

LONGFORD PARISH COUNCIL

IT POLICY

1. Introduction

Longford Parish Council recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations, and communications.

All smaller authorities must have an IT policy. This explains how everyone - clerks, members and other staff - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment.

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 Longford Parish Council's IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts.

3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email

Longford 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 any part of 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

Where possible, authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by Longford Parish Council for council-related tasks. Longford Parish Council provides individual tablets to councillors solely for council-related emails and tasks. See Appendix A for the iPad Agreement which councillors sign on receipt of their tablet.

Where councillors use their own devices they should ensure that they are password protected and not accessible to other users of the device, eg through the use of a separate profile.

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

6. Network and internet usage

Longford 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 Longford 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.

Be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

8. Password and account security

Longford Parish Council users are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts and passwords. Passwords should 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 Longford Parish Council should 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

Longford 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 should be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organised inbox.

12. Reporting security incidents

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the designated IT point of contact for investigation and resolution. Report any email-related security incidents or breaches to the IT administrator immediately.

13 Training and awareness

Longford Parish Council will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors will receive regular training on email security and best practices.

14. Compliance and consequences

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 Parish Clerk.

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

APPENDIX A

LONGFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Dear Councillor,

Ref: iPad Agreement

Agendas and meeting papers will be sent electronically and to facilitate this arrangement the Council will provide you with an iPad whilst you are a Parish Councillor.

Please read carefully the principles surrounding the use of the iPad set out below and sign and date the declaration at the bottom of this letter as confirmation you agree to abide by them.

Principles of Use:

1. It is important to ensure that you operate the iPad in accordance with Council policies and procedures and make every effort to protect both hardware and software from misuse and/or damage.
2. The password set up on the iPad must not be altered.
3. The iPad is covered through the Council's insurance policy. If the iPad is stolen, lost, or damaged it must be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk. Insurance cover is limited to the UK, if you take the iPad abroad you must ensure it is covered under your own insurance policy.
4. You should never send, solicit, or download inappropriate material from the Internet or email.
5. If you choose to download an App it should be done through a personal iTunes Account set up by you on the iPad. Any App downloaded to the iPad should be appropriate and in line with the Parish Council policy.
6. Only you are authorised to use the iPad, it should not be loaned to family members or friends.
7. You are responsible at all times for the protection of Council data, email and documents held on the iPad.
8. You should not reveal confidential data to any third party. This includes personal or sensitive data (as defined under the Data Protection Act 2018), computer software source codes, login details and passwords. This may only be done if explicit permission has been given by the Parish Clerk and only in accordance with Data Protection Guidelines.
9. If a problem occurs with the iPad, please report this to the Parish Clerk who will make the necessary arrangements with our IT provider to resolve the problem. You should not attempt to resolve the problem yourself.
10. You may be liable for any repair costs if it is deemed that the iPad has been mistreated.
11. In some cases, remote monitoring of websites and/or emails sent will be monitored, but only in extreme cases where suspicion of illegal behaviour with regard to iPad use exists. This may only be carried out under supervision of the Parish Clerk. Under no circumstances will any information that is discovered be disclosed to a third party and all investigations will strictly adhere to the Data Protection Act 2018.

12. The iPad should not be used for on-line gambling, accessing, or transmitting pornography, transmitting copyrighted information and/or software material, posting confidential information about other Councillors, employees or the public or suppliers to the Parish Council.

Contravention of any of the above regulations may lead to the iPad being withdrawn.

Yours sincerely

Parish Clerk & RFO

AGREEMENT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF USE OF THE IPAD FOR COUNCIL BUSINESS

I,, a member of Longford Parish Council, agree to the principles of use of the iPad as set out above and agree to receive all Council papers and associated council correspondence electronically via the iPad.

iPad Serial Number:

Signed:
Councillor

Dated: