

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Introduction

BELMAS places a high standard of behaviour on its elected representatives on the Executive and Council Boards. All new Council members are provided with guidance on their responsibilities and general conduct as trustees and directors in line with current best practice as outlined by the Charities Commission. This includes a Brief for Council members and links to the Charities Commission guidance "The Essential Trustee". Additionally, Council members sign Conflict of Interest declarations.

Similarly, BELMAS has an expectation that members uphold our values which are founded on respect for others and a safeguarding of the space for dialogue through tolerance, encouragement and support.

The Nolan Principles, which are the basis of the ethical standards expected of public office holders, have been adapted in this policy for trustees of a charitable membership organisation. The principles are:

Selflessness

Trustees should act solely in terms of membership benefit. They should not act in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Trustees should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in their performance of their role as a trustee.

Objectivity

In carrying out the business of the organisation, trustees should make choices based on merit.

Accountability

Trustees are accountable for their decisions and actions to their members and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their role.

Openness

Trustees should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take.

Honesty

Trustees should declare any private interests relating to their trusteeship and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the member benefit.

Leadership

Trustees should promote and support these principles by leadership and example

It is the responsibility of trustees to act in the best interests of the organisation as a whole and its beneficiaries and avoid bringing it into disrepute. This includes:

- a. registering, declaring and resolving conflicts of interest.
- b. not gaining materially or financially unless specifically authorised to do so.
- c. Understanding what confidentiality means in practice for an organisation, its board and the individuals involved.
- d. engaging in discussions and decision-making processes.
- e. reading papers, querying unclear or difficult things and thinking through issues in good time before meetings.
- f. actively engage in respectful discussion, debate and voting in meetings.
- g. contributing positively, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict.
- h. act jointly and accept a majority decision making decisions collectively, standing by them and not acting individually unless specifically authorised to do so.
- i. respecting diversity, different roles and boundaries, and avoiding giving offence

Members

Similarly, all members are expected to conduct themselves appropriately when engaged in BELMAS activities. Specifically, when engaging in any BELMAS activity, including RIG events, members are expected to:

- behave responsibly avoiding personal and professional misconduct that might bring BELMAS into disrepute
- encourage and support others in their professional development
- be honest in conveying professional conclusions, opinions and research findings
- treat others with respect and dignity, whether in person or by electronic means. You should not discriminate against, bully or harass others on the basis of: cultural and role difference, including those involving age, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, political beliefs, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital or family status and socio-economic status.
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of others
- declare any competing professional or personal interests that may have a bearing on your involvement in BELMAS activities

In the interests of the Society and its members, BELMAS Council may authorise the BELMAS Chair to withdraw membership and its benefits in the event that a serious breach in this Code of Conduct has been determined after due process. Exceptionally, the President may be so authorised by Council if appropriate to the circumstances.