



Forncett Parish Council

1. Purpose

The purpose of this IT Policy is to ensure the safe, secure, and effective use of technology by Forncett Parish Council. It sets out expectations for staff, councillors, and any contractors or volunteers who use IT resources on behalf of the Council.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all IT systems, equipment, and data used in the course of Forncett Parish Council's activities, including:

- Laptops
- Email and internet access
- Cloud storage and backups
- Software and online systems used for council business
- The council website

3. Acceptable Use

- Council IT equipment and accounts are to be used primarily for council business.
- Personal use is permitted within reason, provided it does not interfere with duties, breach security, or contravene other policies.
- Users must not use council systems to access or distribute inappropriate, offensive, or illegal material.

4. Data Protection & Security

- All users must follow the Council's Data Protection Policy and GDPR requirements.
- Passwords must be strong and kept confidential.
- Devices must be kept secure and locked when unattended.
- Sensitive data must be stored securely and only shared with authorised persons.

5. Email and Communications

- Council email accounts must be used for council business.
- Emails should be professional and reflect the council's standards.
- Care must be taken when opening attachments or links from unknown sources.

6. Software and Licensing

- Software from reputable sources may be installed, including necessary updates (e.g. HMRC, accounting, printer software, Microsoft, Google).

7. Backups and Storage

- Regular backups must be carried out and backup data stored securely.

8. Website

- The parish council's website must be used responsibly to share official information and updates. Only the Clerk and the Chairman can access and update this platform.
- Only authorised users may post or edit content on these platforms.
- Personal opinions must not be shared on behalf of the Council.

9. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- AI tools may be used to support efficiency and accuracy in council operations.
- Generative AI may be used on occasion to assist with drafting and updating policies, preparing correspondence, and generating initial content for reports or communications.
- AI tools must not be used to process or generate content involving personal, sensitive, or confidential data without prior authorisation.
- Use of AI must comply with relevant data protection, copyright, and ethical standards.

10. Reporting Issues

- Any IT issues, security breaches, or suspicious activity must be reported to Chairman immediately.
- If an IT issue or breach is reported, the clerk should take appropriate steps such as changing compromised passwords, checking systems for signs of misuse, and contacting IT support if necessary (e.g. in the case of viruses).

11. Monitoring and Enforcement

- The Council reserves the right to monitor use of its IT systems where necessary.
- Malicious breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action and, in serious cases, legal action.

12. Review

- This policy is subject to periodic review and may be updated as necessary to reflect changes in regulations or community needs.

Date of Policy: 16th October 2025