

Equality, Diversity, and Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Purpose

Neatishead Parish Council is committed to promoting equal treatment for all employees, job applicants, and service users, ensuring no individual is discriminated against due to disability, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, religion, political belief, or any other protected characteristic. This policy ensures compliance with equal opportunity legislation and best practices, fostering a fair and inclusive environment for all.

2. Policy Statement

The council aims to provide equality of opportunity in both employment and service provision. All individuals associated with the council, including employees and applicants, must follow and support this Equal Opportunities policy to ensure its success. No one will be unfairly treated due to any protected characteristic, and the council will take active steps to identify and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

The council is committed to:

- Ensuring its services reflect the diverse needs of parishioners.
- Making the best use of the talents and abilities of its employees.
- Supporting individuals in exercising their right to raise complaints about discrimination through the appropriate procedures.

3. Legal Framework

In line with the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly based on protected characteristics including:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, caste, ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

This policy aligns with all relevant legal obligations and ensures that the council creates an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, and victimisation.

4. Types of Unlawful Discrimination

- **Direct Discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably due to a protected characteristic.

- **Indirect Discrimination:** A policy or practice that disadvantages people with a protected characteristic.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic, creating a hostile or offensive environment.
- **Associative Discrimination:** Discrimination against someone due to their association with someone who has a protected characteristic.
- **Perceptive Discrimination:** Discriminating against someone based on the perception that they have a protected characteristic, whether they do or not.
- **Victimisation:** Treating someone unfairly because they raised or supported a complaint regarding discrimination.
- **Failure to Make Reasonable Adjustments:** Not providing necessary accommodations to support disabled individuals in overcoming disadvantages.

5. Equal Opportunities in Employment

The council will ensure that employment processes such as recruitment, promotion, and disciplinary action are free from discrimination. Recruitment and promotion decisions will be based solely on objective job requirements, and reasonable adjustments will be made to support candidates and employees with disabilities.

6. Commitment to the Disabled

Neatishead Parish Council is dedicated to providing full and fair consideration to individuals with disabilities for any vacancies. If an employee becomes disabled during their employment, the council will take all reasonable steps to ensure they remain employed, providing any necessary support or adjustments.

7. Working Practices

The council will review its working practices to ensure they are free from indirect discrimination. It will consider reasonable requests for contract variations to accommodate personal circumstances or disability and will ensure compliance with statutory obligations concerning workplace adjustments.

8. Dignity at Work

The council is committed to creating a work environment where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. Any form of harassment, bullying, or victimisation is a serious disciplinary offence and will be addressed according to council procedures. Acts of harassment may be treated as gross misconduct and result in dismissal.

9. Employee Responsibilities

All employees and councillors must:

- Cooperate with measures introduced to promote equality.
- Avoid persuading others to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Not victimise individuals for reporting or giving evidence on discrimination.

- Refrain from harassing, abusing, or intimidating others based on race, gender, disability, or any other protected characteristic.

12. Complaints Procedure

Employees or job applicants who believe they have been unfairly treated under this policy can raise a complaint through the following procedures:

- **Current Employees:** Employees should raise concerns regarding unfair discrimination or breaches of this policy with the council via its grievance procedure. Complaints will be investigated thoroughly, and appropriate action will be taken where necessary.
- **Prospective Employees:** Job applicants should submit any complaints in writing to the Parish Clerk within 15 working days of the alleged incident. The complaint will be investigated by a council member who was not involved in the original selection process, and the decision of the council will be final. Written notification of the outcome will be provided to the individual.

13. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective and up to date with changes in legislation and best practices. Any identified issues will be addressed promptly, and the council will make necessary adjustments to ensure continued compliance with its commitment to equality and diversity.

Adopted 17th October 2024

Next Review Date 17th October 2027