

Aymestrey Parish Council Information Technology Policy

1. Introduction

Aymestrey 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 and employees.

2. Scope

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

3. Acceptable Use of IT Resources

Aymestrey Parish Council IT resources and the clerk's email account 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, Software, and Network Usage

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

Installation of non-work-related software on authorised devices is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.

The Council does not have its own network or internet connections.

5. Email Communication

Aymestrey Parish Council does not yet provide council email accounts. Councillors are to be aware of the risks of using personal accounts, including difficulties with compliance when responding to Freedom of Information requests.

When councillors step down, they are required to delete parish council emails and documentation from their computers.

Email correspondence should be professional and respectful in tone.

6. Password and Account Security

Aymestrey 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.

Users are reminded to be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

Passwords for the Parish Council laptop are held by the clerk and the Chairman of the Parish Council.

7. Mobile Devices and Remote Work

Mobile devices provided by Aymestrey 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 an office.

8. Data Management and Security

All sensitive and confidential Aymestrey 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.

9. Retention and Archiving

Parish Council emails should be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Regular reviews and deletion of unnecessary emails to be conducted, to maintain an organised inbox.

Parish Council documents on personal computers should be stored in a secure folder, enabling easy access and deletion on retiring from office.

10. Email Monitoring

Aymestrey 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. Reporting Security Incidents

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the clerk for investigation and resolution.

12. Training and Awareness

The Parish Council will ensure that all staff and Councillors receive an introduction to IT security and email best practices when they join the council and will circulate updates or reminders when new risks or guidance arise.

13. Compliance and Consequences

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

14. 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.

15. Contacts and Responsibilities

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact the clerk. All staff and Councillors are responsible for the safety and security of Aymestrey Parish Council's IT and email systems.

By adhering to this IT and Email Policy, Aymestrey Parish Council aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment.

Adopted:

Renewal Date: