



Andrew's, Alresford
Anne & St Laurence, Elmstead Market
Mary Magdalen, Frating with Thorrington

Tenpenny Villages Benefice

Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 St Andrew's Church, Alresford, St Anne and St Laurence Church, Elmstead and St Mary Magdalen Church, Frating with Thorrington wholeheartedly supports the principle of equality of opportunity. It is a central part of the Christian faith that all human beings are created in the divine image, and all are valued equally by God and share equality in God's love. We are aware that in the Christian community 'there is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3.28), and that in St John's vision there is 'a vast throng, which no one could count, from each nation, of all tribes, peoples and languages, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb' (Revelation 7.9).

1.2 Unlawful and unfair discrimination between people is accordingly contrary to God's purpose. It may also contravene the law of the land, including but not limited to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. In today's world we know that both women and men may experience considerable employment or working difficulties because of, say, their gender, background, culture or age. This results in bad practice and the marginalisation of capable persons because of prejudice or discrimination.

2. Principles

2.1 Overall principles

Consistent with this policy, our aim is to provide equality of opportunity for all. We aim to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly, that any events or activities in the church are accessible to all and that decisions on roles within the church, whether as volunteers or paid, are based solely on objective and task-related criteria.

2.2 Volunteers & Employees

We will not discriminate in our appointment of roles within the church, whether volunteer or paid, directly or indirectly, on the grounds of: race, ethnic or national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability or (except in the circumstances described in [paragraph 2.3 below](#)) religion.

2.3 Religious affiliation criterion for a limited number of roles

Given that all the parties to this policy seek in one way or another to serve the Church, with regard to filling a limited number of roles, it is lawful and may be appropriate to take account of the candidate's religious affiliation.

3. Implementation

3.1 Selection

All our selection procedures for roles within the church are designed to recruit the most suitable available person for the role. We may seek to draw opportunities to the attention of groups that are under-represented within the church.

3.2 Harassment, bullying and victimisation

Volunteers and employees are entitled to an environment free from hostility. Harassment, including sexual and racial harassment, bullying and victimisation are all therefore unacceptable.

3.3 People with disabilities

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity, wherever practicable and making reasonable adjustments where necessary, to everyone whether or not they have a disability. See Annex A.



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3.4 We shall not tolerate acts which breach this policy and all instances of such behaviour or alleged behaviour will be taken seriously and fully and promptly investigated.

3.5 Those making a complaint in good faith will be given a full, fair and sensitive hearing by the Rector and 2 members of the PCC and may do so without fear of subsequent victimisation.

3.6 Awareness of this Policy

All members of the PCCs will be made aware of this policy.

4. Responsibility for Implementation

4.1 Responsibility of PCCs

It is the responsibility of the PCCs to ensure the application of this policy. The success of the policy depends on the contribution made by everyone, in their own behaviour, in discouraging discrimination by others and in encouraging good practice.

4.2 Additional role of Ministers

All Ministers have a responsibility to encourage everyone to familiarise themselves with this policy and to attempt to change any discriminatory attitudes prevailing.

5. Review

5.1 In consultation with the PCC, the Rector will formally review this policy every year and, if necessary, make recommendations about changes.

Annex A: Code of Practice on Disability

A.1 We are committed to providing equality of opportunity, wherever practicable and making reasonable adjustments where necessary, to everyone whether or not they have a disability.

A.2 Consistent with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 we will use the following definition of disability: A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. For the purposes of this policy and code of practice, we also include those who have had a disability within the definition above even if they have since recovered.

A.3 We recognise that people with disabilities do not constitute a uniform group whose conditions are apparent. Indeed, the opposite is the case. People with disabilities may include, for example: those with mobility, visual or hearing impairment, epilepsy, diabetes, severe facial disfigurement, a mental illness, learning difficulties, arthritis, dyslexia and those who are HIV positive or who have AIDS. We recognise that each person is an individual and should be treated as such.

A.4 We will take reasonable and practicable steps to ensure that the church environment does not preclude people with disabilities from any activities.

A.5 We will take specific steps to raise awareness of disability matters throughout the church.

Policy agreed: January 2023

To be reviewed: January 2024