

CROSSWAYS PARISH COUNCIL IT and EMAIL POLICY

1. Introduction

Crossways 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 applied to all individuals who use Crossways Parish Council's IT resources, including computer, networks, software, devices, data, and email account.

3. Acceptable use of IT resources

Crossways Parish Council IT resources and 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 the 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 Crossways Parish Council for work related tasks.

5. Data Management and security

All sensitive and confidential Crossways 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

Crossways 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. Password and account security

Crossways Parish Council users are responsible for maintain the security of their accounts and passwords. Passwords should be strong and not shared with others.

8. Email Communications

The official email account of Crossways Parish Council is:

clerk@crossways-pc.gov.uk

The Parish Clerk is the custodian and administrator of this account and is responsible for ensuring that council records and correspondence are appropriately retained, managed, and archived in accordance with statutory requirements, including the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, Freedom of Information legislation, and the Council's Records Retention Policy.

Councillor Email Arrangements

Crossways Parish Council does not currently provide individual council email accounts for councillors. Councillors, including the Chair, may use their personal email addresses for receiving council information and correspondence.

However:

- The Parish Clerk shall remain the principal point of contact for all council business.
- Members of the public, partner organisations, and external agencies should be encouraged to correspond with the Council through the Clerk's official council email account wherever possible.
- Councillors should copy the Clerk into any and all correspondence relating to council business.
- Any decisions, commitments, instructions, or representations made on behalf of the Council must be communicated through, or recorded by, the Clerk.
- Councillors must ensure that any council-related emails received through personal email accounts are retained and forwarded to the Clerk where necessary to ensure that proper council records are maintained.

Use of Personal Email Accounts

Where personal email accounts are used for council business:

- Users must take reasonable steps to protect council information.
- Council information must not be forwarded to unauthorised individuals.
- Sensitive or confidential information should not be stored indefinitely within personal email accounts.
- Council-related records may be subject to disclosure under Freedom of Information or data protection legislation regardless of whether they are held in a personal or official email account.

- Councillors are responsible for ensuring that council records held within personal email accounts can be provided to the Clerk if required for audit, legal or governance purposes.

Council Decisions and Instructions

No councillor, including the Chair, may issue formal instructions on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution of the Council or delegated authority. Operational communications and official council business should be coordinated through the Parish Clerk as the Council's Proper Officer.

Email Monitoring, Governance and Audit

Crossways Parish Council reserves the right to monitor and review council emails to ensure compliance with this policy in order to;

- Meet legal and regulatory requirements.
- Respond to Freedom of Information requests.
- Support internal and external audit requirements.
- Investigate suspected security incidents or breaches.

The Council's arrangements for email management and record keeping are intended to support compliance with AGAR governance requirements, including the maintenance of adequate records and the implementation of recommendations arising from internal and external audit.

9. Mobile devices and remote Work

Mobile devices provided by Crossways 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. 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.

11. Reporting and 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 incident or breaches to the IT administrator immediately.

12. Training and awareness

Crossways 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.

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

The 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

For IT-related enquiries or assistance users can contact The Parish Clerk email clerk@crossways-pc.gov.uk

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

Date 30 July 2026