

## **Sandford St Martin Parish Council Equal Opportunities Policy**

Approved by Sandford St Martin Parish Council on 16 September 2021  
Last approved on 06 October 2022

### Introduction

Sandford St Martin Parish Council is committed to providing the highest quality of provision and service and recognises that the implementation of an effective Equal Opportunities Policy is an integral part of such an approach. However, Sandford St Martin is a relatively small Parish Council, which currently has only one employee. It is also not responsible for the management of any buildings, and its service provision is limited. The scope of this policy is, therefore, designed to reflect this.

The Council, as a corporate body, has responsibilities as an employer, a service provider and a public authority, but both members and employees as individuals also have responsibilities as well as rights. The Council will treat all its employees, partners and customers with dignity and respect, free from discrimination, victimisation and harassment.

### Legal Position

Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the following grounds:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

These are known as “protected characteristics” in section 4 of the 2010 Act.

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.

### The Council's commitment

Sandford St Martin Parish Council understands its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Sandford St Martin Parish Council is fully committed to its duty, imposed by Section 149 of the 2010 Act.

Sandford St Martin Parish Council 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.

The Council is an Equal Opportunities employer, provider of services and contractor. It is committed to the promotion, maintenance and protection of the rights of individuals. The Council is committed to making full use of the talents and resources of its employees. The Council will ensure that all recipients of the services delivered directly by the Council are guaranteed the same opportunity.

All policies of the Council will be designed to support the principles and practices of equal opportunity, to foster a fully integrated community and maintain racial harmony. The Equal Opportunities Policy has the commitment of the Council and the Parish Clerk.

### The Council as an Employer

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). Sandford St Martin Parish Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

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.

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. The Council will encourage and develop all employees to support and carry out the requirements of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings. 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.

This policy is fully supported by all Members of the Council. The Council adopts the model employment contract as devised by the employee professional body in the local government sector (the Society of Local Council Clerks).

### The Council as a Direct Service Provider

The Council's clients have the right to expect fair and non-discriminatory treatment whilst participating in or receiving any of the Council's services or activities. All aspects of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy impact on the manner in which it directly delivers services to and for its residents. Adherence to the principles and practices contained within this policy will be monitored on a regular basis. The above requirements apply to all services and activities of the Council.

### Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required.