LILBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY MAY 2026

Review Due: May 2027

1. Purpose

Lilbourne Parish Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of its work. The Council aims to ensure that its workforce, volunteers and those who use its services are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and without unlawful discrimination.

This policy is based on the **Equality Act 2010**, the **ACAS Code of Practice**, and current ACAS guidance on equality, diversity and inclusion.

2. Our Commitment

The Council will:

• **Promote equality, diversity and inclusion** in employment and service delivery. • **Prevent unlawful discrimination**, harassment and victimisation. • **Provide a safe, respectful and inclusive working environment** for all employees, councillors, volunteers and members of the public. • **Ensure decisions are based on merit**, ability and relevant criteria. • **Make reasonable adjustments** for disabled employees and service users. • **Train councillors and employees** on their responsibilities under this policy. • **Take all complaints seriously** and address them promptly through the Council's grievance or disciplinary procedures. • **Monitor and review** this policy annually and update it to reflect changes in legislation or best practice.

3. Protected Characteristics

The Council will not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of the following protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

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

The Council also recognises **associative discrimination** and **perceptive discrimination**.

4. Expected Standards of Behaviour

All employees, councillors and volunteers must:

• Treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect. • Not engage in bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination. • Report any concerns or incidents promptly. • Cooperate with investigations and support an inclusive culture.

The Council may take disciplinary action where behaviour breaches this policy. Serious cases may constitute **gross misconduct**.

5. Harassment and Bullying

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour that undermines or humiliates.

Harassment may also be a criminal offence under the **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**.

The Council will take all complaints seriously and act promptly.

6. Recruitment, Training and Development

The Council will:

• Ensure recruitment and selection processes are fair, transparent and inclusive. • Advertise roles openly unless there is a lawful exemption. • Provide training and development opportunities fairly and consistently. • Support employees to reach their full potential.

7. Reasonable Adjustments

The Council will make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees and service users, including adjustments to:

• Working arrangements • Duties • Equipment • Access to buildings or meetings • Communication formats

Requests for adjustments will be considered promptly and sensitively.

8. Monitoring and Data Protection

The Council may monitor workforce diversity to support equality objectives. Any monitoring will comply with:

• UK GDPR • Data Protection Act 2018 • Data minimisation principles

Data will be used only for lawful purposes and stored securely.

9. Complaints and Concerns

Employees who believe they have experienced discrimination, harassment or victimisation should raise the matter through the Council's **Grievance Procedure**.

Members of the public may raise concerns through the Council's **Complaints Procedure**.

Using these procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within statutory time limits.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or ACAS guidance changes.