**Cawood Parish Council Equal Opportunity Policy**

1. **POLICY OBJECTIVES**
	1. Cawood Parish Council is committed to providing the highest quality of provision and service and recognises that the implementation of an effective Equal Opportunities Policy is an integral part of such an approach.
	2. Cawood Parish Council is a relatively small Parish Council, which currently has two employees and its service provision is limited.
	3. The Parish Council, as a corporate body, has responsibilities as an employer, a service provider and a public authority. We aim to ensure that no Parish Councillor, employee, volunteer, organisation, job applicant or individual to whom we provide services, will be discriminated against by the Council on any unfair grounds whatsoever.
	4. The Parish Council is committed to promoting equal access to services, facilities and equality for all employees and job applicants irrespective of the following protected characteristics, age, disability, gender reassignment, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
	5. The Parish Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.
	6. The Parish Council opposes all forms of unlawful discrimination with regard to pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents and requests for flexible working.
	7. All employees of the Parish Council will be treated fairly, equally and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.
	8. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop to their full potential to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
	9. This policy applies to all employees, whether full-time, part-time, fixed term or temporary.
2. **STATEMENT ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**
	1. Cawood Parish Council recognises its obligations under the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination and Equality Act and the spirit and intent of the related Codes of Practice:
		1. for the elimination of discrimination on grounds of age, gender, gender identity, sex or marital status and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment;
		2. for the elimination of discrimination on grounds of race, religion / belief and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment;
		3. for the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of disability, pregnancy and maternity and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment.
3. **COMMITMENT TO POLICY**
	1. The Parish Council supports the principles and practices of equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion and recognises that it is the duty of all Councillors and employees to accept personal responsibility for fostering a fully integrated community at work by adhering to the principles of equal opportunity and maintaining racial harmony.
	2. The Parish Council will actively promote equal opportunities throughout the organisation through the application of policies which will ensure that individuals receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities.
	3. As the Responsible Officer, the Clerk will advise on the upholding and compliance of the principles.
	4. The Parish Council will ensure that individuals are recruited and selected, promoted and trained on objective criteria having regard to the relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities. In particular, no applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute indirect unfair discrimination.
	5. The Parish Council will take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors and members of the public in the course of the Parish Council’s activities.
	6. The Parish Council will review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and update them to take account of changes in the law.
4. **TRAINING AND ADVERTISING**
	1. Cawood Parish Council will train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability only.
	2. When vacancies are advertised the Parish Council will continue to ensure that such advertising, both in placement and content, is compatible with the terms of this Policy. In practical terms this means that the wording of advertisements will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that any hidden discrimination is avoided or that sexually, racially or disability loaded wording is avoided.
	3. As a minimum, the advertisements will be placed on the parish notice board and on the Cawood Parish Council website so that as wide a readership as possible has access to the vacancies.
5. **COMMUNICATION**
	1. The principles in this Policy will be brought to the attention of all Councillors and staff.
	2. All are encouraged to bring to the attention of the Parish Clerk / Chair of the Parish Council any act of discrimination they observe. The Parish Council will provide clear information about its services and facilities and where requested make them available in a variety of formats. The website is compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard.
6. **SEXUAL AND RACIAL HARASSMENT**
	1. Cawood Parish Council recognises the problems that sexual or racial harassment may cause at work and is committed to ensure that such unacceptable behaviour does not take place. Sexual harassment includes (but is not limited to) unwanted physical contact, suggestive remarks or behaviour, compromising invitations, demands for sexual favours and similar unwanted behaviour. Racial harassment is similarly unwanted treatment but is concerned with derogatory treatment and language on racial grounds. All forms of harassment are abhorrent and will not be tolerated by the Parish Council.
	2. Sexual and racial harassment are both forms of discrimination and as a consequence are unlawful behaviour. It is also improper and inappropriate behaviour which lowers morale and interferes with the effectiveness of people at work. All such cases will be dealt with under the appropriate Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure. Sexual and racial harassment are regarded as unlawful discrimination and additionally may also be subject to criminal proceedings
	3. It is the policy of the Parish Council to make every effort to provide an environment free from sexual or racial harassment, intimidation and bullying.
	4. All Councillors and employees are expected to comply with the policy and to ensure that such conduct does not occur. Appropriate disciplinary action including summary dismissal for serious offences will be taken against any employee who violates this policy.
7. **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION**
	1. The Parish Council recognises that the detriment a disabled person endures as a consequence of their disability can, in many instances, be removed by the adoption of reasonable adjustments. The Council is committed to ensure that such adjustments will be effected where reasonably practicable.
	2. Any Councillors and employees who are newly disabled are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the Clerk / Chair of the Parish Council to enable a review to be made. This review will include an assessment of physical features and arrangements to ensure that these do not place the disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Where they do, then adjustments will be effected where reasonably practicable to do so.
8. **LIABILITY**
	1. All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and members of the public.
9. **MONITORING**
	1. The effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis by the Staffing Committee.
10. **THE LAW**

The policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, which includes:

• Equal Pay Act 2020

• Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

• The Protection from Harassment Act 1997

• Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999

• Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and 2003

• Disability Discrimination Act 2005

• Equality Act 2010

**Adopted: August 2019**

**Reviewed: August 2020**

**Reviewed by Staffing Committee: January 2022**

**Reviewed: January 2023, January 2024**

**Next Review Date: January 2025**