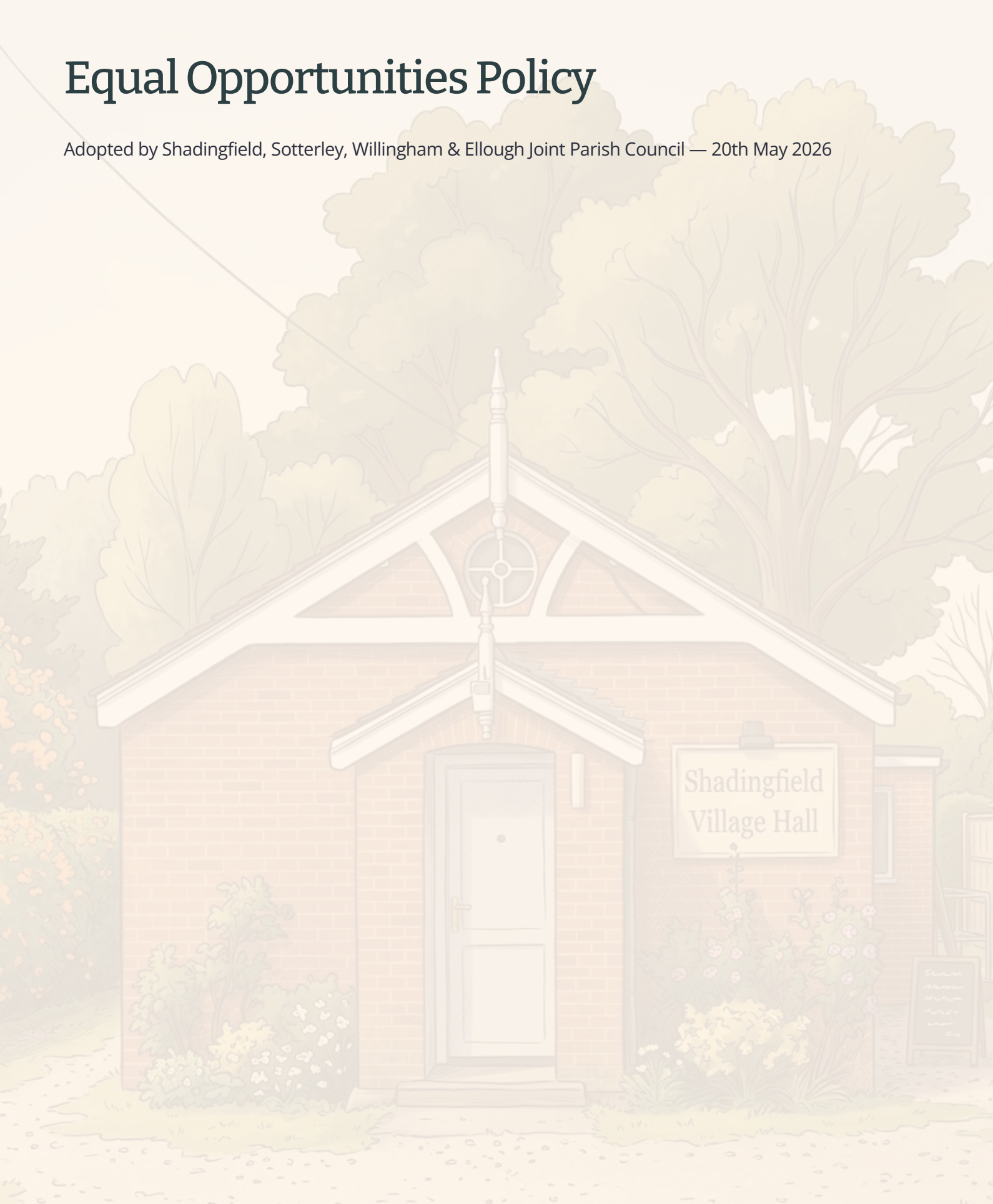
Equal Opportunities Policy

Adopted by Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham & Ellough Joint Parish Council — 20th May 2026



This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if legislation or best practices change.

Next review: April 2028.

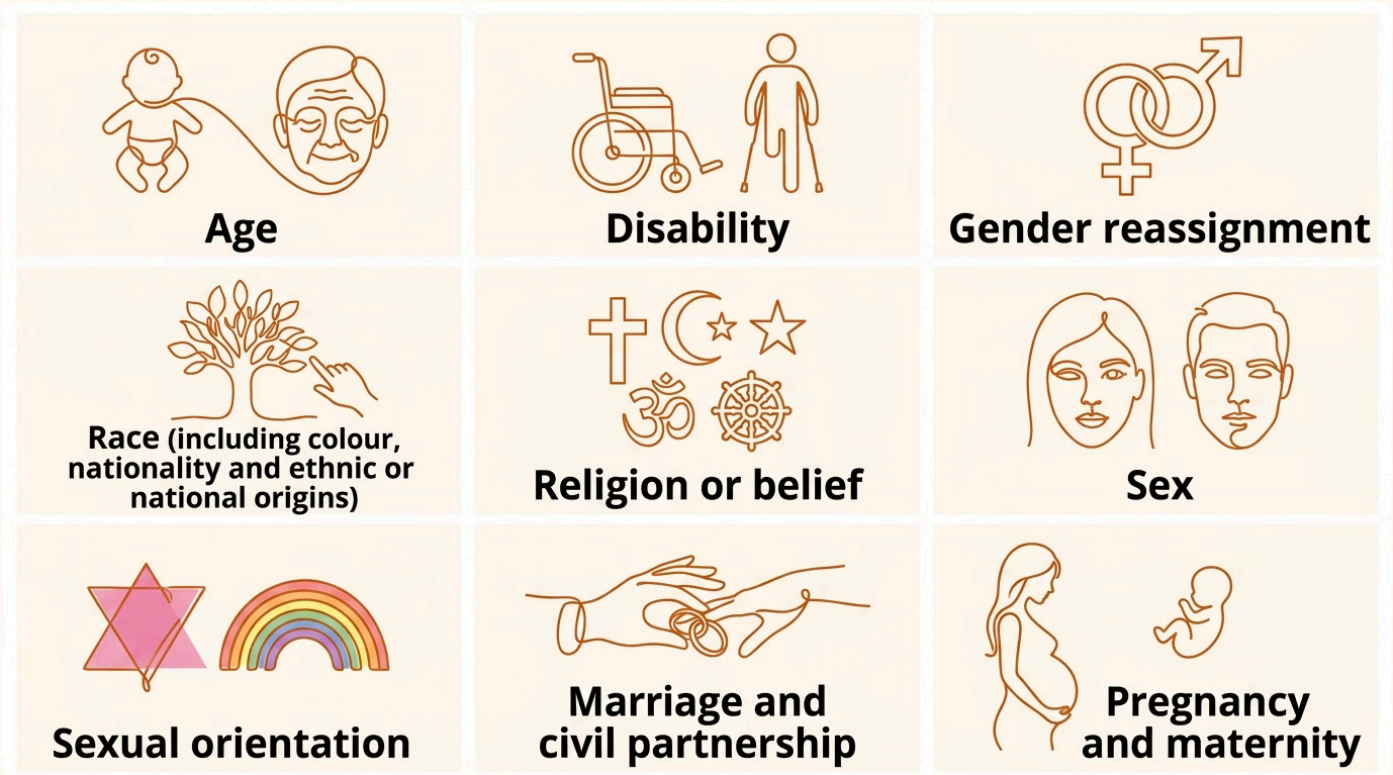
Policy Statement

The Parish Council is committed to being an equal opportunities employer and to ensuring that its workplace, services and decision-making processes are free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We aim to create an inclusive environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

This policy applies to councillors, employees, contractors, volunteers and anyone acting on behalf of the Council.

Legal Framework

Under the **Equality Act 2010**, it is unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the basis of the following protected characteristics:



Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 imposes a **Public Sector Equality Duty** on parish councils to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

ⓘ The Council will take all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, harassment or victimisation in any form.

Our Commitments

The Council will:

- Promote equality of opportunity in all employment practices, including recruitment, training, promotion and terms of employment.
- Ensure decisions are based solely on merit and the requirements of the role.
- Foster a working environment free from bullying, harassment and unlawful discrimination.
- Take prompt and appropriate action where discrimination or harassment is reported or identified.
- Provide reasonable adjustments for employees and applicants with disabilities.

Responsibilities

All those connected with the Council share responsibility for upholding this policy. The specific duties of each group are set out below.

The Council

- Ensures compliance with equality legislation.
- Promotes a culture of fairness, dignity and respect.
- Investigates complaints promptly and takes disciplinary action where appropriate.

Employees & Workers

- Must treat colleagues, councillors, contractors and the public with respect.
- Must not engage in discriminatory behaviour, harassment or bullying.
- Must report concerns or incidents to the Chair.

Councillors

- Must comply with the Code of Conduct.
- Must not act in a discriminatory way in any aspect of council business.

The Council's approach to harassment and bullying is set out in its separate **Harassment and Bullying Policy**.

Breaches of This Policy

The Council takes breaches of this policy seriously. Any failure to comply may result in formal action as outlined below.

Employees: Any employee who breaches this policy may face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Councillors: Councillors who breach the policy may be subject to action under the Code of Conduct.