



# Heybridge Parish Council

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

### **1. Legal Position**

1.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 it is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following “protected characteristics”:-

- i. Age
- ii. Disability
- iii. Gender reassignment
- iv. Marriage and civil partnership
- v. Pregnancy and maternity
- vi. Race
- vii. Religion or belief
- viii. Sex
- ix. Sexual orientation

1.2 The Parish Council acknowledges its responsibilities under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty.)

### **2. Purpose**

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all job applicants, employees, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine occupational qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken) and the way in which services are provided for the public.

2.2 The Parish Council oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics.

2.3 The Parish Council is fully committed to recognising and embracing diversity in the local community (Minute 16/292.)

### **3. Scope**

3.1 All employees (whether full-time, part-time, fixed term contract, agency workers or temporary staff) and workers will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and

resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the council.

#### **4. Our Commitment**

- 4.1 Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. This is further defined in the Dignity at Work policy adopted by the Council.
- 4.2 The commitment to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense as it seeks to utilise the talents available from the local community, representing Society as a whole.
- 4.3 Breaches of the equal opportunities policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Employees are entitled to complain about discrimination or harassment or victimisation through the council's Grievance procedure.
- 4.4 This policy is fully supported by all Members of the Council and adopts the model contract as devised by the employee professional body in the local government sector.
- 4.5 This policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity. Any contract, where appropriate, shall include the following:-
  - Prohibit the contractor from unlawfully discriminating under the Equality Act 2010;
  - Require the contractor to take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff, suppliers and subcontractors meet their obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.6 This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually. Other personnel policies will be reviewed against the values stated in this main Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure that the council strives to remain an Equal Opportunities employer.

#### **5. Recruitment**

The Parish Council's adopted recruitment policy outlines the Council's commitment to equal opportunities during the recruitment process. The Council will not disqualify any applicant because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job.

## **6. Training**

- 6.1 All staff and Councillors will have the option to receive training on Equality and Diversity which will help them embed equality into their scrutiny and decision-making in order to meet the Council's obligations.
- 6.2 The proper officer will attend a suitable training course on Equality and Diversity which will be subject to review as necessary.

## **7. Status**

This policy will be considered for adoption by Council on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2014.  
Adopted on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014. Reviewed April 2016. Amended December 2016. The amended policy will be considered for adoption by Council on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017.  
Adopted 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

20 January 2017  
Clerk