

# Stevenage Lytton Players

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



**Our enforced closure over the past year has provided an opportunity to reflect on many issues. One of these has been our position and policy on equality, diversity and inclusion at the Stevenage Lytton Players. We have always prided ourselves on being open and welcoming to everyone who comes through our doors. We are all responsible for being more proactive in our local community and being inclusive rather than exclusive.**

Our community is a melting pot of race, colour, creed, disability, gender, sexual preference and religion. However, despite priding ourselves on being a friendly and welcoming society (a fact borne out by new members and audiences alike), even a casual glance at our actors, technical staff, and audience shows that we fall short in representing and acknowledging others' differences in these areas. We can do better than that in a world where such a limited worldview is no longer acceptable.

The EDI Statement and Action Plan that follow set out our commitment to becoming a diverse organisation that seeks to change the status quo.

## 1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement – our commitment

The Stevenage Lytton Players are committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our members and our productions. We promote equality, fairness and respect for all and commit to:

- Encouraging equality, equity, diversity and inclusion within the membership;
- Creating an environment free of bullying, harassment and discrimination and one where the contributions of all are recognised and valued;
- Promoting dignity and respect for all;
- Ensuring that all members understand that they can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment or discrimination against fellow members.

By extension, the Executive Committee will take seriously any complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by members. Such acts may result in cancellation of membership and expulsion from the theatre.

## 2. Action Plan

- We will extend the advertising of our proposed Programme and Audition Notices so that potential actors, technical staff, and audiences recognise that we are an inclusive and welcoming organisation.
- We will ensure that actors who audition with the Stevenage Lytton Players are cast on ability and suitability for a role, regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, disability

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(both visible and invisible), age or religion. The only exceptions will be where a particular ethnicity is clearly logical or expressly specified by the author.

- We will seek opportunities to be creative in casting, for example, changing the gender of a role where an auditionee is the best choice, and where this fits within the context of the play, and is permitted by the Author and/or Rightsholder.
- We will ensure that the Executive Committee, Management Committee, Technical Staff and Directors fully understand the principals of diversity we embrace.
- We will disseminate these values to all members of the Stevenage Lytton Players.
- We will continue to challenge language, attitudes, and behaviour that contradict these values, whether written, spoken or omitted.
- We will search out plays and musicals that appeal to, and give opportunities to, actors and technical staff of colour, which will appeal to a diverse audience.
- We will review this Statement and Action Plan formally every year.

I welcome your feedback on both this Statement and Action Plan.

## **Ross Edwards**

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