

Colton Parish Council

EDI Policy 2024, Version 1 Approved at meeting 16th December 2024

Our commitment

The council is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment, in actions and in services. It is committed to avoiding unlawful discrimination and to ensuring that its work and actions consider the needs of all local communities.

Council members will act in accordance with the Nolan Principles and will;

- Act with integrity and honesty
- Act lawfully
- treat all persons fairly and with respect
- lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking the role Councillors will:

- impartially exercise responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- avoid conflicts of interest
- exercise reasonable care and diligence
- ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my Parish Council's requirements and in the public interest.

The law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

The council will not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if (for example) the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

(see Appendix A for types of discrimination)

Colton Parish Snapshot

(data from 2021 Census)

There are 650 residents of Colton Parish, living in 310 households.

In all age bands under 50, the Parish has lower than average numbers, and for all bands over 50, higher. It is 50% male and 50% female.

98% of residents were born in the UK, with 99% being white and 97% having a UK identity only (all above average). 99% say English is their native language.

56% are married or in a civil partnership (above average) and the number of widowed households is above average. Never married and single person households are lower than average. Larger households (3 or more people) are also lower than average.

84% of people say they are in very good, or good health. 18% are disabled (above average). Car ownership is much higher than average.

60% say they are Christian (above average), 23% no religion and 1% buddhist, with no other faiths recorded.

40% of households are deprived in at least one dimension (below average, but significant). 97% of households live in a house. 40% of houses have four or more bedrooms, double the national average with all other categories below. 89% of households own their property (including with a mortgage). 7% of households have another address (ie this is not their only home).

49% of people are currently economically inactive. 10% have never worked. 44% of working people work mainly from home, and 46% travel to work by car or van. Occupations in Management and Skilled Trades are very much higher than national average. Level 4 qualifications are much higher than average, with other qualification levels lower, and the student population is below average.

In essence; Colton Parish is white, old, educated, reasonably affluent, and in fairly good health

EDI in Colton

Equality Diversity and Inclusive practice goes beyond avoiding unlawful or discriminatory practice. It aims to ensure that those people who are not in main or dominant groups are able to participate fully, by taking steps to mitigate any barriers they face.

In Colton, this means taking account of;

- a very large proportion of the population being over 55, with almost twice as many aged 85+ as the national average
- 18% of people having a disability (which can be physical, sensory or cognitive)
- 40% of households having at least one deprivation factor (income, employment, education, health, barriers to services, living environment)

We aim to ensure that all members of our community, whatever their circumstances, have access to the PC's activities

We will:

- Use inclusive language in all our communications

- Promote Cllr and clerk vacancies and opportunities to take part in Council activities as widely as possible, using all available communication channels
- Only hold our meetings in venues that are accessible and provide facilities for people with disabilities.
- Over the course of the year, hold our meetings in different parts of the Parish to facilitate access for local communities.
- Encourage public participation at our meetings by
 - using all means available to us to publicise our meetings
 - ensuring adequate time for members of the public to raise their issues
 - offering a range of communication channels – meeting time, phone conversations, in person and email to suit different needs
 - when we can reasonably be expected to be aware of a person’s communication, mobility and /or other needs, ensuring that we offer appropriate support to enable that person to raise issues with the PC.
- Monitor and record our decision making so that we can be held to account
- Monitor and document our practice as an employer.
- Pay expenses based on our expenses policy so that individuals are not excluded from serving as Councillors or participating in council activities on the basis of financial means.
- Review our grant giving processes to ensure they reflect our commitment to EDI
- Participate in relevant training opportunities to help us reflect on and improve our practice
- Be honest about our mistakes and limitations and seek to learn from the advice available to us and our experience to improve our practice
- We have the right and the duty to cease communication with, exclude from our meetings, turn down applications for grants or employment, any individual or group that we are aware promotes;
 - unlawful discrimination
 - hatred based on protected characteristics
 - violence of any kind

Appendix A

Types of unlawful discrimination

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties.

Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he/she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he/she is suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he/she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Appendix B

Equal opportunities in employment

Colton Parish Council generally has one employee, its Clerk. The guidelines below relate to EDI in employment practice which will be followed.

The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Recruitment

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Working practices

The council will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the council considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The council will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Equal opportunities monitoring

The council will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

Employee responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the council to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the council's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Employee Grievances

If an employee considers that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, they should use the council's grievance procedure to make a complaint. The council will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.