



**THE GORING AND ILEX
CONSERVATION GROUP**
Conserving the beauty and present character of
Goring, the Ilex Avenue,
the trees in Sea Lane and the Goring Gap



Safeguarding, health and safety, and protecting people

GUIDANCE

What we do to protect people
who come into contact with our
group through its activities from
abuse or mistreatment.

Managing the risks:

Protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities is a governance priority for our group. It is a fundamental part of operating as a group of volunteers for the benefit of the public.

As part of fulfilling the Committee's duties, whether working online or in person, the Committee will take reasonable steps to protect from harm people who come into contact with the group.

This includes:

- people who benefit from our group's activities, Committee members, volunteers, and other people who come into contact with our group through its activities.

Committee members and those in charge during work and activity sessions will report safeguarding and health and safety matters to the Committee. The committee will be responsible for putting matters right if things go wrong.

The Committee promotes an open and positive culture and ensures all involved feel able to report concerns, confident that they will be heard and responded to.

The Committee will make sure that the group:

- has appropriate policies and procedures in place, which are followed by all Committee members, volunteers and beneficiaries.
- knows how to spot and handle concerns in a full and open manner
- has a clear system of reporting
as soon as concerns are identified
- sets out identified risks and how they will be managed
- follows safeguarding and health and safety good practice guidance and
- is quick to respond to concerns and carry out appropriate investigations
- does not ignore harm or downplays failures
- has a balanced mix of Committee members and does not let one member of the Committee dominate its work – Committee members should work together
- makes sure protecting people from harm is central to the group's culture
- has enough resources, including trained volunteers and Committee members for safeguarding, health and safety matters, and protecting people.

- conducts periodic reviews of safeguarding and health and safety policies, procedures and practice

Types of risks and harm

The Committee is aware of the wide range of risks and harms that exist, such as the following:

- sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation
- the group's culture, which may allow poor behaviour and poor accountability
- people abusing a position of trust they hold within the group, bullying or harassment, and health and safety failings, and discrimination matters.
- data breaches, including those under General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Policies, procedures and practices

Our group's policies and procedures for protecting people and safeguarding and health and safety procedures will be:

1. put into practice and be responsive to change

2. reviewed as necessary, and always following a serious incident.
3. available to all the members of the group.
4. compliant with all relevant legislation.

The Committee will make all active members, and volunteers aware of the group's policies. They all need to know how to apply them.

The Committee will make sure the group's policies make clear how it will: protect people from undue harm and make sure people can raise safeguarding and health and safety concerns and handle allegations or incidents and respond accordingly, including reporting to the relevant authorities.

Code of conduct

This is covered by the Community Groups & Volunteers Charter, issued by Adur & Worthing Council's Environmental Service.

Health and Safety Policy

Suitable health and safety arrangements are covered by our Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment guidance.

Checking our group's policies, procedures and practice

The Committee must be assured that all policies, procedures and practice are checked and challenged to ensure they are fit for purpose. This means the group will maintain accurate records, and will undertake checks on site. If the group changes the activities it undertakes, the Committee will:

1. review the current policies and make sure they are suitable.
2. consider whether any extra policies are needed to cover any new situations or risks.
3. record these discussions and decisions as part of the risk management procedures.

Protection of volunteers

Our group's volunteers should be protected from undue harm.

The Committee must ensure that the group has clear policies and procedures on:

1. bullying and harassment
2. Whistleblowing

Basically, the Committee will not tolerate any bullying, harassment, or putting its volunteers, members, or the general public in harm's way. All those in authority and all volunteers and members must be made aware of this.

The Committee will always ensure the group has adequate insurance which covers the individuals and the activities involved.

Operating online

Operating online carries specific safeguarding risks connected to protecting people from abuse and protecting sensitive information. These are managed and reflected in the group's policies and practices.

- **Content:** the Committee will ensure that the group has adequate control over its website. And will ensure it knows who can post content, and that content is suitably reviewed before posting. Any images must have the required permissions before being displayed.
- **Data:** any personal data will be protected, in accordance with GDPR legislation.

Handling of incidents and concerns

If the group has an incident or allegation of abuse, it will be handled and recorded in a secure and responsible way. It will be fully and independently investigated and a conclusion arrived at, and discussions held with the parties involved to try and resolve matters. The Committee will review what happened to understand how to stop it from happening again.

If the incident could involve criminal behaviour, then this may have to be reported to the police.