

# **LOPEN PARISH COUNCIL**

## **IT POLICY**

Adopted: 26 January 2026

Minute Ref: 26/7a

Next review: Annually

### **1. Introduction**

Lopen Parish Council recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations, and communications.

All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of Lopen Parish Council's IT and email systems and this policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of IT resources and email by council members, employees, volunteers, and contractors.

By adhering to this IT and Email Policy, Lopen Parish Council aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment that supports its mission and goals.

### **2. Scope**

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

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

Lopen Parish Council's 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.

### **4. Device and software usage**

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

Unauthorised installation of software on authorised devices, including personal software, is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.

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

All sensitive and confidential Lopen Parish Council's 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**

All staff and councillors are home-based and use their own network and internet connections.

## **7. Email communication**

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

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

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

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.

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

Lopen Parish Council does not currently provide mobile devices for use by staff or councillors.

## **10. Email monitoring**

Lopen 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. 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.

## **12. Reporting security incidents**

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the designated IT point of contact for investigation and resolution. Lopen Parish Council does not have a dedicated IT support administrator, and professional advice may need to be sought in the event of a security breach.

## **13 Training and awareness**

Lopen Parish Council will provide appropriate training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates.

## **14. Compliance and consequences**

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

## **15. Contacts**

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact the Clerk.

## **16. 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.