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EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Thurston Parish Council ("Council") is committed to ensuring that, in the exercise of its functions, it fulfils its legal responsibilities under all legislation concerning equality and diversity and does not engage in unlawful discrimination within the Council (including staff, councillors, volunteers and contractors and in the delivery of its service to the public opportunities.

The Council will actively develop positive practices which promote equality of opportunity and enable residents and customers to fully participate and staff to realise their full potential. No resident, customer, job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, colour, creed, nationality, ethnic or national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, marital status, or will be disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be justified.

The Council will ensure that all decisions on participation, recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career development are based on abilities, merits, and objective job-related criteria.

All Staff and Councillors are required to behave in a non-discriminatory manner and to create a culture in which people can feel confident of being treated with fairness, dignity and tolerance.

Commitments:

We are committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons
- Promoting a good and harmonious learning environment in which all men and women are treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment is tolerated
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
- Breaches of our equal opportunities policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to termination of membership.

Implementation:

The Chairman and all members of the Council have the responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. All members are expected to create the equality environment, which is its objective.

In order to implement this policy we shall:

- Communicate the policy to members by issuing a copy of this document to all its members.
- Where appropriate, the Council will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that it will not consciously, or unconsciously discriminate in the selection or recruitment of applicants for membership of the Council.
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into roles and responsibilities of the Council.
- Incorporate equal opportunities notices into general communications practices
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

Monitoring and Review:

We will establish appropriate and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equal opportunities policy. The effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy will be reviewed annually and remedial action will be taken as necessary.

Notes to the Policy:

Acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, in relevant circumstances and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice in the case of staff.

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights/Code of Conduct and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

The Council has a corporate Complaints Procedure.

Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.