

Aston Clinton Parish Council

Equality & Diversity Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Aston Clinton Parish Council is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of its work and believe that everyone, regardless of their background or characteristics, should be treated with respect and fairness.
- 1.2 This policy outlines the Council's commitment to creating an inclusive and diverse environment and sets out our approach to achieving equality for all. The policy aims to:
 - promote equality of opportunity for all members, employees and volunteers, as well as for the wider community;
 - prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - encourage diversity and inclusion within the Parish Council; and
 - comply with legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all members, employees, volunteers, contractors, and members of the public who engage with Aston Clinton Parish Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society and replaces the existing anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplifies the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with.
- 2.2 The characteristics that are protected by the Act (Equality Act 2010 S4) are:
 - Disability
 - Age
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief (this includes lack of belief)
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- 2.3 The public sector Equality Duty Act (Equality Act 2010 s.149) means that public bodies have to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination;
 - advance equality of opportunity; and
 - foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

3. Types of Unlawful Discrimination

- 3.1 Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The

occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

- 3.2 Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- 3.3 Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.
- 3.4 Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- 3.5 Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic when they do not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.
- 3.6 Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so.

4. Equality & Diversity Principles

Aston Clinton Parish Council is committed to:

- 4.1 Eliminating Discrimination
The Council will not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation in any of our activities or decision-making processes.
- 4.2 Promoting Inclusion
The Council will actively promote an inclusive culture that values diversity and ensures that all individuals feel respected, valued and able to contribute to their fullest potential.
- 4.3 Equality of Opportunity
The Council will provide equal opportunities for all individuals, recognizing the benefits that diversity can bring to our community and organisation.
- 4.4 Reasonable Adjustments
The Council will make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers and provide equal access to services, facilities and information for people with disabilities.
- 4.5 Prevention of Harassment
The Council will not tolerate any form of harassment, bullying, or victimisation. All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly and confidentially.
- 4.6 Positive Action
The Council will take positive action measures to address underrepresentation or disadvantage faced by specific groups where it is appropriate and lawful to do so.

5. Equal Opportunities in Employment

- 5.1 The Council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

- 5.2 Persons and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.
- 5.3 The Council will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practises, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standards working practise.

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1 All members and employees of Aston Clinton Parish Council are responsible for adhering to this policy, treating others with respect, and promoting equality and diversity.
- 6.2 Every employee is required to assist the Council to meet its commitments to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

7. Implementation

- 7.1 Aston Clinton Parish Council will provide training and awareness programs on equality and diversity for members, employees and volunteers.
- 7.2 Council will monitor and review this policy annually to ensure its effectiveness.
- 7.3 Council will investigate and address any breaches of this policy promptly and fairly.

8. Reporting & Complaints

- 8.1 Any member, employee, or member of the public who believes they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or victimisation should report it in accordance with the Council's grievance and complaint procedures.