PARISH OF THE ASCENSION EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
(CHURCHES OF ST AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY and ST GILES, and ST LUKE's LEP[1])

The Parish of the Ascension celebrates and welcomes rather than tolerates diversity in our organisation and in society as a whole. It is therefore committed to proactive equal opportunities and welcomes all people, taking a positive view of age, caring responsibilities, gender, disability, racial/ethnic origin, religion, HIV or other health-related status, sexual orientation or socio-economic background. The Parochial Church Council (hereafter PCC) will not tolerate any breaches of this Policy and will endeavour to ensure that all its activities and other policies are in accordance with this policy.

We recognise and accept all obligations under current discrimination legislation, and accept that there is a need to understand what discrimination is, admit it exists and be able to recognise it in all its forms. We accept that it is possible for individuals, policies and structures to be unintentionally discriminatory or offensive and accepts that such attitudes and structures must be challenged. We will proactively promote an environment that treats all people with dignity and respect and provides equality of opportunity to people of any gender, age, religious beliefs, caring responsibilities, racial/ethnic origins, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.

The PCC aims to nurture an environment of equality of opportunity in employment. Interviews for employment and voluntary work will take place in accordance with Equal Opportunities practice. Internal and external job applications and appointments and staff retention will be monitored. In order to make physical environments and services accessible to all, the PCC will strive to make relevant adaptations and provide appropriate resources. We aim to ensure that all staff and volunteers understand and are committed to the promotion of Equal Opportunities from the time of appointment, and that employees understand their responsibilities under legislation and government guidelines, by providing ongoing training and development opportunities.

We will undertake Equal Opportunities monitoring. This will assist in measuring the effectiveness of the Policy as well as identify training needs and review of practices. We recognise the need to have support mechanisms for those who have been or may be subjected to discrimination or harassment and will endeavour to provide such services.

We will avoid entering into contracts, partnerships or agreements with individuals, groups or organisations when we are aware that any of their policies or practices contravene Equal Opportunities policies.

<u>Responsibilities of the PCC</u>

The PCC accepts responsibility under legislation for the actions of employees and responsibility for any practices, policies or procedures that may be found to be unintentionally discriminatory and will strive to ensure that this is eradicated. It welcomes the input of staff, volunteers, committee members and users to bring this to the attention of the PCC.

This policy is reviewed annually. Policy adopted: 22nd November 2016. Last approved: 20 February 2025. Next review date: February 2028.

[1] Local Ecumenical Partnership (United Reformed Church with Church of England)