

Cholsey Parish Council

EQUALITY POLICY

1. Introduction

Cholsey Parish Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities. This policy outlines the Council's commitment to ensuring equality and preventing discrimination, harassment, and victimization in compliance with relevant legislation.

The policy applies to employees of the Council, Councillors, service users and residents, contractors and volunteers associated with the Council.

2. The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by the activities, policies and services provided.

The Equality Act 2010 and its subsequent Regulations place a duty on the Council to work to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic
- Foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic

No individual will be discriminated against. This includes, but is not limited to, the following characteristics (known as 'protected characteristics' under the Act):

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and beliefs
- sex
- sexual orientation

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine occupational qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken), an equality of opportunity in serving the community as a Councillor, and an equality of opportunity in accessing Council services.

Cholsey Parish Council

4. The Council as a Service Provider

The Council aims to ensure that all residents and service users can access Council services without discrimination.

The Council will seek to engage with diverse groups to ensure their needs and views are considered in decision-making. Councillors will consider the impact of decisions on different groups to promote equality.

The Council will provide information in accessible formats as needed. It will ensure that all members of the community are able to attend Council and Committee meetings should they wish to.

5. The Council as an Employer

The following summarises the Council's 'Equal Opportunities policy as an Employer'; the full version of this policy can be found within the Employee Handbook on the Council's web site:

The Parish Council is committed to equal opportunity employment and non-discrimination in all employment aspects, including recruitment, training, promotion, and dismissal. The Council aims to foster a workplace that values diversity, prevents discrimination, and promotes equality for all employees and applicants.

- Recruitment and selection: Advertisements and selection processes will aim to attract a diverse range of applicants and avoid unnecessary criteria that could exclude certain groups.
- Work environment: Efforts will be made to create an inclusive work environment, with training provided to employees and managers on equality and non-discrimination.
- Discrimination: Both direct and indirect discrimination are prohibited. Direct discrimination involves treating someone less favourably due to a protected characteristic, while indirect discrimination occurs when a neutral policy disadvantages a specific group.
- Complaints and disciplinary Action: Employees must report any discriminatory acts, and the Council will take complaints seriously, addressing them through its grievance procedure. Serious breaches can lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal.
- Equal pay: Commitment to ensuring equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent, or work of equal value.
- Monitoring: Regular monitoring of employment practices to ensure equality of opportunity, with adjustments made as needed to address any issues.

6. Serving the community as a Councillor

The Council recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to provide equal opportunities for any member or prospective member wishing to serve their community as an elected or co-opted member of The Council.

Cholsey Parish Council

7. Commitment

The Parish Council will comply with all current and future legislation referring to equality and diversity and will aim to promote good practice in all aspects of the organisation.

This policy will be communicated to all employees, councillors, service users, and relevant stakeholders. It will be made available on the Council's website and in other appropriate formats.

8. Review

This document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on 17th July 2024, it shall be reviewed periodically, at least once per council term or if legislation dictates.

Signed:

Dated:

L. Nixon, Chair, Cholsey Parish Council