



FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL EQUALITY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') took effect on 1 October 2010 and replaced the previous antidiscrimination legislation. It simplified the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it. It also strengthened the law in order to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

The Public Sector Equality Duty is a key measure in the Act, which came into force on 5 April 2011. The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of Forest Row Parish Council, its Members and Officers to meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Duty 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 their activities, helping them to deliver policies, representation and services, which are efficient and effective, accessible to all and which meet different people's needs.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

It is the Council's policy to provide representation, information, facilities, services and employment to all irrespective of:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender, including gender reassignment
4. Marital or civil partnership status
5. Having just had a baby or being pregnant
6. Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
7. Religious belief or political opinion
8. Sexual orientation
9. Having or not having dependants (1-8 are 'protected characteristics' under the Act)

The 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 about will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

The Council recognises that supporting Equality is of primary importance. This policy will help all those who are Council Members or work for the Council to develop sound and effective policies that impact on the village, community and surrounding areas.

The Council aims to create a culture that respects and values each other's' differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity. We aim to remove barriers, bias or discrimination that

prevent individuals or groups from realizing their potential and contributing fully to the community to develop a culture that positively values diversity.

The Council will challenge discrimination. It aims to provide equality and fairness to all in the community and expects all Members and Officers to be aware and understand the Act.

3. EQUALITY COMMITMENTS

3.1 In all our activities we will have due regard to the three aims of the Equality Duty:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

3.2 To those ends, the 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 victimization.
- Fulfilling our legal obligations under equality legislation and associated codes of practice.
- Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies.
- Taking lawful affirmative and positive action where appropriate.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 The Chairman of the Council, together with the Finance & Policy Committee, and with the assistance of the Clerk, shall have specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. In order to implement this policy they shall:

- Communicate the policy to Councillors and members of the public
- Incorporate equal opportunities into general practices
- Ensure that other persons or organisations will comply with the policy in their dealings with the Council
- Establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of the policy.

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

4.3 This policy is cross-referenced to the Council's following staff policies: Equal Opportunities, Harassment, Equal Pay, Dignity at Work.

Policy due for review: May 2022
