



Houghton & Wyton

Parish Council

Equality Policy

Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to implementing and promoting equal opportunities in its activities, services and practice. It realises that discrimination exists in society (whether protected by law or not), and believes that this prevents potential and ability from being realised in young people and others.

Houghton & Wyton Parish Council will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of:

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

In serving the community, Houghton & Wyton Parish Council accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recognises that some people it engages with may, because of their past or present distress or illness, say or do things which would otherwise be unacceptable and incompatible with Houghton & Wyton Parish Council Equality Policy. Houghton & Wyton Parish Council will do all it can to challenge such behaviour.

Houghton & Wyton Parish Council reserves the right to work with, support or sanction the use of its assets for, any organisation who supports its aims and objectives. However, it will exclude those organisations that actively work against the development of an equal opportunities policy over time, despite encouragement from Houghton & Wyton Parish Council.

Houghton & Wyton Parish Council realises that a genuine commitment to equal opportunities must operate on all levels:

- *Houghton & Wyton Parish Council will prevent unfavourable treatment, directly or indirectly, upon individuals from any group facing discrimination in its recruitment and deployment of its resources. Where discrimination does occur, it will be dealt with through the agreed procedures. This will be achieved by following the Houghton & Wyton Parish Council Equality Policy.*
- *Houghton & Wyton Parish Council will seek to prevent discrimination and ensure equal representation in what it does. Where possible, this will involve the development of diversity to ensure a genuinely wide representation.*

Responsibility

1.1 The full Council of Houghton & Wyton Parish Council has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all individual Councillors, volunteers and service users have a duty as part of their involvement with Houghton & Wyton Parish Council to do everything they can to ensure that the policy works in practice. Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work in Houghton & Wyton Parish Council projects and groups are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of Houghton & Wyton Parish Council Equality Policy and adhere to it while involved.

1.2 Houghton & Wyton Parish Council will bring to the attention of all volunteers and service users the existence of this policy, and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.

1.3 If any Councillor, service user or volunteer feels that they have been, or are being discriminated against, in any way, they are entitled to pursue the matter with the full Council.

1.4 All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.

1.5 Complaints or allegations of an unfounded or malicious nature will also be treated as serious.

Disabled Access

2.1 Houghton & Wyton Parish Council will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all the premises it uses have disabled access. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible.

Use of Language

3.1 Councillors, Volunteers and service users should avoid and challenge the use of language which, in any way, belittles anyone.

3.2 Where the language used has a personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person concerned that their use of such language is unwelcome and/or offensive, disciplinary action may be taken if they persist with it.

3.3 All materials used or developed by Houghton & Wyton Parish Council will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be discriminatory will not be used.

Sexual Harassment

4.1 No councillor, volunteer or service user should be subject to sexual harassment.

4.2 This is interpreted as unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:

- verbal sexual abuse
- physical contact
- repeated remarks which an individual finds offensive

4.3 If it has been made clear to the person concerned that their behaviour is unwelcome and they persist with it, then the councillor, service user or volunteer who is the recipient of the behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

Monitoring and Review

The Policy will be constantly reviewed by the council to ensure that no one is put to a disadvantage either, directly or indirectly. This monitoring will apply to the practices of staff, councillors and volunteers, the Council, the composition of the Committees and the deployment of assets.

It is the responsibility of every individual to eliminate discrimination and to ensure the practical application of this Policy.

Houghton & Wyton Parish Council will review this policy every 3 years.

Adopted on: 5 November 2014

Updated: November 2017 and new version adopted by Parish Council at PC meeting on 15 November 2017.

Next review November 2020.