompting Big Local Hub *unless this would conflict with child protection, the protection of vulnerable adults or relating to other illegal behaviour (also see 8).*

Procedures for managing conflict and behaviour

1. The following are preventative measures that the Partnership agrees to adhere to:
 - a. Robust minute taking/detailing decisions
 - b. Improved communications including website with minutes and decisions available for all to see
 - c. Training for all members of the Partnership but particularly for the Chair on how to manage conflict and behaviour
 - d. Anticipating a situation or mood – flash points/subjects
 - e. Listening to and respecting the role of the chair, the other executive officers and paid employees
 - f. Listening to and respecting the views of the Partnership members and volunteers
 - g. Abiding by the decision of the chair or person in authority on issues of conflict or behaviour
 - h. Prioritising and focussing on issues identified in the Big Local Plan and relating to Big Local, rather than other issues in the community
 - i. Acting quickly to address conflict or behaviour issues ie within 48 hours of an incident occurring
 - j. Declaring conflicts of interest – so everyone knows.
 - k. Residents who are also paid employees, Board Members/Trustees or councilors, will need to complete a conflict of interest form prior to the AGM/when they are elected/co-opted, which will be held in a register of Conflicts of Interest which will be available at each meeting and held in the Sompting Big Local Hub.
2. Action to be taken to manage conflict or behaviour incidents:
 - a. On the first incident, the individual will be issued with a warning by the person in authority present and asked to apologise. The person in authority includes; either of the Co-Chairs, Vice-Chair, Secretary or Treasurer, the Big Local Rep, the Co-ordinator and/or a member of staff of Adur Voluntary Action (the Locally Trusted Organisation).
 - b. Any Member of the Partnership, employee, volunteer or member of the public may declare to the person in authority if they feel that an incident/s has taken place.
 - c. Details of the incident and the name of the individual responsible for the incident will be recorded in the Minutes of the Meeting or the Incident Book held in the Sompting Big Local Hub.
 - d. On the second incident, the individual responsible will be asked to leave the meeting, event, activity or the Sompting Big Local Hub by the person in authority and be banned for six weeks from participating in Big Local activities (ie including the next meeting of the Partnership) – a cooling off period.

- e. On the third incident the individual will be considered to have permanently excluded themselves from the Big Local programme and will not be permitted to attend any further Partnership meetings, events or activities or visit the Sompting Big Local Hub.
- f. The Sompting Big Local Partnership will offer mediation (via the West Sussex Mediation Service) to individuals who are considered to be at risk of breaking or have broken the Policy, but subject to the individual agreeing in advance to accept the outcome of the mediation.

Conclusion

9. Managing Conflict and Behaviour Policy Statement

- a) The Partnership is committed to a conflict free environment in which every member can participate with confidence and encouragement.
- b) This will benefit members, paid-staff and volunteers, who will feel valued and empowered.
- c) This will benefit the Partnership, which will be more attractive to community members as a positive and nurturing organisation.
- d) This will benefit the project, which will be more successful with a cohesive and proactive team spirit.

10. Acknowledgement, endorsement & commitment

It is the eventual aim of the Partnership to compile a Handbook of all policies and personnel matters for the wellbeing and best practice of all participants, including a thorough induction pack for new Partnership members, paid employees and volunteers. In the meantime, all members of the Partnership, paid employees and volunteers should read and sign this Policy.

Signed... *SBL Parntership*Date... *06/03/2017*

Review: March 2018