MONK SHERBORNE PARISH COUNCIL
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

GENERAL STATEMENT

1. Monk Sherborne Parish Council is committed to providing and promoting equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity in the community and within the Council.
2. To treat people with respect.
3. To encourage all staff, councillors, volunteers and contractors to give their best and treat each other and members of the public with respect.

AIMS OF THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

- Providing equality, fairness and respect for all in delivering our services and in our governance and employment practices
- Not unlawfully discriminating in delivering our services and in our governance and employment practices, in relation to 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
- Opposing and avoiding all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in delivery of our services to the public, in our governance, employment conditions, recruitment practices and in training or other developmental opportunities

THE COUNCIL COMMITS TO:

- Encourage equality and diversity in the delivery of our service and within our governance and employment practices as this is good and proper practice and helps us to make the most of skills and deliver our services well
- Create a service-delivery and working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and contributions are recognised and valued. This commitment includes training staff and councillors about their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination
- 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 the public
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities

- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff and councillors, 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 organisation
- Decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and to update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law

Acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, in relevant circumstances and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice in the case of staff. The Council reserves the right to take steps to protect staff in cases of inappropriate behaviour to them, including by councillors and members of the public. In the case of councillor misconduct in this respect, complaints may be made to the Monitoring Officer, under the Council's Code of Conduct.

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights/Code of Conduct and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal.