

Horsted Keynes Parochial Church Council

St. Giles Church

# Equal Opportunities Policy

**(v 0.1)**

**DOCUMENT INFORMATION**

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## 1 Statement of Intent

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Horsted Keynes Parochial Church Council (HKPCC) to the promotion of equality of opportunity within the Parish.

It is our policy to provide equality of membership to all, irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment;
- Marital or civil partnership status;
- Having or not having dependents;
- Religious belief or political opinion;
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins);
- Disability;
- Sexual orientation; and
- Age.

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Everyone will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions on volunteering, selection for office, training or any other benefit will be made objectively, without unlawful discrimination, and based on aptitude and ability.

We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in all our activities will benefit the Parish. Our equal opportunities policy will help those involved with the Church to develop their full potential and their talents and resources will be utilised fully to maximise the effectiveness of the Church.

HKPCC recognises that there is a statutory duty enacted under national law to implement an equal opportunities policy.

HKPCC is committed to the principles and practice of equality and values the diversity of the local population. We want our services, facilities and resources to be accessible and useful to every citizen regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, religious belief, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other individual characteristic which may unfairly affect a person's opportunities in life.

## 2 Equality 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 national equality legislation and associated codes of practice; and
- Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies.

In order to implement this policy we will:

- Communicate the policy to Parishioners by issuing an induction pamphlet to all existing, and new volunteers;
- Endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that it will not consciously, or unconsciously discriminate in the selection or recruitment of applicants for volunteering in the Church; and
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

### **3 Suitability for Positions of Trust**

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the organisation undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any person on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

A Disclosure is only requested if relevant to the participation in a regulated activity. Every person under-going a Disclosure check will be made aware of the DBS Code of Practice and a copy will be available on request.

### **4 Monitoring & Review**

We will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equal opportunities policy. The effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy will be reviewed regularly (at least annually) and action taken as necessary.

### **5 Complaints**

Parishioners who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed procedures, which can be found in Appendix "A". All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Every effort will be made to ensure that volunteers or Parishioners who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly, and confidentially.

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## **Annex A Complaints Procedure**

This procedure provides volunteers with a means by which to lodge a grievance or complaint if informal discussions have failed to resolve the issue(s) or where volunteers or Parishioners do not believe that the matter can be dealt with informally.

Grievances or complaints should firstly be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator (PSC) who will then report the issue to the HKPCC. Volunteers and Parishioners can, if necessary, report the issue directly to the Rector if the issue concerns the PSC. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the issue, the PSC may ask the volunteer or member to put the complaint in writing.

When reporting a grievance in writing, the volunteer or Parishioner should include all details relevant to their complaint. They should mention names, dates and locations and a description of events that have occurred that have led to the complaint being made.

The HKPCC may in some cases elect to suspend individuals from voluntary work while the matter is being investigated. They will be notified of this in writing.

Once all the facts have been investigated, a decision will be made and appropriate action (if necessary) will be taken.

All comments and complaints should be recorded together with actions taken, process followed, decisions made and outcomes, where measurable.

This policy will be reviewed every three years and will next be reviewed in August 2016.