

# **SOUTH HEIGHTON PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Equal Opportunities Policy**

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## Notes and Background

The Parish Council is committed to achieving good local governance. This means that the Parish Council wants to ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

To help the Parish Council achieve this we aim to follow the six principles of good local governance:

- 1 Focusing on the purpose of the Council and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
- 2 Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
- 3 Promoting values for the Council and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
- 4 Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
- 5 Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective;
- 6 Engaging with local people and other interested persons to ensure robust public accountability.

As a first tier of local government the Parish Council is directed and controlled by central government legislation. This document is one of a number, which together, sets out the systems and processes of how the Parish Council works within this framework and, as importantly, our culture and values on the way we work, so that we may fulfil these six principles.

This Equal Opportunities Policy has been prepared from the model provided by the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils (SSALC) on their website as at 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018. It has however been adapted to meet the specific circumstances of South Heighton Parish Council.

It should be read in conjunction with the other adopted policies, procedures and protocols of the Parish Council such as the “Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors and Officers Protocol”, which deals in more detail with what is expected of Councillors and the Parish Clerk in respect of their roles, responsibilities and working relationships.

The Council is committed to being a responsible employer and the adoption and application of this Policy/Procedure is part of this commitment.

For their part the Parish Clerk is expected to comply with the principles of this Policy.

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**In the context of this document reference to the “Council” and/or “Parish Council” means South Heighton Parish Council**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council only employs one member of staff and that is the Parish Clerk, the purpose of this policy is to provide them equal opportunities, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or social class. The Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.
- 1.2 They 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. They will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and talents and resources and will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

## **2. Principles**

- 2.1 Discrimination, direct or indirect, based on a person's gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, social class or other irrelevant distinction is unacceptable.
- 2.2 In addition to being unacceptable, such forms of discrimination represent a waste of human resources and a denial of the opportunity for individual fulfilment.
- 2.3 The Council seeks to involve the Parish Clerk in the continuing development and implementation of this policy.

## **3. Members of the public**

- 3.1 The Council recognises that many members of the public use the facilities it provides, or contact its Parish Clerk and Councillors. The Council takes seriously its responsibility to these people and affirms that they will be treated with the same respect and rights. Likewise, it is not acceptable for the Parish Clerk or Councillors to be treated unfairly by members of the public.

## **4. Organisational Responsibilities**

- 4.1 The Council is responsible for overseeing the implementation, monitoring and review of this Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 4.2 The Council's responsibilities include communicating the policy and its implementation to the Parish Clerk and monitoring its implementation. The Parish Clerk's responsibilities include communicating the policy and its implementation to anyone working on behalf of the Council and advising Members on matters concerning equal treatment.
- 4.3 The co-operation of the Parish Clerk and Councillors is essential for the success of this policy. However, ultimate responsibility for achieving the policy's objectives and for ensuring compliance with relevant statutes and codes of practice lies with the Council.
- 4.4 Intentional breaches of the provisions or spirit of this policy will in the case of the Parish Clerk be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Policy and in the case of Councillors will also be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

## **5. Legal framework**

5.1 The policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, the main statute being the Equality Act 2010. This brought together 116 separate pieces of legislation to provide a framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equal opportunities for all. The main pieces of legislation which have merged under the new act are:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007