

## **Harwell Parish Council: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

**APPROVED April 2021**

### **Introduction**

This document outlines Harwell Parish Council's (HPC) policy regarding equality, diversity and inclusion among its workforce. HPC is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The overall aim of this policy is to guide the recruitment and employment of individuals working for HPC, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best. While a further aim is for HPC employees to be truly representative of all sections of society, this policy takes into consideration that the Parish Council workforce is small (3 employees) and while societal representation is an ideal it is challenging to implement with such a small workforce.

### **Purpose**

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

### **Policy details**

The Council commits to:

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice.
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the Council provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees and the public.

- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination by fellow employees, visitors and the public and any others in the course of the Councils work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the Council grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 — which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic — is a criminal offence.

- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Council.
- Decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Ensure that the recruitment of new employees to the HPC workforce is conducted such that equal opportunities to apply for employment are established, including ensuring that advertising of available positions is such that visibility of positions and the ability to apply for employment do not discriminate against any members of society.

### **Grievance and disciplinary policies**

Details of the Council's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found on the website and via the Clerk. Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

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