PINEWOOD

PARISH COUNCIL

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY 2026

Policy Statement

Pinewood Parish Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and fairness in all aspects of its activities and services. The Council believes that everyone should be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect, regardless of their background or personal circumstances.
The Parish Council and Community Hall aim to provide an environment that is welcoming, inclusive and free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.
The Council will seek to ensure that all individuals have equal access to Council services, facilities, employment opportunities, volunteering roles and community activities.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Encourage diversity and inclusion within the community.
- Prevent unlawful discrimination.
- Foster good relations between different groups.
- Ensure fair access to Council services and Community Hall facilities.
- Support a culture of dignity, respect and understanding.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Parish Councillors.
- Employees.
- Volunteers.
- Contractors and suppliers.
- Community Hall users and hirers.
- Residents and visitors accessing Parish Council services and facilities.
-

The policy applies to all Parish Council activities, meetings, events, services and communications.

Legal Framework

The Parish Council will comply with relevant equality legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Any subsequent legislation relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Council recognises the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Protected Characteristics

The Parish Council will not tolerate discrimination based on:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage and civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

Our Commitments

The Parish Council will:

Equality

- Treat everyone fairly and with respect.
- Ensure decisions are objective and transparent.
- Consider equality implications when developing policies and services.
- Promote equal access to opportunities and facilities.

Diversity

- Recognise and value differences between individuals and communities.
- Encourage participation from all sections of the community.
- Respect different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

Inclusion

- Create an environment where everyone feels welcome.
- Identify and remove barriers to participation where reasonably practicable.
- Encourage community involvement in Council and Community Hall activities.

Community Hall Access

The Parish Council is committed to ensuring that the Community Hall is accessible and welcoming to all users.

Where reasonably practicable, the Council will:

- Provide accessible entrance and exit routes.
- Consider the needs of people with disabilities.
- Provide information in accessible formats upon request where possible.
- Make reasonable adjustments to support participation in activities and events.
- Ensure hall booking arrangements are fair and non-discriminatory.

No individual or group shall be unfairly refused access to the Community Hall, except where there are legitimate operational, legal or safety reasons.

Recruitment and Employment

The Parish Council is committed to fair and equal treatment in relation to:

- Recruitment and selection.
- Training and development.
- Promotion opportunities.
- Working conditions.
- Pay and benefits.
- Performance management.

Employment decisions will be based on merit, competence, qualifications and experience.
The Council will not discriminate unlawfully against any employee, job applicant or volunteer.

Behaviour and Conduct

All persons covered by this policy are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Promote equality and inclusion.
- Challenge discriminatory behaviour where appropriate.
- Cooperate with the Parish Council in promoting a welcoming environment.

The following behaviours are unacceptable:

- Discrimination.
- Harassment.
- Bullying.
- Victimisation.
- Offensive language or behaviour.

- Intimidation or exclusion of individuals or groups.

Such behaviour may result in:

- Removal from Council facilities or events.
- Termination of volunteer arrangements.
- Action under employment procedures.
- Termination of hall hire agreements.
- Referral to external authorities where appropriate.

Harassment and Bullying

The Parish Council will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying.

Examples include:

- Offensive jokes or comments.
- Insulting behaviour.
- Intimidation.
- Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic.
- Deliberate exclusion.
- Threatening or abusive behaviour.

Complaints will be investigated promptly, fairly and confidentially wherever possible.

Events and Community Activities

When organising events, the Parish Council will seek to:

- Welcome participation from all sections of the community.
- Consider accessibility requirements.
- Promote inclusive practices.
- Ensure publicity materials are respectful and non-discriminatory.
- Monitor and address barriers to participation where feasible.

Community Hall hirers are expected to support the principles of this policy during their events and activities.

Communication and Accessibility

The Parish Council will endeavour to make information accessible by:

- Using clear and straightforward language.
- Making reasonable adjustments where possible.
- Considering alternative methods of communication when required.
- Ensuring website and public information remains as accessible as reasonably practicable.

Responsibilities

Parish Council

The Parish Council will:

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Monitor compliance with this policy.
- Review policies and procedures where necessary.
- Address complaints fairly and appropriately.

Parish Clerk

The Parish Clerk will:

- Support implementation of the policy.
- Investigate concerns and complaints.
- Provide advice and guidance where appropriate.
- Report significant issues to the Council.

Councillors, Employees and Volunteers

All Councillors, employees and volunteers are responsible for:

- Supporting the principles of this policy.
- Treating others fairly and respectfully.
- Reporting discriminatory behaviour.
- Leading by example.

Hall Hirers and Users

Hall hirers and users must:

- Respect all attendees.
- Avoid discriminatory conduct.
- Comply with terms and conditions of hire.
- Cooperate with Parish Council representatives where concerns arise

Complaints

Anyone who believes they have experienced discrimination, harassment or unfair treatment should report the matter to:

- The Parish Clerk; or
- The Chair of the Parish Council (where appropriate).

Complaints will be:

- Treated seriously.
- Handled confidentially wherever possible.
- Investigated fairly and impartially.
- Resolved in accordance with Council procedures.

Monitoring and Review

The Parish Council will:

- Review this policy every two years or sooner if required.
- Monitor complaints and incidents.
- Consider equality implications when reviewing services and facilities.
- Seek opportunities to improve accessibility and inclusion.

This policy was approved by the Community Hall Management Committee on28 July 2026.

This policy was adopted by Pinewood Parish Council on 8 September 2026
Review date: September 2028