



Equality & Diversity Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all Billingshurst parishioners, councillors, council employees, volunteers and contractors, and anybody else that the Parish Council may interact with whilst carrying out its activities, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or social class. The Parish council opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination.

All employees, volunteers and contractors 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 relevant personnel will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential. The talents of all human resources will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Billingshurst Parish Council's Equality Duties

The Equality Act (EA) 2010 consolidated a complex set of equalities and other legislation and was designed to improve understanding of what the practical application of equality actually means.

The Equality Act 2010 added to existing duties that the public sector must comply with and created the "*Public Sector Equality Duty*".

The Public Sector Equality Duty

The 2010 Act replaced a disjointed set of race, disability, gender, age and other equality duties with a more straightforward, single duty covering a broader equality spectrum. The new duty covers the following:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

The Public Sector Equality Duty is comprised of a General Duty (to respect equality) and a more Specific Duty (to ensure that we act with equality in all that we do).

The General Duty

Under the General Duty we must take steps to:

- Recognise and eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity.

The Specific Duty

Under the Specific Duty we must be able to demonstrate equality and diversity in our procedures and working practices.

Our Aim

Our aim is to comply with the Public Sector Equality duty. This to ensure that all residents, particularly those vulnerable to equality issues, are able to access all relevant council services freely and fairly and are supported to achieve this wherever possible. {NB; Council Services includes all that we do for the community; whether managing assets, providing or gathering information, representing the community, supporting the community (e.g. grants) or other council activities}.

Our Objectives are to ensure that:

1. All Councillors and employees understand and promote our Equalities Aim.
2. All council services, information, communications, consultation activities and events are as accessible as is reasonably practicable.
3. Equality principles are recognised in the management of all assets and resources, including community grant applications.
4. The Equality Objectives are considered when planning the provision of services.
5. All Councillors and employees are encouraged to undertake appropriate equality and diversity training to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities in relation to equalities in service provision or other council activities.

This policy applies equally to the Parish Council and Billingshurst Centre.

Adopted by Working Practices Committee on 24th July 2019