

HOPESAY PARISH COUNCIL IT POLICY

1. Introduction

Hopesay 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 applies to all individuals who use Hopesay Parish Council's IT resources, which includes computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts.

3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email

Hopesay Parish Council's IT resources 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. Hopesay Parish Council email accounts are to be used only for official council-related activities and tasks.

4. Device and software usage

Where possible, authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by Hopesay 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

Regular Hopesay Parish Council data backups should be performed to prevent data loss, and secure data destruction methods should be used when necessary. All sensitive and confidential data should be stored and transmitted securely using approved methods.

6. Network and internet usage

Hopesay 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. Email communication

Email accounts provided by Hopesay Parish Council are for official council 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. Councillors should not keep Council data on personal devices.

Email accounts provided by Hopesay Parish Council are for use by current employees and current councillors. Former employees and councillors must relinquish their Hopesay Parish Council email accounts on ceasing their roles.

8. Password and account security

Hopesay 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.

9. Mobile devices and remote Work

Mobile devices provided by Hopesay 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. Email monitoring

Hopesay 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 Clerk and the Chair for investigation and resolution. Report any email-related security incidents or breaches to the Clerk and the Chair immediately.

13 Training and awareness

Hopesay Parish Council will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, technology updates, email security and best practices. All employees and councillors should attend.

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

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

This policy is based on the SAPPJ Joint Practitioners Guide 2025 template.