

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all in employment and users of the Council's facilities, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexuality, religion, marital status and social class. The Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All employees, whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training 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.

The Law

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

- Equal Pay Act 1970 (Equal Value Amendment 1984)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999)
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Beetley Parish Council - Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Statement on Equal Opportunities

1. Beetley Parish Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and declares its opposition to any form of less favourable treatment, whether through direct or indirect discrimination accorded to the general public including on the grounds of their race, religious beliefs, creed, colour, disability, ethnic origin, nationality, marital/parental status, sex or sexual orientation.
2. Beetley Parish Council, recognises its obligations under the Sex Discrimination Acts, Race Relations Act and Disability Discrimination Act and the spirit and intent of the related Codes of Practice:
 - o for the elimination of discrimination on grounds of sex or marital status and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment;
 - o for the elimination of discrimination on grounds of race and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment;
 - o for the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of disability and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment.

2. General Practices

1. Beetley Parish Council states its wholehearted support for 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.
2. Beetley 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 clerk will seek to ensure that all employees comply with these principles.
3. Beetley 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.
4. Beetley 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.
5. Beetley 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. - Beetley Parish Council is committed to ensure that such adjustments will be effected where reasonably practicable and where the detriment is substantial.

3. Training and Advertising

1. Beetley Parish Council will train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability only.
2. When vacancies are advertised both internally and externally, the Parish Council will continue to ensure that such advertising, both in placement and content, is compatible with the terms of this Policy. To this end, opportunities will be taken through language, images or declarations, as appropriate, to show that the Parish Council is an equal opportunities employer. 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 in newspapers and publications so that as wide a readership as possible has access to the vacancies.
3. To this end, "word of mouth" advertising, personal contacts and family relationships will be discouraged as the only means of recruiting new staff or promoting existing staff.

4. Communication

1. The principles in this Policy will be brought to the attention of all councillors and staff.
2. All councillors and employees are encouraged to bring to the attention of the clerk any act of discrimination they observe.
3. 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.

5. Sexual and Racial Harassment

1. Preamble

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.

2. Definition

Sexual and racial harassment means unwanted conduct of a sexual or racial nature or conduct based on sex or racial abuse which is offensive to the recipient.

Sexual harassment does not refer to behaviour of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behaviour which is unsolicited, that is personally offensive and that fails to respect the rights of others.

3. **Examples**

The following are examples of inappropriate behaviour covered by this Policy:-

Physical conduct of a sexual nature: unwanted physical contact including unnecessary touching, patting, pinching or brushing up against another employee's body, assault, coercing sexual intercourse.

Verbal conduct of a sexual or racial nature: unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or pressure for sexual activity, continued suggestions for social activity outside the workplace after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome, offensive flirtations, suggestive remarks, innuendoes or lewd comments.

Non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature: the display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, objects or written materials, leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures.

Sex-based or racially abusive conduct: conduct which denigrates or ridicules or is intimidatory or physically abusive to an employee because of his or her sex or race such as derogatory or degrading abuse or insults which are gender related or of a racial nature and offensive comments about dress or appearance or physique, hygiene etc.

Equal Opportunities

The Parish Council is fully committed to providing a harmonious working environment in which employees are able to maximise their full potential and to contribute to business success, irrespective of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, religious belief or marital status.

The Parish Council is committed to identifying and eliminating discriminatory practices, procedures and attitudes throughout the organisation. The Parish Council believes that all employees are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect while at work and also when representing the business in any capacity outside of work. The Parish Council expects employees to support this commitment and to assist in all possible ways.

The aim of this policy is to prevent discrimination, provide guidance to resolve any problem should it occur and prevent recurrence.

Preventing Discrimination in Employment

The Parish Council endeavours to ensure that no employee or job applicant is discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, marital status or disability. This commitment applies to all the aspects of employment outlined below:

- Recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, interview and selection procedures.
- Training.
- Promotion and career development opportunities.
- Terms and conditions of employment, and access to employment-related benefits and facilities.
- Grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures.
- Selection for redundancy.

BEETLEY PARISH COUNCIL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Council and its staff to the promotion of equality of opportunity in Beetley Parish Council.

It is our policy to provide equality of membership to all, irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Having or not having dependents
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Race [including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, being an Irish traveller]
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All members of the Council and its staff will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions on membership, selection of office, training or any other benefit will be made objectively, without unlawful discrimination, and based on aptitude and ability.

We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in all our activities will benefit the Council and its staff. Our equal opportunities policy will help members to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the members will be utilised fully to maximise the effectiveness of the organisation.

Beetley Parish Council recognises that there is a statutory duty to implement an equal opportunities policy. This policy applies to applicants for employment, volunteers and members of the Council alike.

Beetley Parish Council is committed to the principles and practices of Equality. Beetley Parish Council values the diversity of the local population. We want our services, facilities and resources to be accessible and useful to every citizen regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, religious belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other individual characteristic, which may unfairly affect a person's opportunities in life.

EQUAL COMMITMENTS

We are committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons
- Promoting a good and harmonious learning environment in which all men and women are treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment is tolerated
- preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies
- taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
- breaches of our equal opportunities policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to termination of membership.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Chairman and the Committees and all members have the responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. We expect all members to create the equality environment, which is its objective. In order to implement this policy we shall:

- Communicate the policy to members by issuing a copy of this document to all its members.
- Beetley Parish Council will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that it will not consciously, or unconsciously discriminate in the selection or recruitment of applicants for membership of the Council.
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into roles and responsibilities of the Council.
- Incorporate equal opportunities notices into general communications practices
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

We will establish appropriate and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equal opportunities policy. The effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy will be reviewed annually and remedial action will be taken as necessary.

COMPLAINTS

Any complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the formal Council's Complaints Procedure.

Reviewed August 2023 to be reviewed in 12 months.