

Guist Parish Council
Information Technology Policy (IT)

Policy History

Date approved 5 th February 2026	Minute Ref.6.6
Date reviewed	Minute Ref.
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1. Introduction and Purpose of the Policy

Guist 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.

The policy will reassure the public that the council is aware of how IT is used safely within the council.

2. Scope

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

3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email

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

Guist 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 Guist 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.

Caution must be given with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Sources should be verified before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

8. Password and account security

Guist 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. A copy of all passwords is held by the Chairman in a sealed envelope, only to be opened should the Clerk be incapacitated.

9. Mobile devices and remote work

Mobile devices provided by Guist Parish Council should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication. When working remotely, users should follow the same security practices as when in the office.

10. Email monitoring

Guist 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 2018 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 chair for investigation and resolution.

13 Training and awareness

Guist Parish Council will provide or arrange training and resources to employees and councillors to explain about technology updates, email and IT security, and best practices.

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 every third year

or unless the law changes, 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 clerk@guistparishcouncil.gov.uk.

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

Date of approval: _____ 5th February 2026 _____

Date to be reviewed: _____ February 2029 _____

Signed by Chair: _____