

Godshill Parish Council

IT and Email Policy

Adopted 9th December 2025 Minute 132.25

1. Introduction

Godshill 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 and email by Council members, employees, volunteers and contractors.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who use Godshill Parish Council's IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data and email accounts.

3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email

Godshill Parish Council's 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 any part of this policy. All users must adhere to ethical standards, respect copyright and intellectual property rights and not access inappropriate or offensive content.

4. Device and software usage

Where possible, authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by Godshill Parish Council for work-related tasks.

Unauthorised installation of software on authorised devices, including personal software, is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.

5. Data management and security

All sensitive and confidential Godshill Parish Council data must be stored and transmitted securely using approved methods. Regular data backups should be performed to prevent data loss, and secure data destruction methods must be used when necessary.

6. Network and internet usage

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

7. Email communication

Email accounts provided by Godshill Parish Council are for official communication only. Emails should be professional and respectful in tone. Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless it is encrypted or password protected.

Caution should be taken with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. The source should be verified before any attachments are opened or any links are clicked.

8. Password and account security

Godshill Parish Council users are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts and passwords, including those for the Parish Council's website. Passwords must be strong and not shared with others. Regular password changes are encouraged to enhance security.

9. Mobile devices and remote Work

Mobile devices provided by Godshill Parish Council must be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication. When working remotely, users should follow the same security practices as if they were in the office.

10. Email monitoring

Godshill Parish Council reserves the right to monitor email communications to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant laws. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

11. Retention and archiving

Emails must be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Unnecessary emails should be reviewed and deleted regularly to maintain an organised inbox (see the Council's Information and Data Protection Policy).

12. Reporting security incidents

All suspected security breaches or incidents must be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk for investigation and resolution. Any email-related security incidents or breaches must be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk.

13. Training and awareness

Godshill Parish Council will provide training and resources to inform users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors will receive training on email security and best practices as and when required.

14. Compliance and consequences

A breach of this IT and Email Policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges and further consequences as deemed appropriate.

15. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.

16. Contacts

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact the Clerk on clerk@godshillparishcouncil.gov.uk.

All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of Godshill Parish Council's IT and email systems. By adhering to this IT and Email Policy, the Council aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment which supports its mission and goals.