

# Widdington Parish Council

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## IT Policy

Widdington 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.

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

### **Acceptable use of IT resources and email**

Widdington 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.

### **What you must do if you use your own personal devices**

The Authority may agree to provide individuals with devices to use for council business. If you are using your own device you must make sure you are:

- using strong passwords for all your accounts (preferably using a password manager)
- downloading the latest operating system security updates
- using anti-virus software

### **Device and software usage**

Where agreed authorised devices, software and applications will be provided by Widdington Parish Council for council related tasks.

If devices are supplied unauthorised installation of software, including personal software is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.

### **Data management and security.**

All sensitive and confidential Widdington Parish Council data should be stored (and transmitted) securely. Regular data backups should be performed to prevent data loss, when necessary secure data destruction methods should be used.

### **Email communication.**

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

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

### **Password and account security.**

# Widdington Parish Council

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Widdington 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.

## **Network and internet usage**

You must be careful about which Wi-Fi networks you join. Public Wi-Fi networks in coffee shops or on trains can be targeted by hackers. Always make sure you are using a trusted internet connection, which is password protected when carrying out official business.

## **Email monitoring**

Widdington 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.

## **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.

## **Reporting security incidents**

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the Clerk for investigation and resolution. Report any email related security incidents or breaches immediately.

## **Training and awareness**

The Authority will source regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. You should engage in regular training on email security and best practices, including but not limited to:

- the [Parish Council Domain Helper Service's virtual cybersecurity workshops for councils](#)
- The National Cyber Security Centre [Cyber Security training for small organisations](#) and free [Cyber Action Toolkit](#).

For IT-related enquiries or assistance please contact the Clerk.

	Date	Minute reference
Adopted	07/05/2026	05.26.13
Reviewed		

**Date to be reviewed: December 2028 (Or sooner if required by legislation or operational reasons)**