

HOLBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Introduction.

1. Holbrook Parish Council, under the Equality Act 2010, has a duty in the exercise of its functions to ensure that it fulfils its legal responsibilities under all legislation concerning equal opportunities.
2. The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of Holbrook Parish Council, its Members and Officers, to meeting these responsibilities and also to meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5th April 2011. The Equality Duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.
3. It is the responsibility of all Council Members and employees to adopt and implement this policy as part of their professional activities and conduct.

Policy Statement.

4. The Council acknowledges that certain groups and individuals within society can be discriminated against. There are certain Protected Characteristics listed below which have been identified by the Equality Act 2010. It is Holbrook Parish Council's policy to provide representation, information, facilities, services and employment to all irrespective of:
 - **Gender, including gender reassignment:** gender re-assignment is a protected characteristic that applies to a transsexual person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process or part of a process to change their sex by physiological or other attributes of sex
 - **Marital or civil partnership status:** marriage, or civil partnership between a man and a woman or a same sex couple. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples
 - **Pregnancy or Maternity:** Pregnancy refers to being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding
 - **Religion and Belief:** religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect someone's life choices or the way they live for it to be included in the definition
 - **Race** (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins): The Parish Council has a general duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equal opportunity and promote good race relations between people of different racial groups
 - **Disability:** a person is defined as having a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long- term effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

- **Sexual orientation:** No-one should be treated differently solely because of his or her real or perceived sexual orientation: lesbian, gay (homosexual), bisexual, asexual, pansexual, or straight (heterosexual).
 - **Sex:** A woman or a man must not be treated less favourably than someone of the opposite sex
 - **Age:** discrimination because of age is unlawful.
5. Holbrook Parish Council is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All people and employees will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. All decisions will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.
6. Holbrook Parish Council aims to create a culture that respects and values differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity. It aims to remove barriers, bias or discrimination that prevent individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to the community to develop a culture that positively values diversity.

Equality Commitments.

7. Holbrook Parish Council is committed to:
- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons.
 - Promoting a good and harmonious environment in which all persons are treated with respect.
 - Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
 - Fulfilling its legal obligations under equality legislation and associated codes of practice.
 - Complying with its own equal opportunities policy and associated policies.
 - Taking lawful, affirmative and positive action where appropriate.

How will Holbrook Parish Council meet their equality commitments?

- By endeavouring to provide services that are equally accessible to all people, free from prejudice and discrimination and sensitive to the needs of all sectors of the community
 - By valuing all members of its community and their differences
 - By working with partner organisations from all sectors to ensure that equality issues and considerations are fully considered when developing plans and strategies
 - By working pro-actively towards eliminating all forms of direct or indirect discrimination
 - By encouraging participation from all groups in the community in the development and application of council plans, policies and practices and by providing them with the opportunity to influence how their needs are met
8. The Council will ensure that all decisions on participation, recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career development are based on abilities, merits, and objective job-related criteria.

Implementation of this policy.

9. The Chairman has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. In order to implement this policy, he or she shall:
- Communicate the policy to Members, the Clerk and members of the public,
 - Ensure that the policy is in line with relevant legislation, including employment legislation and anti-discrimination legislation, as well as in line with good practice guidelines
 - Incorporate equal opportunities into general practices, and

- Ensure that other persons or organisations will comply with the policy in their dealings with the Council.
 - Provide appropriate training for employees/councillors and volunteers, so they can confidently put policy into practice
10. All Staff and Councillors are required to behave in a non-discriminatory manner and to create a culture in which people can feel confident of being treated with fairness, dignity and tolerance.

Monitoring and Review.

11. The effectiveness of the equality and diversity policy will be reviewed continually, and action taken as necessary.

Complaints of discrimination.

12. In addition to the Council's internal procedures, any person has the right to pursue complaints of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.