

## Accessibility Policy

### 1. Statement

Bicester U3A is a learning co-operative and membership charity that enables members of their third age to share educational, creative, and leisure activities. Members draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to learn from each other (*peer-to-peer learning*). Bicester U3A is committed to ensuring that the U3A is as inclusive and accessible as possible for those who meet the criteria for membership. This policy document should be read alongside the following policies: **Bicester U3A's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**, **Bicester U3A's Data Protection Policy**, and **Privacy Policy**.

### 2. Aims of the Policy

This policy has been drawn up to ensure that Bicester U3A takes steps to review accessibility needs for individual members and makes reasonable adjustments, where possible, to accommodate the needs of members with disabilities and/or health-related needs. The policy takes into account the requirements of the **Equality Act 2010** and the need for Bicester U3A to avoid discriminating directly or indirectly against members with disabilities and/or health-related needs. The policy acts as a reference point for Committee Members, Group Leaders and individual members in terms of the steps Bicester U3A takes. The policy also identifies the parameters of the adjustments that can be made. Bicester U3A is a membership charity and not a service provider, therefore, whilst reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that individuals can participate and can attend with carers to support their needs, there are certain needs that the U3A is not able to accommodate due to the level of care that an individual may need.

### 3. Practical Approaches to Increasing Access

In ensuring equality of access, Bicester U3A takes the following steps:

- Appointment of an **Accessibility Officer** from among the members. This is a volunteer role/committee member role. His/her role may be divided between two committee members as indicated below.
- The **Groups Coordinator/Accessibility Officer** has responsibility for liaising with Group Leaders on an ongoing basis to ensure that groups are accessible and that group leaders are aware of what the expectations are and what adjustments may need to be made e.g. relocating a group held within someone's home to a wheelchair accessible venue.
- The **Membership Officer/Accessibility Officer** contacts new members who indicate that they have a disability or health-related issue that may need additional support and/or adjustment and discuss with them what needs they have and how these could be met – as appropriate.
- General meetings are, as far as possible, held at a well-lit, fully wheelchair-accessible venue, spacious enough to cope with wheelchairs and mobility scooters, with a wheelchair-accessible toilet and with a sound system in use.
- Speakers giving visual presentations are asked to provide a good description of the presentation if there is a possibility that people with visual impairment are present.
- At the monthly members' meetings the front row of seats are reserved for members with impaired hearing or vision.

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- The committee reviews access on an ongoing basis with a view to considering any additional adjustments that may need to be made e.g. availability of a hearing loop or access to dementia friendly training.
- Committee members and Group Leaders receive an induction and/or training designed to support them in having an awareness of and facilitating access.
- Group Leaders running groups that require a certain level of fitness and/or mobility are asked to provide this information to members in advance so that members can decide whether the group is suitable for them.
- Group Leaders liaise with the Groups Coordinator/Accessibility Officer when there are concerns about an individual's ability to participate.
- Bicester U3A tries to ensure that there is a range of groups available that provide access to members so that members do not feel excluded from too many interest/activity groups.
- Bicester U3A encourages and may require members to bring carers with them to U3A activities. If the activity requires a payment or a fee, for example, for a coach expense, the carer will pay this expense as a member. The carer falls under U3A liability insurance unless they are a professional carer, in which case the carer is covered by their employer's insurance cover.
- Bicester U3A maintains a database of venues and the facilities offered by each venue to accommodate different needs.
- Bicester U3A has a duty of care to all members, and this may mean that difficult decisions have to be taken in assessing an individual's ability to participate either in the U3A as a whole or within individual activities. These decisions are always taken through discussion with the individual member and his or her carer in order to ensure that a fair and considered decision is taken. This may include developing a risk assessment with the individual regarding their ability to participate.
- Whenever the Bicester U3A Committee deems necessary, it will seek additional advice and support from the Third Age Trust National Office, the National website and external specialist organisations as required.

Signed.....   
 Committee Role..... CHAIR.....  
 Date..... 19<sup>th</sup> MAY 2026.....  
 Next Review Date..... 18<sup>th</sup> MAY 2028.....

<b>u3a</b>	<b>Accessibility Policy Bicester</b>	<b>Bicester U3A</b>
<b>Version</b>	<b>Description of changes</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.0	Based on version 0.1 of this document	15-May-26