GISLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Gislingham Parish Council is committed to encouraging Equality, Diversity and Inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination for Council Members, employees, contractors, volunteers and parishioners irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Marital or Civil partnership status
- Pregnancy, maternity and paternity leave
- Social status
- Having or not having dependents
- Religious belief
- Political opinion
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- Disability

The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all employees, whether temporary, part-time or full-time.
- 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 in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

Gislingham Parish Council:

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

- responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.
- such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- further, 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.
- Make opportunities for training, development, and progress available to all staff and Council Members 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 decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- monitoring to include assessing how the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

The Chair and all Councillors have the responsibility for the effective implementation of this Policy by creating an environment of equality, which is the objective.

The Parish Council will endeavor, through appropriate training, to ensure that it will not consciously, or unconsciously discriminate in the selection or recruitment of applicants for the Parish Council, granting of contracts or delivery of service to residents.

Any complaints will be dealt with in accordance with Gislingham Parish Council's Complaints Procedure.

Signed: *C Fell* **Chair**

Approved by Gislingham Parish Council on 21st September 2026

Date of next review September 2028