

THE PARK BENCH AIMS & VALUES

The aim is extremely simple :-

and is expressed in our constitution as

The provision, in the interests of social welfare, of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation, in particular the provision of a lending library service to those within the Bristol area who are unable to access the Public Library Service through lack of a permanent address or fixed abode, with the object of improving their conditions of life.

but it is important to emphasise some values which should underpin this aim :-

1. to provide a service that treats users and volunteers with respect and trust.
This implies
 - a non-judgmental attitude, particularly to peoples lifestyle and faith (or lack of)
 - setting clear expectations of volunteer staff and service users and providing relevant support to meet those expectations.

2. we have no intent for commercial gain.
This implies
 - we will aim to run the service with a voluntary staff
 - we will only seek funding where necessary to meet the needs of the service
 - we will only seek to own assets to meet the needs of the service (this would exclude acceptance of legacies which did not allow depletion of capital)
 - we will not compromise the service or its values to gain additional funding (this would exclude the acceptance of conditional grants which imposed other values or limited the service we aim to provide)

3. the service is about people not books
This implies
 - the cost of, or loss of, a book is secondary to meeting an individuals needs
 - being there for people and being prepared to listen to them is a priority
 - we should encourage service users to become involved in the project at all levels (including management and librarian roles where appropriate).

4. we are a volunteer organisation with limited aims.
We must remember that there are professional agencies which can give service users a range of help and advice and we need not take personal responsibility for all their personal problems. It is not appropriate for volunteers to give their home address or telephone numbers to service users.

How will we judge our success?

Success of this project will not be measured in quantitative terms. If only a small number of people have had their lives enriched by The Park Bench it will have been a success.

We will judge success based on

- regular feedback from service users and voluntary staff
- our ability to maintain a service that meets the aims without compromising our values