

TOCKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Purpose

Tockenham Parish Council is committed to promoting **equality of opportunity**, **eliminating discrimination**, and **valuing diversity** in all aspects of its work. This policy sets out the Council's approach to ensuring that councillors, employees, volunteers, contractors and members of the public are treated fairly, with dignity and respect. The Council aims to create an inclusive environment where everyone can participate fully in local democracy and access services without disadvantage.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by the **Equality Act 2010**, which protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of the following protected characteristics:

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

The Council also recognises its Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different groups

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Parish Councillors
- Employees of the Council
- Volunteers acting on behalf of the Council
- Contractors and service providers
- Members of the public engaging with the Council

It covers all areas of Council activity, including governance, employment, service delivery, procurement, community engagement and decision-making.

4. Policy Statement

Tockenham Parish Council will:

- Treat all individuals with **fairness, dignity and respect**
- Ensure that no person is disadvantaged or discriminated against
- Promote an inclusive culture that values diversity

- Make reasonable adjustments to support disabled people
- Ensure that its services and facilities are accessible to all
- Encourage participation from under-represented groups
- Challenge and address discriminatory behaviour or practices

5. Responsibilities

a. Councillors

- Uphold the principles of this policy in all Council business
- Comply with the Code of Conduct, including respect and non-discrimination
- Consider equality impacts when making decisions

b. Employees and Volunteers

- Treat colleagues and the public respectfully
- Report concerns about discrimination or harassment
- Support inclusive service delivery

c. Contractors and Service Providers

- Are expected to comply with the principles of this policy
- Must not unlawfully discriminate in the provision of goods or services

6. Employment Practices

The Council is committed to fair and transparent employment practices, including:

- Recruitment based on merit, ability and suitability
- Inclusive advertising and selection processes
- Reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and employees
- Zero tolerance for bullying, harassment or victimisation
- Equal access to training and development opportunities

7. Service Delivery and Community Engagement

The Council will:

- Ensure that meetings, services and information are accessible
- Consider equality impacts when planning or reviewing services
- Use clear, inclusive communication methods
- Encourage community involvement from all residents, including those who may face barriers to participation

8. Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation

The Council will not tolerate:

- Harassment
- Bullying
- Victimisation
- Any behaviour that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile or degrading environment

Complaints will be taken seriously and addressed through appropriate procedures.

9. Decision-Making and Equality Considerations

When making decisions, the Council will:

- Consider how proposals may affect people with different characteristics
- Seek to remove or minimise disadvantage
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Record equality considerations where appropriate (e.g., in minutes or reports)

10. Monitoring and Review

The Council will:

- Review this policy every **three years**, or sooner if legislation changes
- Monitor its practices to ensure compliance
- Review complaints or incidents to identify areas for improvement

11. Complaints

Any person who believes they have been discriminated against or treated unfairly may raise the matter through:

- The Council's complaints procedure (for members of the public)
- The grievance procedure (for employees)
- The Monitoring Officer (for complaints relating to councillor conduct)

All complaints will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

12. Adoption

This policy was adopted by **Tockenham Parish Council** on:

Signed: Chair of the Council

Signed: Clerk to the Council