



St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council

Information Technology (IT) & Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations, and communications. This policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of IT resources, email, and social media by council members, employees, volunteers, and contractors.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who use St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council's IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, email accounts, and social media platforms.

3. Acceptable Use of IT Resources and Email

Parish Council IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks. Limited personal use is permitted, provided it does not interfere with work responsibilities or violate this policy. All users must adhere to ethical standards, respect copyright and intellectual property rights, and avoid accessing inappropriate or offensive content.

4. Device and Software Usage

Authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by the Council for work-related tasks. Unauthorised installation of software or apps, including personal software, is strictly prohibited.

5. Data Management and Security

All sensitive and confidential data should be stored and transmitted securely using approved methods. Regular data backups must be performed to prevent data loss, and data must be securely destroyed when no longer required.

6. Network and Internet Usage

The Parish Council's network and internet connections should be used responsibly and efficiently for official purposes. Downloading and sharing copyrighted material without authorisation is prohibited.

7. Email Communication

Email accounts are for official communication only. Emails must be professional, respectful, and comply with data protection regulations. Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless encrypted. Attachments and links should only be opened if verified as safe.

8. Password and Account Security

All users are responsible for the security of their accounts and passwords. Passwords must be strong, unique, and not shared. Regular password changes are encouraged.

9. Mobile Devices and Remote Work

Mobile devices provided by the Council must be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication. Remote workers must follow the same security practices as in-office staff.

10. Email Monitoring

The Council reserves the right to monitor email and IT usage to ensure compliance with this policy. Monitoring will comply with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

11. Retention and Archiving

Emails and electronic documents must be retained and archived in accordance with the Council's Document Retention Policy and legal requirements.

12. Reporting Security Incidents

All suspected IT or email security breaches must be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk or designated IT contact.

13. Training and Awareness

The Parish Council will provide regular training to staff and councillors on IT security, privacy, and data protection best practices.

14. Social Media Use

Social media must be used responsibly, whether on council or personal accounts. Staff and councillors must not post defamatory, discriminatory, or confidential information, or make comments that could damage the Council's reputation. Any issues should be reported to the Clerk or Chair. Breaches may result in disciplinary action.

15. Compliance and Consequences

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in suspension of IT access, disciplinary action, or other measures as deemed appropriate by the Council.

17. Contacts

For IT or data security assistance, contact the Parish Clerk. All staff and councillors share responsibility for safeguarding Parish Council systems and data.

18. Review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Council or earlier if required due to changes in legislation or council operations.

19. Approval

Adopted by St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council on: _____

Signed (Chair): _____

Review Date: _____