HOPE WITH ASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Equality and Diversity Policy

Reviewed and Adopted:

Date: 9th November 2026

Parish Council Minute: 116/26.2

Hope with Aston Parish Council is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among its employees and councillors and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for employees and councillors to be truly representative of the community, and for employees and councillors to feel respected and able to give their best.

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all employees and councillors.
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes, but is not limited to, pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, selection for employment, selection of councillors, training or other developmental opportunities.

The Parish Council commits to:

- encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and Parish Council membership.
- create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, where individual differences and the contributions of staff and councillors are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training staff and councillors about their rights and responsibilities under the equality and diversity policy.

Responsibilities include:

- staff and councillors conducting themselves to help the Parish Council provide equal opportunities in employment and within the Parish Council, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- taking complaints seriously of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by employees, councillors, suppliers, members of the public and any others in the course of Parish Council activities.
- making opportunities for training, development and progress available to staff and councillors, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Parish Council.
- reviewing employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and updating Parish Council policies accordingly.
- monitoring the demographic of staff and councillors regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, to meet the aims and commitments set out in the equality and diversity policy.
- basing any decisions concerning staff and councillors on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act 2010).

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

All employees and councillors understand they can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, against employees, councillors, members of the public and suppliers

Any grievance should be raised in accordance with the Parish Council's complaints, grievance and / or disciplinary policies. This does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

The equality and diversity policy is fully supported by all staff and councillors of Hope with Aston Parish Council.