

## **IT and Email Policy**

**Adopted: March 2026**

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### **1. Introduction**

Welford 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 councillors, employees, volunteers and contractors.

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### **2. Scope**

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

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### **3. Acceptable Use of IT Resources and Email Accounts**

Welford Parish Council IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks.

Limited personal use may be permitted, provided it does not interfere with council responsibilities or violate any part of this policy.

All users must:

- Adhere to ethical standards;
  - Respect copyright and intellectual property rights;
  - Avoid accessing inappropriate, unlawful or offensive content;
  - Use IT systems responsibly and professionally.
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### **4. Device and Software Usage**

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

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

Council data must not be stored on personal devices unless expressly authorised.

## **5. Data Management and Data Security**

All sensitive and confidential Welford Parish Council data must be stored and transmitted securely using approved methods.

Access to personal data will be limited to those who require it for legitimate council business purposes.

Regular data backups will be undertaken where appropriate to prevent data loss. Secure data destruction methods will be used when necessary, in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy and Data Retention Policy.

Welford Parish Council does not process or store personal data relating to criminal convictions or offences on its IT systems as part of its normal functions.

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## **6. Network and Internet Usage**

The Council's network and internet connections must be used responsibly and primarily for official purposes.

Downloading or sharing copyrighted material without proper authorisation is prohibited.

Users must not access websites or online content that could compromise the security or reputation of the Council.

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## **7. Email Communication**

Email accounts provided by Welford Parish Council are for official communications.

Emails must:

- Be professional and respectful in tone;
- Not contain offensive, discriminatory, or unlawful content;
- Avoid sending confidential or sensitive information unless encryption or secure methods are used.

Users must not open attachments or click on links unless they are satisfied the source is legitimate.

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## **8. Password and Account Security**

Users are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts and passwords.

Passwords must:

- Be strong and unique;
- Not be reused across different systems;
- Not be shared with others.

Multi-factor authentication (MFA) should be used where available.

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## **9. Mobile Devices and Remote Working**

Mobile devices provided by Welford Parish Council must be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication.

When working remotely, users must ensure:

- Devices are not left unattended in public places;
  - Public Wi-Fi is avoided unless using a secure VPN;
  - Screens are positioned to prevent unauthorised viewing;
  - Council data is not downloaded onto personal devices unless authorised;
  - Printed materials are securely stored and disposed of appropriately.
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## **10. Email and IT Monitoring**

Welford Parish Council reserves the right to monitor use of its IT systems and email communications to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant laws.

Any monitoring will be proportionate, necessary, and carried out in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Council's Data Protection Policy. Monitoring will not be excessive and will be limited to legitimate business purposes such as security, compliance, and prevention of misuse.

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## **11. Retention and Archiving**

Emails and electronic records must be retained and archived in accordance with the Council's Data Retention Policy and any applicable legal requirements.

Users should regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain effective record management.

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## **12. Reporting Security Incidents**

Any suspected IT security incident or personal data breach must be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk.

Where a personal data breach is identified, it will be handled in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy, including assessment of whether notification to the Information Commissioner's Office is required within 72 hours.

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## **13. Training**

Welford Parish Council will provide appropriate training and guidance to councillors and staff on IT security, email usage, and data protection responsibilities.

All users are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and comply with its requirements.

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## **14. Compliance and Consequences**

Failure to comply with this policy may result in investigation and appropriate action in accordance with the Council's procedures.

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## **15. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness, or sooner if required due to legislative or operational changes.

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## **16. Contact Details**

For any queries relating to this policy, please contact:

### **The Parish Clerk**

Welford Parish Council

Email: [welfordparish@yahoo.com](mailto:welfordparish@yahoo.com)

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**Adopted by Welford Parish Council:** March 2026

**Next Review Date:** March 2027