HARGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL

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Equal Opportunities Policy

Ver. 1.1 Adopted 07/11/2019

1. Statement on Equal Opportunities

1. (a) Hargrave Parish Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and declares its opposition to any form of less favourable treatment, whether through direct or indirect discrimination accorded to the general public including on the grounds of their race, religious beliefs, creed, colour, disability, ethnic origin, nationality, marital/parental status, sex or sexual orientation.

1. (b) Hargrave Parish Council recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. This act requires equal treatment in access to employment as well as private and public services, regardless of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

2. Hargrave Parish Council, recognises its obligations under the Sex Discrimination Acts, Race Relations Act and Disability Discrimination Act and the spirit and intent of the related Codes of Practice:

- for the elimination of discrimination on grounds of sex or marital status and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment;
- for the elimination of discrimination on grounds of race and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment;
- for the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of disability and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment.

2. General Practices

1. Hargrave Parish Council states its wholehearted support for the principles and practices of equal opportunity and recognises that it is the duty of all councillors and employees to accept their personal responsibility for fostering a fully integrated community at work by adhering to the principles of equal opportunity and maintaining racial harmony.

2. Hargrave Parish Council will actively promote equal opportunities throughout the organisation through the application of policies which will ensure that individuals receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities. The Clerk will seek to ensure that all employees comply with these principles.

3. Hargrave Parish Council will ensure that individuals are recruited and selected, promoted and trained on objective criteria having regard to the relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities. In particular, no applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute indirect unfair discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be taken where a disabled person is put in a detrimental position and such reasonable adjustments remove the detriment.

4. Hargrave Parish Council recognises the problems that sexual or racial harassment may cause at work and is committed to ensure that such unacceptable behaviour does not take place. Sexual harassment includes (but is not limited to) unwanted physical contact, suggestive remarks or behaviour, compromising invitations, demands for sexual favours and similar unwanted behaviour. Racial harassment is similarly unwanted treatment but is concerned with derogatory treatment and language on racial grounds. All forms of harassment are abhorrent and will not be tolerated by the Parish Council. Sexual and racial harassment are regarded as unlawful discrimination and additionally may also be subject to criminal proceedings. All such cases will be dealt with under the appropriate Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure.

5. Hargrave Parish Council recognises that the detriment a disabled person endures as a consequence of their disability can, in many instances, be removed by the adoption of reasonable adjustments. Hargrave Parish Council is committed to ensure that such adjustments will be effected where reasonably practicable and where the detriment is substantial.

3. Training and Advertising

1. Hargrave Parish Council will train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability only.

2. When vacancies are advertised both internally and externally, the Parish Council will continue to ensure that such advertising, both in placement and content, is compatible with the terms of this Policy. To this end, opportunities will be taken through language, images or declarations, as appropriate, to show that the Parish Council is an equal opportunities employer. In practical terms this means that the wording of advertisements will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that any hidden discrimination is avoided or that sexually, racially or disability loaded wording is avoided. Every effort will be made to ensure that the advertisements are placed in newspapers and publications so that as wide a readership as possible has access to the vacancies. Job descriptions will be provided for all advertised posts along with a list of key job requirements. Due regard will be paid by interview panels to cultural bias and the effect that it may have on interview proceedings. All recruitment and selection documentation should be retained for one year and will clearly record the reasons for an appointment.

3. To this end, "word of mouth" advertising, personal contacts and family relationships will be discouraged as the only means of recruiting new staff or promoting existing staff.

4. Communication

1. The principles in this Policy will be brought to the attention of all councillors and staff.

2. All councillors and employees are encouraged to bring to the attention of the Clerk any act of discrimination they observe.

3. Councillors and employees who are newly disabled are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the clerk to enable a review of their treatment to be made. This review will include an assessment of physical features and arrangements to ensure that these do not place the disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Where they do, then adjustments will be effected where reasonable to do so.

4. Hargrave Parish Council will welcome and consider fully any constructive criticism or suggestion from any group or individual as to how this policy may be improved or more effectively implemented.

5. Sexual and Racial Harassment

1. Preamble
Sexual and racial harassment are both forms of unlawful sex and racial discrimination and as a consequence is unlawful behaviour. It is also improper and inappropriate behaviour which lowers morale and interferes with the effectiveness of people at work.
It is the policy of this organisation to make every effort to provide an environment free from sexual or racial harassment and intimidation.
All councillors and employees are expected to comply with the policy and to ensure that such conduct does not occur. Appropriate disciplinary action including summary dismissal for serious offences will be taken against any employee who violates this policy.

2. Definition
Sexual and racial harassment means unwanted conduct of a sexual or racial nature or conduct based on sex or racial abuse which is offensive to the recipient.
Sexual harassment does not refer to behaviour of a socially acceptable nature. It refers to behaviour which is unsolicited, that is personally offensive and that fails to respect the rights of others.

3. Examples
The following are examples of inappropriate behaviour covered by this Policy:-
Physical conduct of a sexual nature: unwanted physical contact including unnecessary touching, patting, pinching or brushing up against another employee's body, assault, coercing sexual intercourse. Verbal conduct of a sexual or racial nature: unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or pressure for sexual activity, continued suggestions for social activity outside the workplace after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome, offensive flirtations, suggestive remarks, innuendoes or lewd comments. Non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature: the display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, objects or written materials, leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures. Sex-based or racially abusive conduct: conduct which denigrates or ridicules or is intimidatory or physically abusive to an employee because of his or her sex or race such as derogatory or degrading abuse or insults which are gender related or of a racial nature and offensive comments about dress or appearance or physique, hygiene etc.

6. Volunteers, Partners and Client Services

Hargrave Parish Council intends to act with due regard to this policy and with due regard for the law.

Hargrave Parish Council will encourage everyone with whom it works to act in a manner which is supportive of our principles.

Hargrave Parish Council will work with due concern for vulnerable groups such as children or mentally disabled people and take advice whenever appropriate. It will consult with representatives of groups possibly subject to discrimination and act on such advice whenever appropriate.

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