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Equality Policy

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people in the workplace and in wider society from discrimination. It replaced and simplified previous anti-discrimination legislation with one single Act and it applies to all organisations that provide a service to the public or a section of the public, which includes Parish Councils. The Act identifies nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Sheviack Parish Council Commitment

Sheviack Parish Council is committed to valuing, promoting and celebrating equality, diversity and community cohesion in order to ensure that its residents, visitors and employees enjoy an outstanding quality of life. It is committed to ensuring that people in the parish have equal access to its services and the right to live free from unlawful discrimination.

Its commitment to equality applies to everything it does. It will ensure that all its decisions and policies are based on evidence and that it has undertaken relevant impact assessments to avoid and eliminate any potential unlawful discrimination. It has identified three key areas of relevance to this Policy.

Access to services, facilities and information

It is committed to providing easy access to services, facilities and information and to being honest about what it can and cannot do. The Parish Council will:

- involve people in the design, prioritisation and delivery of services
- monitor and review services regularly to identify any under-representation or discrimination
- make sure information is accessible using Plain English and other accessibility standards
- provide alternative formats, translations and interpreters when needed
- make sure meetings and events are easy to access and welcoming to all

Recruitment and Employment

It is committed to fair employment and the development of its staff. The Parish Council will:

- advertise jobs openly
- use non-discriminatory job criteria
- take positive action to ensure a diverse workforce
- apply fair selection procedures
- monitor and review employment practice
- make reasonable adjustments
- support staff through appropriate performance review and training
- encourage membership of relevant professional networks

Representing the Parish

The Parish Council is committed to being representative of the Parish and encouraging diversity through membership. It will:

- use public meetings to consult, discuss and disseminate information
- encourage issues to be raised through public representation
- set up working groups involving residents to resolve specific parish issues and provide experience of council operations and discussions
- encourage individuals from under-represented groups to become more involved and to stand for election
- provide experience of council representation through co-option to the council

Responsibilities

Sheviock Parish Council has overall responsibility to comply with legislation and relevant best practice guidance in general and the Equality Act 2010 in particular and to ensure that this Equality Policy is enforced, monitored and reviewed.

All councillors and staff have a personal responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy, to treat colleagues with dignity at all times and not to discriminate against, harass or victimise other members of staff, councillors, visitors, members of the public, contractors, suppliers or anyone with whom they come into contact in their role as a councillor or member of staff.

The Clerk to the Parish Council has been appointed as the person with operational responsibility for these matters. The Clerk will:

- promote the objectives as set out in this policy
- ensure his/her own behaviour and those of the staff and councillors comply in full with this policy
- ensure that any complaints of discrimination, victimisation or harassment, including against themselves, are dealt with appropriately and not suppressed or disregarded.

Non-compliance

Any breach of this Equality Policy, or failure to comply with the spirit of its intention will be taken very seriously and is likely to result in disciplinary action against the offender up to and including immediate dismissal for staff and suspending and reporting councillors to the Standards Committee for Cornwall.

Policy Review

Shevioc Parish Council is committed to effective management of its Policy portfolio through regular review and monitoring to ensure that all policies and guidance notes continue to be relevant and that they achieve their aims and objectives. Shevioc Parish Council will:

- formally review this Policy annually
- provide and maintain effective procedures for consultation
- encourage communication and feedback with employees, councillors and the public
- publish its performance with regards to complaints and action taken for breach of this Policy