

RANGEWORTHY PARISH COUNCIL EQUAL OPPORTUNITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Policy Statement

Rangeworthy Parish Council recognises that it has moral and legal responsibilities to be fair and is committed to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. This means treating people fairly, valuing difference and removing barriers that prevent full participation in public life and reaching their full potential.

This Policy outlines our legal responsibilities and the commitments the Parish Council has made which help to ensure equality is an integral part of the way we reach decisions, provide services, recruit staff and work with other organisations.

Implementation of this Policy is the responsibility of Rangeworthy Parish Council through elected and co-opted members, employees and others acting on its behalf.

Legal Requirements

The Equal Opportunities Act – came into force in October 2010 and brings together all legal requirements on equality. Under the Act, everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work or when using a service. It protects people from discrimination on the basis of certain characteristics, namely –

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- Religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- Sex and sexual orientation
- Under the Equality Act 2010 these are known as “protected characteristics”

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). The Parish Council oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it is direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Scope

All Rangeworthy Parish Council employees, whether full or part-time, fixed term contract, agency or temporary staff, 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. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Parish Council.

Commitment

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.

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The commitment to equal opportunities in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense as it seeks to utilise the talents available from the local community, representing society as a whole.

Breaches of this Policy will be regarded as serious misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. Employees are entitled to complain about discrimination or harassment or victimisation through the Parish Council's Grievance Procedure.

This Policy is fully supported by all Members of Rangeworthy Parish Council and adopts the model contract of employment as devised by the employee professional body in the local government sector (the Society of Local Council Clerks).

Rangeworthy Parish Council is committed to ensuring equality, fairness, inclusion and good relations are at the heart of everything we do – be it employment, policy-making or service delivery.

Staff Recruitment & Selection

Rangeworthy Parish Council will ensure that staff recruitment and selection is fair and equitable and will continue to evaluate procedures to identify and remove barriers, eliminating discrimination.

Members

Rangeworthy Parish Council will provide access to training and guidance to elected and co-opted Members so that they are aware of the Parish Council's legal responsibilities and rights when exercising Council duties and functions.

Rangeworthy Parish Council will maintain a working/meeting environment that is inclusive, free of discrimination, harassment and bullying, where individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

Rangeworthy Parish Council will encourage elected members to highlight discrimination and challenge unacceptable language and behaviour.

Rangeworthy Parish Council will make reasonable adjustments where necessary so that any obstacles a person faces as an elected or co-opted member relating to a protected characteristic, are removed, reduced or prevented.

Rangeworthy Parish Council will publicise Parish Council vacancies widely within the community.

Decision Making & Services

Rangeworthy Parish Council will –

- Ensure that people are treated with dignity and respect.
- Consider the needs of all individuals in our day-to-day work. Will try to understand how different people will be affected by our activities so that our policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.
- Recognise that people's needs may be different. We will take account of this when making decisions about policies or services and make reasonable adjustments where necessary and if reasonable to do so.

- Will aim to provide all information in Plain English, and alternative formats on request wherever possible and it is reasonable to do so.

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Working with Partners & Contractors

Rangeworthy Parish Council recognises that we are responsible for ensuring that any third parties who exercise functions on our behalf are capable of complying with the Equality Duty, are required to comply with it, and that they do so in practice.

Rangeworthy Parish Council will communicate our Equal Opportunity & Diversity Policy to partners and contractors.

Rangeworthy Parish Council will obtain commitment from contractors/partners that they will comply with the Equality Duty and our Equal Opportunity & Diversity Policy when carrying out work on our behalf.

Rangeworthy Parish Council will take equalities considerations into account when developing contract specifications and conditions.

Monitoring & Review Our Policy

Rangeworthy Parish Council will keep a record of how decisions were reached to demonstrate that the aims of our Equality Duty were considered. We will consider collecting equality monitoring information if it is useful and relevant to do so.

Rangeworthy Parish Council will monitor and review our Equal Opportunity & Diversity Policy at the lessor of every two years or legislative changes.

Dealing with Complaints & Grievances Relating to Equality

Complaints and grievances about discrimination will be properly handled through the Parish Council's respective policies.

Breaches of our Equal Opportunity & Diversity Policy by employees will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

Date Policy Adopted: 7th September 2021

Minute Reference: 33.09.21

To be Reviewed: September 2023 or earlier if legislation dictates.