CHILDSWICKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Equal Opportunities Policy
Adopted 08/01/26

This is an overarching equality policy which sets out the council's commitment to equality in all of its activities. It seeks to provide equal opportunities to all employees, irrespective of age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The Parish Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.
All employees of the Parish Council 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 to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Statement on Equal Opportunities

The Parish Council recognises its obligations under the Sex Discrimination Acts, Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination and Equality Act and the spirit and intent of the related Codes of Practice:

- For the elimination of discrimination on grounds of age, sex or marital status and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment;
- For the elimination of discrimination on grounds of race and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment;
- For the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of disability and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment.

Commitment to Policy

The Parish Council supports the principles and practices of equal opportunity and recognises that it is the duty of all councillors and employees to accept their personal responsibility for fostering a fully integrated community at work by adhering to the principles of equal opportunity and maintaining racial harmony.

The Parish Council will actively promote equal opportunities throughout the organisation through the application of policies which will ensure that individuals receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities. The Parish Clerk will seek to ensure that all employees comply with these principles.

The Parish Council will ensure that individuals are recruited and selected, promoted and trained on objective criteria having regard to the relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities. In particular, no applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute indirect unfair discrimination.

Reasonable adjustments will be taken where a disabled person is put in a detrimental position and such reasonable adjustments remove the detriment.

The Parish Council recognises the problems that sexual or racial harassment may cause at work and is committed to ensure that such unacceptable behaviour does not take place. Sexual harassment includes (but is not limited to) unwanted physical contact, suggestive remarks or behaviour, compromising invitations, demands for sexual favours and similar unwanted behaviour. Racial harassment is similarly unwanted treatment but is concerned with derogatory treatment and language on racial grounds. All forms of harassment are abhorrent and will not be tolerated by the Parish Council. Sexual and racial harassment are regarded as unlawful discrimination and additionally may also be subject to criminal proceedings. All such cases will be dealt with under the appropriate Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure.

The Parish Council recognises that the detriment a disabled person endures as a consequence of their disability can, in many instances, be removed by the adoption of reasonable adjustments. The Council is committed to ensure that such adjustments will be effected where reasonably practicable and where the detriment is substantial.

Training and Advertising

The Parish Council will train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability only. When vacancies are advertised the Parish Council will continue to ensure that such advertising, both in placement and content, is compatible with the terms of this Policy. In practical terms this means that the wording of advertisements will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that any hidden discrimination is avoided or that sexually, racially or disability loaded wording is avoided.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the advertisements are placed on parish notice boards and on the website so that as wide a readership as possible has access to the vacancies.

Communication

The principles in this Policy will be brought to the attention of all councillors and staff.

All councillors and employees are encouraged to bring to the attention of the Parish Clerk any act of discrimination they observe.

Councillors and employees who are newly disabled are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the clerk to enable a review of their treatment to be made. This review will include an assessment of physical features and arrangements to ensure that these do not place the disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Where they do, then adjustments will be effected where reasonable to do so.

Sexual and Racial Harassment

Sexual and racial harassment are both forms of unlawful sex and racial discrimination and as a consequence is unlawful behaviour. It is also improper and inappropriate behaviour which lowers morale and interferes with the effectiveness of people at work.

It is the policy of this organisation to make every effort to provide an environment free from sexual or racial harassment and intimidation.

All councillors and employees are expected to comply with the policy and to ensure that such conduct does not occur. Appropriate disciplinary action including summary dismissal for serious offences will be taken against any employee who violates this policy.

The Law

The policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, which includes:

- Equal Pay Act 1970 and the Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value Amendment 1983
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and (Amendment) 1986
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003.
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003.
- Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010

Policy Review

The Parish Council will review this policy annually (in May) or as is necessary and appropriate.