



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of residents. It recognises that it has moral and legal responsibilities and is committed to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. This means treating people fairly, valuing differences and removing barriers that prevent people from participating fully in public life and reaching their full potential.

This Equality and Diversity Policy outlines our legal responsibility and the commitments we have made which help us to ensure equality is an integral part of the way we reach decisions, provide services, recruit staff and work with other organisations.

The Equality Act came into force from October 2010 and brings together all legal requirements on equality. Under the Act everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work or when using a service. It protects people from discrimination based on certain characteristics, these are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race to include ethnicity, national origins, or nationality
- Religion or belief to include lack of belief
- Sexual orientation

Under the Equality Act 2010 these are known as “Protected Characteristics”.

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all, irrespective of their characteristics and we oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it is direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation, or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

All Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council employees will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training remuneration or any other benefit will be based on 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.

Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre PC will make reasonable adjustments, where necessary, so that any obstacles a person faces as an elected member relating to a protected characteristic, are removed, reduced, or prevented.

Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council will work to prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act and advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. This involves considering the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics and encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.
- Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council will foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. This involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.
- Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council is committed to ensuring equality, fairness, inclusion, and good relations are at the heart of everything we do.
- Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council will ensure that our staff recruitment and selection procedures are fair and equitable. We will continue to evaluate our procedures to identify and remove barriers eliminating discrimination.
- Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council will provide access to training and guidance to Elected Members so that they are aware of their legal responsibilities and rights when exercising Council duties and functions.
- Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council will maintain a working/meeting environment that is inclusive, free of discrimination, harassment and bullying where individuals are treated with dignity and respect.
- Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council will encourage elected members to highlight discrimination and challenge unacceptable behaviour and language.
- Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council will ensure that we treat people with dignity and respect.
- Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council will consider the needs of all individuals in our day-to-day work and will try to understand how different people will be affected by our activities so that our policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.
- Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council recognises that people's needs may be different. We will take account of this when making decisions about policies or services and make reasonable adjustments where necessary and if reasonable to do so.

Reviewed: February 2024

Lucy White- Clerk