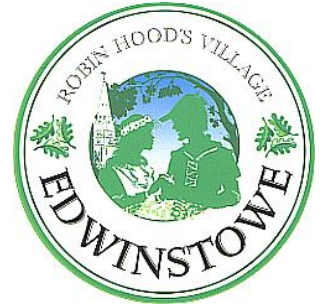


# Edwinstowe Parish Council



*Working to make a difference*

**Parish Clerk - Alice Dunn**

## EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY.

### CONTEXT

Edwinstowe Parish Council (EPC) has an unequivocal commitment to equality. It is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010. It is conscious of the existence in the wider community of discrimination against people owing to their particular characteristics and beliefs. Moreover, EPC is aware that, sometimes, discrimination can occur unintentionally.

Everyone is different and has something unique to offer (Diversity); EPC aims to make the most of everyone's talents.

Councillors, EPC employees, service providers and visitors on the Council's premises are required to actively adhere to the Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy.

### AIMS

- (i) To treat all people with dignity and respect in an environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. To ensure that no form of intimidation is tolerated.
- (ii) To ensure that diversity is recognised and respected. By doing so, EPC creates an environment where everyone feels valued for their talents, skills and competencies. Therefore, human resources are fully utilised.
- (iii) To ensure that related complaints/observations are taken seriously and dealt with quickly and fairly.

### THE LAW

The 2010 Equality Act legally protects people from discrimination both in the workplace and in wider society. This means it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- (i) age
- (ii) being or becoming a transsexual
- (iii) being married or in a civil partnership
- (iv) being pregnant or having a child
- (v) disability
- (vi) race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- (vii) religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- (viii) sex
- (ix) sexual orientation.

These are known as the PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS.

Additionally, people are protected from discrimination if they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic eg family member, friend.

### FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination may occur in the following forms:

- (i) direct discrimination: this means treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others.
- (ii) indirect discrimination: putting rules/regulations in place which places someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair advantage.

- (iii) harassment: unwanted behaviour linked to the protected characteristics which violates a person's dignity and/or creates an offensive environment for them
- (iv) victimisation: treating someone unfairly because they have complained about discrimination and/or harassment. The law aims to protect a person from retaliation for bringing or supporting a complaint of discrimination and/or harassment.

### **'WHISTLEBLOWING'**

This is where someone reports a perceived wrongdoing in the public interest. A 'whistleblower' is protected by law and must not be treated unfairly.

A 'whistleblower' can raise a concern at any time about an incident which happened in the past, is happening now or it is believed might happen in the near future. Observations which count as 'whistleblowing' are (i) a criminal offence (ii) someone's health and safety being at risk (iii) a risk of, or actual damage to the environment (iii) a miscarriage of justice (iv) a breach of the law (vi) the covering up of wrongdoing.

Personal grievances are not included unless such are judged to be in the public interest.

### **ACTION**

EPC will have regard to the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy in all business it undertakes. Other personnel policies will be reviewed against the values stated in this policy.

An important part of implementing a policy is monitoring its effectiveness. To this end, the Risk Assessment Panel (RAP) will exercise due diligence on behalf of EPC.

Anyone who believes that they have been subjected to discrimination or harassment has a right to seek redress. Where the matter pertains to EPC, in the first instance, it should be reported to the Chair of EPC (the Chair) or, if this is inappropriate, to the RAP. It will be dealt with confidentially and promptly.

Any member of staff or **member** of EPC considered to be in breach of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Any visitor or service provider considered to be in breach of this policy will instigate urgent, appropriate/serious action, **as determined by the Chair.**

If necessary, the Chair/RAP will instruct the chair of the HR group to arrange an investigation which, normally, should be completed within 10 working days. Based solely on the outcome of the investigation, **the Chair/RAP will determine if a disciplinary hearing is necessary or if any other action/s should be instigated.**

Any such hearing then will be arranged by the chair of the HR group and, normally, should take place within 15 working days of the submission of the investigation report. The disciplinary hearing panel will comprise 3 members; wherever possible, members of the panel will comprise both genders.

### **REVIEW**

The RAP will review this policy every two years (or earlier if required).

Approved at Full Council Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026