



## **Internet & Email Acceptable Use Policy**

1. Introduction. The following outlines the Council's Acceptable Use Policy regarding e-mail and the Internet. The Policy has been developed to ensure that all councillors and employees are clear about expectations regarding Internet and e-mail in order to protect them and the Council from misuse of facilities and potential breach of the law. The Policy also ensures that the Council's IT facilities are used most effectively. Email is provided by the Council to assist councillors and employees in carrying out their work. This applies equally to councillors covering for employees. Use of these services should support Council policies and objectives and reflect the Council's high standards of service.

If you are aware of any abuses of this policy they should be reported to the Chair. If you are uncertain about any aspects of this policy and how it applies to you, please discuss with the Chair.

### 2. Email Guidance

2.1 Emails relating to your role as a Councillor or Clerk should be sent from the Council's email system, rather than a personal email account.

2.2. Email messages cannot be guaranteed to be private and secure: do not send confidential, sensitive or personal data via email unless approved by Council. Remember that any message you send could potentially be forwarded to others by the recipient.

2.3 No message should be sent, either internally or externally, which contains illegal, offensive, obscene, racist or abusive material (for example, pornography) or libellous, defamatory or discriminatory material, or material which may bring the Council into disrepute. You are responsible for emails you send. Emails could be used as evidence in a tribunal or other court proceedings.

2.4 Respect the rights of others when sending emails. Email should not be used to harass or discriminate

2.5 Be aware that agreements made by email may have the same status as letters or formal contracts. Seek Council guidance before making any agreement by email.

2.6 If you receive emails from unknown sources and they contain attachments, they should not be opened as they may contain viruses.

2.7 It is important to keep virus software up-to-date and doing this is the responsibility of the user(s). Any downloaded or copied files must be virus checked first.

2.8 Ensure that the computers are password protected and that you do not disclose your password to others. Ensure that your screen saver is also password protected.

2.9 Do not use email to transmit material that may infringe copyright or licensing laws.

2.10 The Council's email facilities must not be used to operate a personal business (income generating or not).

Email monitoring

2.11 The Council reserves the right to view all emails stored on Parish Council equipment.

2.12 The Council also reserves the right to investigate all emails in connection with disciplinary or audit investigations, including where we suspect that the email system is being misused. Full co-operation will be given if law enforcement or regulatory agencies request information about email use by a Councillor or an employee if the council is satisfied that the request is for an appropriate purpose and proportionate, and that disclosure is legal. Information will not normally be disclosed other than in connection with a criminal investigation or pursuant to a court order.

Signed..... Date..... Chair Reach Parish Council