

Membership and Support

Introduction

Bristol City of Sanctuary (BCoS) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), regulated by the Charity Commission of England and Wales.

BCoS holds the vision that our nation will be a welcoming place of safety for all and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.

A 'City of Sanctuary' is a place where a broad range of local people, organisations, community groups, schools and faith communities, as well as local government, are publicly committed to welcoming and including people seeking sanctuary.

There are three possible levels of engagement with BCoS for both individuals and organisations.

- You can be a Contact: simply sign up to receive our newsletter.
- You can be a Supporter: publicly supporting the work of BCoS by welcoming and including people seeking sanctuary. Supporters receive our newsletter – you cannot support the work if you do not know what it is.
- You can be a Member: Members are Supporters who participate in shaping the direction of the charity. Members have certain rights and responsibilities and pay an annual membership fee. There are a few conditions limiting who can become a member.

For all three options, you can apply online, or you can download and complete the paper Sign Up Form.

Contact

We will send our email newsletter to everyone on our Contact list. You will only be on the Contact list if you tell us you want to receive the newsletter. Once you are on the Contact list, we will assume you wish to remain on it until you tell us otherwise.

We send the newsletter out by email, but ask for other contact details so that we can contact you if the email address stops working.

In general, everything we send to our Supporters and members will be in the newsletter and also go to our Contacts, but we may from time to time decide to send some specific information only to Supporters or to Members.

Support

As a Supporter you publically say you support our work and say you will do what you can to make Bristol a place where refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed.

In addition, there are three specific actions which we ask organisational Supporters to take.

- Firstly, review your organisational policies and practices to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed, and are included in your activities wherever possible.
- Secondly, educate your staff and volunteers about the needs of refugees and asylum seekers and the issues surrounding their support and how they are treated.
- Thirdly, agree, by whatever mechanism is appropriate to your organisation, the following statement.

We recognise the contribution of asylum seekers and refugees to the city of Bristol; we are committed to welcoming and including them in our activities and support the work of Bristol City of Sanctuary.

Other ideas about ways to support our work can be found on the ‘Ways to Support Us’ notes, available from the web site.

Member

The Membership Application Process

Membership of BCoS is open to both individuals and organisations; the process is almost the same in each case. There are only two criteria which make you eligible for membership.

- Members must be committed to furthering the objects of the charity.
- Members must have a local connection with Bristol or the surrounding area: Organisational Members must have an office and Individual Members must live, work or study there.

The application process for membership is straightforward.

- Step one: read the ‘Membership and Support’ notes.
- Step two: if you are eligible, decide to apply. For an organisation, this requires a decision of your governing body.
- Step three: complete the sign up form. You can either complete the relevant form online, or download the PDF, print and sign it, and return it to the BCoS office.
- Step four: pay the annual membership fee. If possible, we ask you to set up a standing order, but you can also pay by cheque or, when the facility is made available, by cash. However you pay, if you are an individual and able to do so, please complete the Gift Aid form to enable us to claim back tax you have paid on your membership.
- Step five: tell people what you have done! We need your help to publicise BCoS and the work we do.
- Step six: consider what other practical steps you can take to support refugees

and asylum seekers in Bristol. You can download our list of suggestions, but please feel free to come up with other ideas – and let us know!

The Trustees have the right to approve applications for membership, but have decided at present not to exercise this right. They are, however, able to investigate and, if necessary, take action if it appears that a membership is not in the best interests of the charity.

Membership Renewal

Your joining date will be the date you completed the online form or signed the paper form.

When you first join, your membership will run to the end of the quarter in which the first anniversary of your joining date falls: the last day of March, June, September or December. So if you joined on 1 April, 14 May or 30 June 2019, your membership runs to the renewal date of 30 June 2020 and the following year's membership runs for one year from 1 July 2020.

In subsequent years, payment of the annual membership fee is sufficient to renew your membership for another year. This fee is due by the renewal date; if it is paid within three months of the renewal date, your membership will run without a break.

If you no longer wish to be a Member, please contact us and let us know what you wish to do. If your membership renewal is more than three months late and we have not heard from you, we will assume you no longer wish to be a Member and record you as a Supporter instead.

Functioning as a Member

Members must comply with any rules established by the Trustees.

Members have certain rights.

- Members are entitled to vote at general meetings.
- Individual Members can stand for election as a Trustee.
- If 10% of the Members agree, they can call a General Meeting.
- If 10% of the Members agree, they can propose a motion to be voted upon in a General Meeting.

BCoS has certain obligations towards Members.

- We will notify you of any changes to the membership terms and conditions.
- We will notify you in good time of the date, location and agenda of General Meetings.
- We will provide you with details of the individuals who are standing for election as Trustees, the Annual Report and Annual Accounts at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting.

Membership Rules

We aim to make membership as simple and easy as possible, with only the minimum rules necessary for the proper functioning of the charity.

- Members are required to pay the annual membership fee.
- Members are required to notify us of any change to your contact details.
- Members must be willing to publicise their membership of BCoS.

Voting by Members

Every Member has one vote to cast, and every vote must be cast by a Member, either an Individual Member or a representative of an Organisational Member.

A Member can cast a vote in a General Meeting either in person or through a named proxy whose identity they have notified BCoS of before the General Meeting.

If a Member has already voted on a motion by email, they cannot also cast a vote on that motion in the General Meeting.

All Organisational Members have one vote to cast. It is for each Organisational Member to decide who is to cast the vote for their organisation: this does not have to be the named contact.

All Individual Members have one vote to cast. Any Individual Member who is present as a representative of an Organisational Member will get a vote in their own right, which must be exercised independently of any decision by their organisation.

No person present in a meeting can cast more than one vote, even if they are entitled to vote for more than one Member. An Individual Member cannot also vote by proxy for another Member. If each person present on behalf of an Organisational Member is either an Individual Member, or is entitled to vote by proxy for another Member, then nobody is present to cast a vote on behalf of the Organisational Member and the Organisational Member cannot vote.

Charitable Objects

According to the constitution, it is the duty of each Member to exercise their powers as a Member of the charity in the way they decide in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the charity.

While it is not a duty, we hope and expect that our Supporters will do the same.

Our aims ('objects') are to work for the public benefit in four specific ways.

1. The promotion of social inclusion for the public benefit among people who are refugees and asylum seekers, socially excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position, by promoting and coordinating services and facilities to assist them to adapt within a new community.
2. The relief of financial hardship among asylum seekers and refugees living or working in Bristol and the surrounding area by acting as an umbrella and

resource for local refugee support services.

3. The advancement of the education of the public in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum and human rights.
4. The promotion of equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding and good relations between the general public and people seeking sanctuary.

For more information, please contact us. Our full contact details are available from our web site (<http://bristol.cityofsanctuary.org>), where you can also download a full copy of our constitution.

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