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BROCTON PARISH COUNCIL

Equal Opportunities Policy

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This Policy is fully supported by all Members of the Parish Council and adopts the model contract as devised by the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Introduction – Statement of Commitment

- 1.1 Brocton Parish Council is committed to the values of equality and diversity in its approach, covering the full range of failure to act with good manners to direct discrimination and believes that equal opportunities are essential to the values that lie at the heart of the Parish Council. It will seek to provide the highest quality provision and service and recognises that the implementation of an effective equal opportunities policy is an integral part of this.
- 1.2 Brocton is a small Parish Council, with one employee. It is not responsible for the management of any buildings and its service provision is limited. The scope of this policy reflects this.
- 1.3 The Council, as a corporate body, has responsibilities as an employer, a service provider and a public authority. It also recognises that both members and employees, as individuals, also have responsibilities as well as rights. As an employer the Parish Council will ensure that employees/job applicants are treated fairly regardless of their sex, gender reassignment, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, pregnancy and maternity status (known collectively as 'protected characteristics' under the 2010 Equality Act), responsibilities for dependants or political affiliations, marital or civil partnership status and social class.
- 1.4 The Council recognises its duty under the Equality Act (2010) to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees, to help them overcome disadvantages resulting from impairment.
- 1.5 The Council will treat all: its employee, partners and customers with dignity and respect, ensure they are free from discrimination, victimisation and harassment and will make appropriate provision to warrant that the implications of the Equality Act are fully considered in relation to any decisions that are taken.

2. The Legal Position

- 2.1 This policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, which includes:
 - Equal Pay Act 1970 (Equal Value Amendment 1984)
 - Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
 - Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999)
 - Race Relations Act 1976
 - Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
 - BDS Disclosure information in accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2010

2.2 It is the Councils Policy not to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

2.3 Section 149 of the 2010 Act imposes a Duty on Parish Councils to take into account:

- The need to eliminate discrimination and harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- To advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- To foster good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

2.4 This policy, and the measures the Parish Council takes to implement it, have been devised on the basis of advice from the relevant governmental and professional bodies. We are committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective and to bring it to the attention of all those engaged in working with the Parish Council. The principle of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies equally to the treatment of visitors, clients, customers and suppliers by members of our workforce and also, in some circumstances, ex-employees.

2.5 This policy is for guidance only and shall be provided to all workers however, it does not form part of the contract of employment.

3. To Whom does this Policy Apply?

3.1 The Policy applies to all employees, regardless of employment status, to ex-employees; job applicants and individuals who are not employees, such as agency staff, consultants and volunteers but who work at the Parish Council (collectively workers).

3.2 All workers have a duty to act in accordance with this Policy and therefore to treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff.

4. Commitment to Equal Opportunities

4.1 Brocton Parish Council:

- understands its obligations under the Equality Act 2010
- is fully committed to its duty, imposed by Section 149 of the 2010 Act
- is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and declares its opposition to any form of less favourable treatment, whether through direct or indirect discrimination, on the grounds of the protected characteristics as specified in the Equality Act 2010.

- 4.2 The Parish Council is an Equal Opportunities employer and service provider. It is committed to the promotion, maintenance and protection of the rights of individuals. The Parish Council is committed to making full use of the talents and resources of its employee.
- 4.3 The Parish Council will ensure that all recipients of the services delivered directly by the Parish Council are guaranteed the same opportunity.
- 4.4 All policies of the Parish Council will be designed to support the principles and practices of equal opportunity, to foster a fully integrated community and maintain racial harmony.
- 4.5 The Equal Opportunities Policy has the commitment of the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk.

5. The Council as an Employer

- 5.1 The Purpose of this Policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees or prospective employees, irrespective of their characteristics (unless there are genuine qualifications or objectively justified reasons for a different approach to be taken). We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.2 All employees, whether full-time, part-time, fixed contract, agency workers or temporary, 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 council.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 The Parish Council will encourage and develop all employees to support and carry out the requirements of the Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 5.5 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.

6. Breaches of the Policy

- 6.1 Breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. The Parish Council encourages such matters to be raised through the Parish Councils Grievance Procedure. Such matters raised will be treated in confidence and investigated accordingly, in line with the appropriate procedure.

- 6.2 Workers who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations of a breach in this Policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.
- 6.3 If, after investigation, you are proven to have harassed any other worker on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, disability or age or otherwise act in breach of this Policy, you will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The Parish Council will always take a strict approach to serious breaches of this Policy.
- 6.4 As this Policy applies equally to the Parish Council workers' relations with visitors, clients, customers and suppliers, if, after investigation, you are proven to have discriminated against or harassed a client or supplier you will also be subject to disciplinary action.
- 7. Monitoring and Revision of this Policy**
- 7.1 The Parish Council will review this Policy every 4 years. This will ensure any changes to legislation and guidance are reflected in the Policy. Regular monitoring of the effectiveness of the Policy will also be carried out to ensure the objectives outlined within the Statement of Commitment are being met.

Adopted by Brocton Parish Council on 6 November 2019.

To be reviewed in November 2023.