



KINGSMEAD
PARISH COUNCIL

Email and Internet Usage Policy

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Approvals

This document requires the following approvals:

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Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

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Full council and website	24.03.25	1.0

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Council recognises that email and internet are important information and communication systems which are used during the course of Council business. This policy provides guidelines and procedures to protect users and the Council.
- 1.2** This policy applies to employees who have access to the internet and email facilities via Council computers.
- 1.3** The email policy applies to all Councillors in their correspondence with employees and/or other Councillors.

2.0 INTERNET USAGE

- 2.1** Employees are encouraged to use the internet responsibly as part of their official and professional activities.
- 2.2** Information obtained via the internet and published in the name of the Council must be relevant and professional. A disclaimer must be stated where personal views are expressed.
- 2.3** The use of the internet to access and/or distribute any kind of offensive material will not be tolerated and employees may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 2.4** The equipment, services and technology used to access the internet are the property of the Council. The Council reserves the right to monitor internet traffic and monitor and access data that is composed, sent or received through its online connections.

3.0 UNACCEPTABLE USE OF THE INTERNET

- 3.1** Unacceptable use of the internet by employees includes, but is not limited to:
- a) Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing or threatening messages or images.
 - b) Using computers to perpetrate any form of fraud, and/or software, film or music piracy.
 - c) Obtaining, using or disclosing another employee's password without authorisation.
 - d) Sharing confidential material or proprietary information outside of the Council.
 - e) Hacking into unauthorised websites.
 - f) Sending or posting information that is defamatory to the Council, its services, Councillors and/or members of the public.
 - g) Introducing malicious software onto Council computers and/or jeopardising the security of the Council's electronic communication systems.
 - h) Sending or posting chain letters, solicitations or advertisements not related to Council business or activities.
 - i) Passing off personal views as those representing the Council.
 - j) Accessing inappropriate internet sites, web pages or chat rooms.

4.0 EMAIL

- 4.1** Use of email is encouraged as it provides an efficient system of communication.
- 4.2** Email should be regarded as written paper documents for the purposes of production, use, retention and disclosure and can be called upon under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Personal information should be kept in accordance with the principles established in the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 4.3** The Council reserves the right to open any email file stored on the Council's computer system.
- 4.4** The following guidelines for email use should be observed by all employees and Councillors:
- a) Use appropriate language to avoid unintentional misunderstandings.
 - b) Respect the confidentiality of information contained within emails, even if encountered inadvertently.
 - c) If you are copying in a recipient(s) without certainty that permission for their email address to be circulated has been given, personal identifying data must be omitted and Bcc used to protect their information.
 - d) Check with the sender if there is any doubt regarding the authenticity of a message.
 - e) Do not open any attachment unless certain of the authenticity of the sender.
 - f) Only copy emails to others where appropriate and necessary.
 - g) Emails which create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the Council must be sent by officers only, not Councillors.
 - h) Emails must comply with common codes of courtesy, decency and privacy.
 - i) Kingsmead Parish Council email addresses must be used solely for council business.
 - j) Only Kingsmead Parish Council email addresses should be used for council business.
 - k) The use of the auto-forwarding function to personal email addresses constitutes a data protection risk and will not be available.
 - l) Personal devices used for correspondence using the Kingsmead Parish Council email will be secured by password to ensure only the Councillor or employee can obtain access.
 - m) Councillors not using webmail to access e-mail should set up a rule to ensure a copy of email is kept on the server.
 - n) Data breaches should be reported to the Clerk who will log and report the breach to the Information Commissioner's Office within 72 hours, where feasible, also informing affected individuals as soon as possible.

5.0 SECURITY

- 5.1** Only software purchased by the Council shall be installed on the Council's computer system. Software licences shall be retained.