

# Bitterley Parish Council

## Information Technology Policy

Date Adopted: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Review: September 2026

### 1. Introduction

Bitterley parish council (referred to as parish council in document) 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 parish council's IT resources, including computers, data, and email accounts.

### 3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email

Parish council IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks. No personal use is permitted

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

An authorised laptop, software, and applications is provided for the clerk. Access to these should not be given to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties by users.

### 5. Data management and security

Data held on the Parish Councils laptop should be held on OneDrive which automatically stores and backs up work and is password protected.

### 6. Network and internet usage

The Parish council has no network or internet connections.

Parish Councillors need to be aware that when using their [@bitterley-pc.gov.uk](mailto:@bitterley-pc.gov.uk) email addresses the internet and network connections they are using should be secure.

### 7. Email communication

A generic council email account is hosted on an authority-owned domain - [bitterley-pc.gov.uk](mailto:bitterley-pc.gov.uk) and must be used for all council emails communications.

Councillors are provided with [@bitterley-pc.gov.uk](mailto:@bitterley-pc.gov.uk) email address and should be used for parish council related business. It is strongly recommended that councillors do not use their private

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email addresses for council business or communication. Access to these should not be given to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties by users.

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

Parish council users are responsible for maintaining the security of their parish council accounts and passwords. Passwords should be strong and not shared with others.

## **9. Mobile devices and remote Work**

The Parish council does not provide any mobile communication devices.

## **10. Email monitoring**

Should the parish council receive a complaint about the content or wording used in emails sent using parish council email addresses or whilst communicating council business it reserves the right to review such 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**

Parish councillors are responsible for regularly reviewing and deleting unnecessary emails to maintain an organised inbox, as a suggestion every 6 months

## **12. Reporting security incidents**

Should a councillor suspect their @bitterley-pc.gov.uk email account has been compromised in anyway they should inform the clerk immediately and request the account is suspended.

Should the clerk suspect their laptop has been hacked or its security compromised they must inform the chairperson immediately and agree a course of action to protect the parish council and its data.

## **13 Training and awareness**

n/a

## **14. Compliance and consequences**

Breach of this IT and Email Policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges and further consequences including suspension of parish councillors @bitterley-pc.gov.uk email accounts

Councillors who's email accounts have been suspended will be expected to make their own arrangements for getting minutes and documents the clerk will not provide these in paper form.

## **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 enquiries users can contact the parish clerk