

## **CHEARSLEY PARISH COUNCIL: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

### **1. Background & Legal Framework**

Chearsley Parish Council is committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all of its actions, services, and employment practices. This policy is governed by the Equality Act 2010 (as amended) and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under Section 149 of the Act.

The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation based on nine protected characteristics:

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

### **2. Council's Commitment & Statutory Duty**

As a public authority, Chearsley Parish Council will, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Council will ensure that its services, facilities, communication channels, and public meetings meet the varied needs of local people and that everyone has equal, barrier-free access.

### **3. Employment and Council Membership**

Chearsley Parish Council is an equal opportunities employer. No job applicant, employee, volunteer, or Councillor will receive less favourable treatment or face unlawful discrimination based on any protected characteristic.

In accordance with the Worker Protection Act, the Council maintains a zero-tolerance approach to workplace harassment and implements proactive measures to prevent sexual harassment.

While the ultimate responsibility for equal opportunities rests with the Council as a corporate body, all employees and Councillors have a personal responsibility to:

- Co-operate with measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination.
- Ensure they do not discriminate against, harass, or victimise colleagues, residents, or service users.
- Promptly draw the Parish Council's attention to any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.

Breaches of this policy by employees will be treated as a disciplinary matter. Breaches by Councillors will be treated as a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct and referred to the Monitoring Officer at Buckinghamshire Council.

### **4. Monitoring and Review**

The Parish Council will monitor its service delivery and employment practices to ensure they operate fairly, transparently, and without discrimination. This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if required by legislative changes.

Adopted on: May 2026

Next Review Date: May 2028