
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

ADOPTED: 15th December 2024

Version Control

Version	Description of Change	Officer	Reviewing Committee	Frequency of Review	Version Approval Date	Next Review Date
1.	Creation	Parish Clerk	Full Council	Annual	November 2022	

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Manea Parish Council is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce and job applicants and to avoid unlawful discrimination. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.
- 1.2 All councillors and employees, working at all levels and grades, have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with employees and to relations between employees and councillors at all levels. This includes, but is not limited to, job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of employment, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures and termination of employment.

- 1.4 The Parish Council will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities. For specific details please speak to the Parish Clerk.
- 1.5 Our Statement under Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.6 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

2. Discrimination

- 2.1 It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly against or harass other people, including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors on the basis of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins); religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; (Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics).
- 2.2 The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity apply in the workplace, outside the workplace and on work related trips or events including social events, to the way in which staff and Councillors treat visitors, volunteers, contractors and former staff members.
- 2.3 The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:
- **Direct discrimination** - when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic.
 - **Indirect discrimination** - occurs where an individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision criterion or practice which e.g. one sex or race or nationality or age group finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision, criterion or practice is 'neutral'.
 - **Associative discrimination or discrimination by association** - direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.
 - **Discrimination by perception** - direct discrimination against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular Protected Characteristic even if they do not actually possess it.
 - **Harassment** - unwanted conduct related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. You may complain of such offensive behaviour even if it is not directed towards you personally.
 - **Victimisation** - when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance about unlawful discrimination or are suspected of doing so.
 - **Disability discrimination** - this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified unfavourable treatment because of something arising in consequence of

a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability

3. Parish Council Commitments

3.1 Recruitment.

- 3.1.1 The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in terms of relevant abilities and qualifications. The Parish Council is committed to applying their equal opportunities policy statement at all stages of recruitment and selection.
- 3.1.2 Recruitment publicity will aim to positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified people when advertising job vacancies, in order to attract applications from all sections of the community.
- 3.1.3 Where vacancies may be filled by promotion or transfer, they will be published to all eligible employees in such a way that they do not restrict applications from employees with a particular Protected Characteristics. However, where having regard to the nature and context of the work, having a particular Protected Characteristics is an occupational requirement and that occupational requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, the Parish Council will apply that requirement to the job role and this may therefore be specified in the advertisement.
- 3.1.4 The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. The Parish Council will ensure that this equal opportunities policy is available to all staff, and in particular is given to all staff with responsibility for recruitment, selection and promotion.
- 3.1.5 The selection of new staff will be based on job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or to train for, the job in question. Person specification and job descriptions will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment, promotion or transfer will be assessed objectively against the requirements of the job.
- 3.1.6 With disabled job applicants, the Parish Council will have regard to their duty to make reasonable adjustments to work provisions, criteria and practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide auxiliary aids or services in order to ensure that the disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.
- 3.1.7 All applications will be processed consistently. The staff responsible for short listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application. All questions that are put to the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job.

3.2 Training, Transfer and Promotion

- 3.2.1 The Parish Council will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision and instruction for all line managers in order to familiarise them with the Parish Council's policy on equal opportunities, and in order to help them identify discriminatory acts or practices and to ensure that they promote equal opportunity within the departments for which they are responsible. The training will also enable line managers to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.
- 3.2.2 Training will be provided to all employees to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the equal opportunities and anti-harassment policies and what they can do to create a work environment that is free of bullying and harassment.
- 3.2.3 All persons responsible for selecting new employees, employees for training or employees for transfer or promotion to other jobs will be instructed not to discriminate because of one or more of the Protected Characteristics. Where a promotional system is in operation, the assessment criteria will be examined to ensure that they are not discriminatory. The promotional system will be checked from time to time in order to assess how it is working in practice.
- 3.2.4 When a group of workers who predominantly have a particular Protected Characteristic appear to be excluded from access to promotion, transfer and training and to other benefits, Town Council systems and procedures will be reviewed to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination.

3.3 Terms of Employment, Benefits, Facilities and Services

- 3.3.1 All terms of employment, benefits, facilities and service will be reviewed from time to time, in order to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of one or more of the Protected Characteristics.

3.4 Equal Pay and Equality of Terms

- 3.4.1 The Parish Council is committed to equal pay in employment, believing that male and female employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, the Parish Council will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

3.5 Disabilities

- 3.5.1 If an employee is disabled or becomes disabled, the Parish Council will encourage them to inform the Parish Clerk about their condition so that they can be supported as appropriate.
- 3.5.2 If employees experience difficulties at work because of their disability, they may wish to speak to the Parish Clerk to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The Parish Clerk may wish to consult with employee and their medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. The Parish Council will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate employee's needs within reason. If it is considered a particular adjustment would

not be reasonable, the reasons why will be explained to the employee with an aim to try to find an alternative solution where possible.

3.5.3 The physical features of our premises will be monitored to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, reasonable steps to improve access will be taken.

4. Menopause

4.1 The Parish Council is committed to supporting staff affected by the menopause, recognising that many members of staff will experience the menopause and that, for some, menopause will have an adverse impact on their working lives.

4.2 All women will experience menopause at some point during their life. Menopause can also impact trans and non-binary people who may not identify as female. Most of those who experience menopause will do so between the ages of 45 and 55. However, some start experiencing symptoms much earlier. Often, symptoms last between four to eight years, but they can continue for longer.

4.3 The majority of those going through menopause will experience some symptoms, although everyone is different and symptoms can fluctuate. Symptoms can include, but are not limited to, sleeplessness, hot flushes, memory loss or poor concentration, headaches, muscle and joint pains, depression and anxiety.

4.4 Menopause is preceded by perimenopause, during which the body prepares itself for menopause. Perimenopause can also last several years and can involve similar symptoms to menopause itself. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to menopause includes perimenopause.

4.5 Open Conversations

4.5.1 Menopause is not just an issue for women. All staff should be aware of menopause so that they can support those experiencing it or otherwise affected by it.

4.5.2 The Parish Council encourages an environment in which colleagues can have open conversations about menopause. It is expected all employees to be supportive of colleagues who may be affected by menopause in the workplace.

4.5.3 Anyone affected by menopause should feel confident to talk to their line manager about their symptoms and the support they may need to reduce the difficulties menopause can cause them at work.

4.5.4 Line managers and the Council should be ready to have open conversations with staff about menopause and what support is available. These conversations should be treated sensitively and any information provided should be handled confidentially and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

4.6 Risk Assessments.

4.6.1 The Parish Council is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all employees and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal symptoms. This may include identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and well-being of those experiencing menopause.

4.7 Support and Adjustments.

- 4.7.1 While many who experience menopause are able to carry on their working lives as normal, the Parish Council recognises that others may benefit from adjustments to their working conditions to mitigate the impact of menopause symptoms on their work. If employees believe that they would benefit from adjustments or other support, they are asked to speak to their line manager in the first instance. If they feel unable to do so, they are asked to contact the Parish Clerk.
- 4.7.2 Physical adjustments could include temperature control, provision of electric fans or access to rest facilities. Depending on individual and business needs, adjustments such as flexible working, consideration of more frequent rest breaks or changes to work allocation. These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.
- 4.7.3 Employees may be referred to a doctor nominated by the Parish Council or asked to seek medical advice from their GP to better understand any adjustments and other support that may help alleviate symptoms affecting them at work.

5. Bullying and Harassment

- 5.1 The Parish Council is committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all employees are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. This includes harassment or bullying which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions.
- 5.2 Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.
- 5.3 Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to a Protected Characteristic. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.
- 5.4 Harassment may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:
- a) unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing.
 - b) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
 - c) offensive emails, text messages or social media content.
 - d) mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.
- 5.5 A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.
- 5.6 Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or

threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

5.7 Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), by way of example:

- physical or psychological threats.
- overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance.

5.8 Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

5.9 [If You Are Being Harassed or Bullied](#)

5.9.1 If employees are being harassed or bullied, they need to consider whether they feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. It should be explained clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes them uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, they should speak to their line manager who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally. If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, the matter should be raised formally under the Town Council's Grievance Procedure.

5.9.2 The Parish Council will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint, where possible. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. The Parish Council will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship between the employee and the person accused during the investigation.

5.9.3 Once the investigation is complete, the Parish Council will inform the employee of their decision. If it is considered the employee has been harassed or bullied by another employee, the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. If the harasser or bully is a third party such as a customer or other visitor, consideration will be given about what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem. Whether or not the complaint is upheld, the Parish Council will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between the employee and the person concerned.

5.9.4 Employees who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under the Parish Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

5.9.5 Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on the employee's personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with the Parish Council's Data Protection Policy.

6. Monitoring Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work

6.1 We will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions and personnel and pay practices and procedures in order to assess whether equal opportunity and dignity at work are being achieved. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its working practices. If changes are required, we will implement them. We will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

6.2 Breaches of this Policy

6.2.1 The Parish Council take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with the Parish Council's Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

6.2.2 If anyone believes that they have suffered discrimination the matter can be raised through the Parish Council's Grievance Procedure or Bullying and Harassment Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

6.2.3 No one should be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under the Parish Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

Appendix A

Manea Parish Council: Public Sector Equality Duty

This Statement describes how Manea Parish Council intends to fulfil its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, with three aims under the general duty for local government:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out our duties.

To meet these aims, the Parish Council is fully committed to:

- Treating all of our employees and job applicants equally in all aspects of employment including recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, other terms of employment, discipline, selection for redundancy and dismissal.
- Creating a working environment that is free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- Training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under this equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion policy.
- Employing, training and promoting employees on the basis of their experience, abilities and qualifications, without regard to race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, age, marriage and civil partnership or disability. In this policy these are known as the '*Protected Characteristics*'.
- Making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all employees, 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 Town Council.

We will not condone any form of bullying, harassment, or unlawful discrimination whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with us, such as clients, customers, contractors and suppliers.

Employees have a duty to co-operate with us to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination, harassment or bullying. Action will be taken under our Disciplinary Procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this policy will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.

All employees should understand they, as well as the Parish Council, 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 the public.

Employees are asked to draw to the attention of their line manager any suspected discriminatory acts or practices or suspected cases of harassment. Employees must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or harassment or who has provided information about such discrimination or harassment. Such behaviour will be

treated as potential gross misconduct. Employees should support colleagues who suffer such treatment.

Alan Melton
Clerk to the Council
December 2025