ALDWINCLE PARISH COUNCIL
Equality Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 took effect on 1 October 2010 and replaces the previous anti-discrimination legislation. It simplifies the law removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it. It also strengthens the law in order to help tackle discrimination and inequality. The Public Sector Equality Duty is a key measure in the Act which came into force on 5 April 2011. All public bodies and organisations carrying out public functions have a duty to consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities for everyone who comes into contact with Aldwincle Parish Council, irrespective of their characteristics.

LEGAL POSITION

To discriminate against someone means to treat them less favourably, to harass or victimise them or to subject them to a provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a disadvantage. It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of the following 'protected characteristics' (as defined in the Act):

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT

Aldwincle Parish Council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination whether it be direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. The Council is committed to the promotion and delivery of equal opportunities in the work place and in the delivery of services. In all our activities we will have due regard to the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Parish Council will:

- Treat all individuals with dignity and respect.
- Ensure fair and equal access to council services and facilities.
- Oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.
- Foster a culture of inclusion and respect within the council and the community.
- Promote equality of opportunity in recruitment, employment, and training.
- Take proactive steps to identify and address discrimination or bias.

RESPONSIBILITIES

• Parish Councillors and Staff: Are expected to adhere to this policy, challenge discrimination, and promote equality in their interactions.
• The Clerk: Will endeavour to ensure this policy is implemented effectively and review it bi-annually or sooner if required.
• Residents and Partners: Will be expected to uphold the principles of equality and respect when engaging with the council.

COUNCIL DECISION-MAKING

The Parish Council will endeavour to ensure that its decisions consider the impact on different groups in the community and therefore do not disproportionately disadvantage any protected characteristic.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- The council will engage with the community in the course of its work to understand their diverse needs and ensure their voices are heard.
- Public meetings and consultations will be accessible to all.

COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING DISCRIMINATION

• Any complaints of discrimination, harassment, or unfair treatment will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.
• Residents, staff, or councillors can report concerns to the Clerk. clerk@Aldwincleparishcouncil.gov.uk

REVIEW AND MONITORING

• This policy will be reviewed annually or as required to ensure compliance with legal changes and best practices.
- The application of this equality policy will be monitored and reported to the council.

ADOPTION OF THE POLICY

This policy was created by Aldwincle Parish Council in October 2026, circulated to all councillors and will be formally adopted at the parish council meeting on 23rd November, 2026. It will be reviewed annually at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

Policy to be formally adopted 23rd November, 2026

Aldwincle Parish Council acknowledges the following sources of information from which this policy has been drawn:

1. Society of Local Council Clerks - Model Equal Opportunities Policy (Oct 2010).
2. National Association of Local Councils – Legal Topic Note 78: Equality Act 2010 (Jan 2013).
3. Government Equalities Office - Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty What do I need to know? A Quick Start Guide for Public Sector Organisations (June 2011).
4. Denford Equality Policy
5. Wollaston Parish Council

APPENDIX

The Nine Protected Characteristics

Age: Protection applies to people of any age or a specific age group.
Disability: Protection covers physical or mental impairments that have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on normal daily activities.
Gender reassignment: Protection applies to anyone who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process to reassign their sex.
Marriage and civil partnership: Protection covers individuals who are legally married or in a civil partnership (primarily within the workplace).
Pregnancy and maternity: Protection covers women during pregnancy, maternity leave periods, and breastfeeding.
Race: Protection includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.
Religion or belief: Protection covers any religious or philosophical belief, or a lack of religion or belief.
Sex: Protection applies to being a man or a woman.
Sexual orientation: Protection covers sexual attraction towards the same sex, the opposite sex, or either sex.