

GREAT WALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Equal Opportunities Policy

Version 5

This policy document should be reviewed and updated as necessary.

Version	Review Date	Reviewed By	Summary of Changes
1	April 2015	P. Jackson	Two sections made Section (a) for employees and Section (b) relating to members of the public added. Para 1.3 'numbers' replaced by 'members' Section 3 Rights of disabled people removed as this is covered by sections 1 and 2.
2	July 2016	P. Braisby	Add the words 'sexual orientation' to para 1.2
3	June 2021	S. Gilbert	Insertion of version number in review table. Revised formatting and correction of numbering. Updated scope description in s.1.1. Amendments to list in s.1.2. Revised wording in s.1.3. Amendment to 7.1 to make clear recommended changes require Council approval. Introduction of s.8 to identify complaints procedure.
4	December 2021	S. Gilbert	Format change.
5	March 2022	H. Lockwood	No changes.

(A) WITH REFERENCE TO EMPLOYEES

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. The Parish Council recognises that discrimination is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the Parish Council and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. This policy covers all areas of employment: recruitment and selection, terms and conditions, promotion, transfer, training, appraisal and selection for redundancy.
- 1.2. It is the aim of the Council to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race, socio economic status, nationality or ethnic origin, religion, family or caring responsibilities, age, working practices or whether they have chronic illness or HIV and/or AIDS or are placed at a disadvantage by imposed conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified. The Parish Council wishes to see its workforce broadly reflecting the community in which its premises are based.
- 1.3. Present members of staff and all applicants shall be assessed and selected for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit on the basis of their suitability, capability and qualifications.
- 1.4. This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any Codes of Practice issued by the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Department of Employment, and guidance from the Department of Health, and other statutory bodies.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. Where discrimination against any person or group is referred to it shall be deemed to be potential discrimination within any of the categories listed in the policy statement. Two types of discrimination are covered by statute - direct and indirect.

Direct Discrimination

- 2.2. Direct discrimination occurs when a person or group is treated less favourably than others.
- 2.3. Segregating a person or group on the basis of their race, sex or disability is unlawful. It also is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a job applicant whose criminal conviction is spent.

Indirect Discrimination

- 2.4. Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is imposed which, although applied equally to all individuals or groups, is such that:
 - the proportion of persons of a group who can comply with it is significantly smaller than the proportion of persons not of that group who can comply with it;

- the Employer cannot show it as being justifiable based upon the needs of the job;
- it is to the detriment of the individuals concerned because they cannot reasonably comply with it.

2.5. For example, a dress code which prevents women wearing trousers discriminates against women of a particular race or religion; a higher language standard than is actually needed to do the job discriminates on the grounds of nationality/race; a training policy which excludes part-time staff may discriminate against women, who fill the majority of part-time jobs.

3. VICTIMISATION

3.1. Discrimination by victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another because he/she had asserted his/her rights under the Acts relating to discrimination or had helped another person to assert those rights.

4. MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

4.1. The responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Proper Officer of the Council. Council Members and Officers shall ensure that they operate within the policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. The Proper Officer and Chair of the Parish Council will ensure that:

- all Members and Officers of the Council are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- proper records are maintained.

4.2. The Proper Officer will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants, including periodic audits.

5. RESPONSIBILITY OF STAFF

5.1. Whilst the responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with the Proper Officer, the attitudes of those in Council employment and Members/Officers are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all persons should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups on the grounds specified in the policy statement;
- inform the Proper Officer or Chair of the Parish Council if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

6. RELATED POLICIES AND ARRANGEMENTS

6.1. All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The Parish Council policies will be reviewed regularly and any discriminatory elements removed.

7. MONITORING

7.1. The Parish Council deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the Parish Council as a whole. Accordingly, the implementation of the Parish Council's policy will be monitored on a regular basis, and recommendations to address any issues that arise will be considered with a view to introduction by the Council.

7.2. The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.

8. COMPLAINTS

8.1. All complaints received by the Council in relation to this policy will be handled under its Code of Practice for Handling Complaints.

9. REVIEW

9.1. The policy and arrangements will be reviewed annually by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

(B) WITH REFERENCE TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

10.1 The above policy and the arrangement for its implementation apply to all the interaction between the Council and its employees/Members/Officers and members of the public.