

# Barnton Parish Council (BPC)

<b>Policy Title:</b> Equal Opportunities Policy	<b>Ref:</b> BPC o6
<b>Author:</b> Lynn Gibbon	<b>Date:</b> January 2013 Version 2 <b>Review Date:</b> January 2014

## Introduction

BPC recognises it is essential to provide equality of opportunities to all people without discrimination. This policy sets out the organisation's position on equal opportunity in all aspects of employment, and provides guidance and encouragement to employees at all levels to act fairly and prevent discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, marital status, disability, part-time and fixed term contract status, age, sexual orientation or religion.

We recognise that an effective Equal Opportunities policy will help all the staff to develop to their full potential, which is clearly in the best interests of both staff and the council. We want to ensure that we not only observe the relevant legislation, but also do whatever is necessary to provide genuine equality of opportunity.

It is expected that employees will be treated and treat others with respect. The aim is to provide a working environment free from harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in any form, which may affect the dignity of the individual.

## Scope

This policy applies to all activities and procedures undertaken and adopted by BPC to ensure equality of opportunity for all. The organisation is an equal opportunities employer in which people are recognised as individuals, with differences recognised, accepted and valued.

## Definitions

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Both forms of discrimination must be avoided.

**Direct discrimination** - when one person is treated less favourably than another on grounds relating to sex, race, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

**Indirect discrimination** - where a requirement is imposed which can only be complied with by a smaller proportion of people of a particular sex, race, marital status, disability, age, part-time or fixed term contract status, sexual orientation or religion, than people in another group, which makes it not objective or justifiable in the given situation.

## The legal framework

All employees are expected to abide by the requirements of:

- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- The Codes of Practice issued by the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission.

## **Barnton Parish Council (BPC)**

### **Policy**

BPC recognises the dignity and worth of every individual by promoting equality of opportunity for all. BPC is committed to oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on grounds of race, gender, colour, nationality, ethnic or natural origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, employment status, religion, age, trade union activity and responsibility for dependants.

BPC will recruit, develop and retain quality individuals, treating them fairly and equitably and decisions on recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career management will be based solely on individual ability, effective performance and the needs of the company.

BPC will fulfil the provisions and requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended) and the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended), which make it unlawful for an organisation to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of race or gender; the Equal Pay Act 1970; the discrimination Act 1995 which relates to the recruitment and employment of disabled people and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exception) Order 1975, which makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of a 'spent conviction'.

BPC will ensure that sex discrimination does not occur and in accordance with the Sex Discrimination Act, will promote equality of opportunity between males and females within and applying to, the company.

### **Racial Equality**

BPC will ensure that Race Discrimination does not occur and, in accordance with the Race Relations Act, to promote equality of opportunity for all. Where individuals have specific cultural and/ or religious needs, which may require modification to existing requirements, the company, where possible, will endeavour to accommodate these needs. Each situation will be treated individually.

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on racial grounds.

### **Disabled Persons**

BPC will ensure that discrimination does not occur on grounds of disability and recognises that it is unlawful in terms of the provision of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 for an employer to discriminate against a disabled person.

Access will therefore be based on skills, qualification and relevant experience and BPC will provide the necessary assistance, where possible, to ensure that people with disabilities are treated fairly in all aspects. Wherever possible, BPC will provide opportunities and training for disabled people, including those who become disabled, in order to make the best possible use of skills and potentials.

### **Terms and conditions of employment**

BPC will ensure that all policies including compensation, benefits and any other relevant issues associated with Terms and Conditions of Employment, are formulated and applied without regard to race, religion or belief, nationality, ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, domestic circumstances, full or part time employment, disability or any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job.

### **Recruitment and selection**

BPC aims, through written instructions and appropriate training and supervision, to ensure that all staff responsible for recruitment and selection is familiar with this policy and it is applied in conjunction with our Recruitment and Selection policy.

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Selection will be conducted objectively focusing on the applicants' suitability for the job and their ability to fulfil the job requirements i.e. their skills, abilities, qualifications, aptitude and potential to do their jobs.

Person specifications will be reviewed to ensure that discriminatory criteria are not applied, either directly or indirectly, and that they do not impose any condition or requirement which cannot be justified by the demands of the post.

### **Training and development**

BPC recognises that equality of opportunity responsibilities do not end at selection, and is committed to ensure that, wherever possible, all staff receives the widest possible range of development opportunities for advancement. All employees will be encouraged to discuss their ~~career prospects~~ and training needs with either the Chair of BPC or the Clerk.

### **Responsibility**

The overall responsibility for implementing this policy lies with BPC. Activities relating to the positive implementation and administration of the policy, in respect of recruiting and employing staff, will be the responsibility of all Councillors and Clerk.

All staff are expected to comply with this policy and promote equal opportunities in all aspects of business.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Clerk to ensure that it is continually developed, meets current legislation and is made publicly available.

### **Associated Documents**

Diversity Policy  
Harassment Policy

**Authorised by:** .....

**Date:** .....