

GDPR Acceptable Use Policy

1.0 Background

1.1 The parish council recognises that it has a legal obligation to secure confidential information. Communication mediums need to be managed effectively to ensure data is protected whilst sharing relevant information. Social media provides a medium where data is readily available and the parish council has a responsibility to communicate fairly and without bias.

1.2 All users need to be aware that your personal emails are subject to Freedom of Information Requests/Subject Access Requests if they relate to council business or an individual. It is a criminal offence to block the release of data.

1.3 This document provides the policy framework through which data can be managed and communicated. It covers:

- Acceptable Usage
- Social Media

2.0 Acceptable Usage for Content

2.1 All Staff and Councillors are required to read and comply with the conditions of this policy in respect of the way in which the communications mechanisms are used. The policy includes computers and all other electronic media, the mailbox that the parish council has provided you with and any use by you of your own personal devices.

- The Council recognises that access to professional information by e-mail or through web sites is a necessary requirement of the job of Clerk to the Council and other staff and is permitted.
- Staff and users are expected to use technology in a courteous, reasonable and responsible manner. The following activities are not acceptable and anyone found to be involved in them may face disciplinary action. In certain instances the matter will be considered to be gross misconduct or a breach of the Code of Conduct.
 - Receiving, sending or displaying messages or pictures that are offensive or may be construed to be offensive in nature;
 - Using obscene language;
 - Improper use of e-mail and internet;
 - Damaging computers, computers systems or computer networks;
 - Violating copyright laws;
 - Using others' passwords and identities;
 - Issuing of passwords to third parties unless authorised to do so; trespassing in others' folders, works or files;
 - Intentionally wasting limited resources;
 - Employing the system for commercial purposes;
 - Employing the system for illegal activities;
 - Downloading any commercial software;
 - Use of personal mobile phones or other devices in meetings and during any other Council business (unless authorised).
 - Sharing data/information supplied by the Council or residents where consent has not been given.

3.0 Acceptable Usage for Equipment

- The Council encourages electronic communications with local, national and international organisations.

- The Council cannot control and is not responsible for the accuracy or content of information gathered over the internet. Security is maintained by appropriate software, internal computer security settings and passwords.
- It is a requirement of the Council and the duty of all staff to avoid deliberate use of the Council's internet connections and technology for inappropriate use. Staff should immediately alert the Clerk to the Council or the Chair of the Council of any suspect material found stored on any computer.
- The computer equipment and software must be used as installed. Staff and users may not install/uninstall, delete or change anything on Council computers. Any requirements to change anything should be authorised by the Clerk to the Council and/or the Chair of the Council.
- The Council uses a virus-checker on the computers. Staff are forbidden to load disks or memory sticks that have not been virus checked by the system. Staff or councillors using their own devices must use anti-virus software to maintain security of their system.
- Access to chat rooms, gaming and other associated sites are not permitted on Council computers.
- The Parish Council's email address and IT equipment is only to be used for Parish Council business and must not be used for other personal use.
- Any breaches of the Data Protection Act 2018 must be reported immediately to the Data Protection Officer.

4.0 Social Media

4.1 Social media is a generic term for the sharing options, gossip, discussions, stories, video, pictures and information electronically. The key feature of such systems is that they can be accessed in different ways – via computers, tablets and phones. Examples of popular social media tools include: Twitter, Facebook, Wikipedia, YouTube, Pinterest, Snip It, LinkedIn and Google Plus. Groupings of interest are a natural feature of the development of such systems with people with similar interests being attracted to share information.

4.2 Councillors need to be aware that when using social media, the Code of Conduct applies to all posts that can be construed as being made in your official capacity. You may wish to consider running a social media account for personal use that is separate from your posts as councillor.

4.3 When staff and Councillors are using Social Media sites they should always follow these guidelines:

- Information published on Social Media should be deemed relevant to the Parish Council or the community that it represents;
- Information should be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent;
- Be aware that what is published will be in the public domain indefinitely;
- Compliance with data protection, intellectual property and copyright laws should be ensured;
- Details about customers, partners, or suppliers should not be referred to without their prior written consent (ensuring no advertisement of the services or goods of third parties)
- Staff and Councillors must refrain from promoting themselves as working for the Council in a way which has, or may have, the effect of bringing the Council into disrepute;
- Staff and Councillors must not disclose personal data or information about the Council or its service users, employees or Councillors that could breach the Data Protection Act 2018 (e.g. Photographs, images);
- Staff and Councillors must not make any defamatory remarks about the Council, its service users, employees, Councillors, members of the public or conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the Council.

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