**Tintwistle Parish Council**

**Equality and Diversity Policy**

Tintwistle Parish Council is committed to encouraging equality and diversity, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The Council values diversity, recognises any differences and treats everybody with respect. It believes that everybody has a right to equality of opportunity, regardless of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, background or personal circumstances.

The Council expects its staff, councillors, volunteers, contractors and community stakeholders to play an active part in promoting equality and challenging discriminatory behaviour.

The Council expects anybody who feels unfairly treated, is upset by thoughtless comments or jokes, experiences any form of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or abuse to tell the Council. The Council takes any form of discrimination and harassment very seriously. If anybody witnesses any discriminative behaviour then the Council should be informed.

The aim is for each individual to feel respected and able to give their best.

The Council - in providing its services, facilities and activities - is committed to no unlawful discrimination against local residents, the public, councillors, volunteers, contractors, community stakeholders and all involved with the Council’s business.

The Council commits to:

• Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, 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 (gender) 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, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, training or other developmental opportunities.

• 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 are recognised and valued.

(This commitment includes training all employees and councillors about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the Council provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. Staff should understand that they, as well as the Council as the employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, local residents/the public, volunteers, councillors, community stakeholders and suppliers.)

• Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, local residents, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the Council’s work activities. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the Council’s grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

• Make opportunities for training and development available to all staff, 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 Council, for the benefit of local residents.

• Reviewing employment practices, policies and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and updating them and this policy to take account of changes in the law.

• Monitoring how this equality and diversity policy, and any action plans, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

**Compliance**

The Council will aim to ensure that due regard is given to the aims of this policy by considering all of its functions in order to determine compliance:

➢ Councillors – All Councillors are bound to adhere to equal opportunities principles by the Code of Conduct. The Council’s staff will make every effort to accommodate councillors with particular needs.

➢ Employees – All employees will be equally encouraged to apply for suitable training appropriate to their role. Whenever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups, for example, considering job sharing and part-time working.

➢ Vacancies – Vacancies, where appropriate, will be advertised widely across all sections of the community to ensure knowledge of the positions reaches underrepresented groups. The selection criteria will be kept under constant review, to ensure they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.

➢ Premises – The Council premises are compliant with (or will be practicably adapted to comply) the Equality Act 2010 whenever possible. Where buildings are not in compliance, the Council will do all that is reasonably possible to ensure that service users are able to access facilities. All staff will respect and be sympathetic to the needs of minority groups and ensure that they receive the same level of service as other members of the community.

The Council has a formal Complaints Procedure Policy, including for any anonymous complaints.

The Council is committed to challenging inequality, discrimination and disadvantage. It endeavours to ensure equality of opportunity to all sectors of the community and its workforce is an integral part of this commitment.

This policy was adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting on 23 August 2022.