

St Cleer Parish Council
Equality and Diversity Policy

This policy was formally adopted by
St Cleer Parish Council
on
26.03.25

Review date 26.03.28

ST CLEER PARISH COUNCIL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The Policy

St Cleer Parish Council intention is to be an effective Equal Opportunities organisation. This means it will do everything in its power to ensure that everyone has equal access, and is treated with respect, in relation to employment opportunities, to its services and to all its activities.

St Cleer Parish Council commits to:

- encourage equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense; and
- create a working environment 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
- help all staff and Councillors to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of St Cleer Parish Council.

The aim is for our Council to be truly representative of all sections of society, and for each member of staff and Councillor to feel respected and able to give their best. The policy's purpose is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time. oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities
- provide equality, fairness and respect for all who sit as Council Members (with links to the Code of Conduct¹)
- not unlawfully discriminate and to promote the 9 protected characteristics of equality² in all of its activities:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnerships
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion and belief
 - sex and
 - sexual orientation

As an Employer

- All employees are required to treat one another with mutual respect. Actions, behaviour and attitudes should consistently demonstrate respect for the dignity and worth of an individual, irrespective of the position they have within the organisation.
- St Cleer Parish Council is making every effort to create a workplace where individuals are valued, listened to and treated with respect.
- St Cleer Parish Council maintains a work environment that seeks out and values the insight, experience, contribution and full participation of all staff.
- Harassment and discrimination in any form is unacceptable behaviour and offenders will be subject to disciplinary action.
- Ensuring that all staff and Councillors understand they, as well as St Cleer Parish Council, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, Councillors and the public.
- taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by employees, Councillors, the general public and any others in the course of St Cleer Parish Council activities. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the St Cleer Parish Council Grievance Procedures and Disciplinary Procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice For Councillors such acts will dealt with under the Code of Conduct.
- sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights/code of conduct matter **and** a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 –

¹ Localism Act 2011

² Equality Act 2010

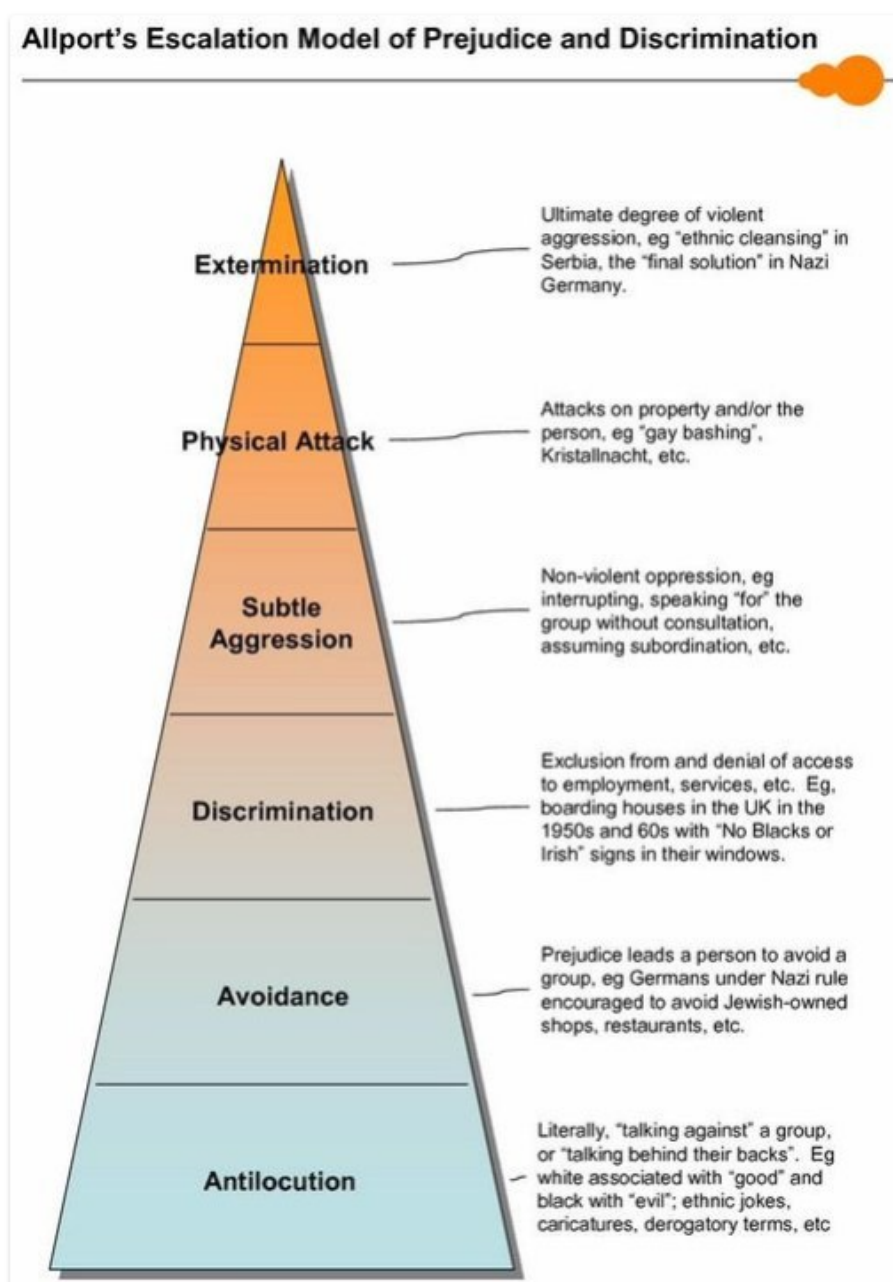
which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

- Ensuring all decisions concerning staff are based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- reviewing employment practices and procedures (using the Equality Impact Assessment Framework) when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and ensure that policies take account of changes in the law.

As a Service Provider

- St Cleer Parish Council will strive to ensure that all services provided by, or on behalf of, the Council are made accessible to all individuals and groups equally and without discrimination;
- All service users will be treated with respect. Actions, behaviour and attitudes should consistently demonstrate respect for the dignity and worth of an individual;
- St Cleer Parish Council will, wherever appropriate, work in partnership with other agencies in the area, including the County and Parish Councils, voluntary groups and community organisations to promote equal opportunities;
- St Cleer Parish Council will ensure that all contractors directly supplying goods and services or executing works for, or on behalf of, the Council comply with this Council's stated policy on equal opportunities.

St Cleer Parish Council recognises that discrimination has a clear path of destruction as is easily shown in the following diagram:



The Policy in Action

As an Employer

St Cleer Parish Council aims to achieve the policy by:-

- ensuring its employees are made aware of their rights and responsibilities to each other, the customer and the organisation regarding equal opportunities issues;
- providing a way in which individuals can communicate any concerns via competent named personnel;
- treating any unacceptable behaviour seriously;
- ensuring all Managers realise they have a key role in implementing this policy and are expected to take personal responsibility in ensuring its success;
- providing awareness training for all employees and Councillors, ensuring opportunities to develop relevant competencies are available to implement the policy;

As a Service Provider

St Cleer Parish Council aims to achieve its policy by:-

- providing training for all staff in equal opportunities awareness and customer care, emphasising equality of treatment in service delivery;
- ensuring that no member of the public is disadvantaged, or treated less favourably than others, in terms of access to Council services. Where the Council's practice, policy or procedures are found to make access impossible or unreasonably difficult, we will take such steps as are reasonable in the circumstances to change these practices, policies or procedures;
- ensuring that, wherever practical, all public buildings and premises owned or managed by the Council are accessible to all. Where this is impractical in the short-term, we will provide reasonable alternative methods of access so that no member of the public is disadvantaged by physical barriers;
- recognising the importance of communication in attaining equity and quality services which are responsive to the needs of all local people, for example through the provision of information in large print and on audio tape on request;
- complying with all relevant legislation relating to discrimination and equity.

Role of Councillors and Employees

- All Councillors and employees are responsible for implementing the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. It is important that all individuals who are employed by the Council appreciate that they have a responsibility and a role to play in the provision of equal opportunities.

Monitoring of Equal Opportunities

- the HR Committee will have responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the policy as it applies to St Cleer Parish Council as an employer, involving staff as appropriate in the monitoring process