



# **Parbold Parish Council**

## **IT and Email Policy**

### **Introduction**

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

### **Scope**

This policy sets out the Council's position on the use of the facilities and it includes:

- Employees and Councillors' responsibilities and potential liability when using the facilities.
- the monitoring policies adopted by the Council; and guidance on how to use the facilities.

This policy has been created to:

- ensure compliance with all applicable laws relating to data protection, information security and compliance monitoring
- protect the Council from the risk of financial loss, loss of reputation or libel; and
- ensure that the facilities are not used so as to cause harm or damage to any person or organisation.

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

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

Parbold 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.

### **Device and software usage**

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

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

### **Data management and security**

The consequences of misuse can be severe. Examples of potential damage include, but are not limited to, malware infections, legal and financial penalties for data leakage and lost productivity from network downtime. All sensitive and confidential Parbold Parish Council 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. Personal data must not be used by any person for any other purpose than that for which it has been provided. Personal data received for the purposes of Council business must not be shared with any other person or organisation. If a device needs to be repaired, the owner will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the repairer cannot access any personal data.

### **Network and internet usage**

Parbold 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.

### **Email communication**

Email accounts provided by Parbold 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.

### **Password and account security**

Parbold 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. Sensitive information should be stored in password protected folders.

### **Mobile devices and remote work**

Any mobile devices provided by Parbold Parish Council should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication. When working remotely, users should follow the same security practices.

### **Email monitoring**

Parbold 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.

### **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.

### **Reporting security incidents**

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the designated IT point of contact for investigation and resolution. Report any email-related security incidents or breaches to the Clerk immediately. In the event that a device is lost or stolen, or is suspected of having been lost or stolen, the Chairman and Clerk of the Parish Council must be informed. The Council will work with the owner of the lost or stolen device to identify any personal data at risk and will then take appropriate action, including reporting any breach to the ICO as necessary.

### **Leaving the Council**

If a Councillor ceases to be a member of the Council for any reason then all personal data received in the course of Council business must be permanently deleted from devices and from any email account used for Council business.

### **Training and awareness**

Parbold Parish Council will provide regular updates and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors will receive regular updates on email security and best practices.

### **Compliance and consequences**

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

### **Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with Parbold Parish Council's Document Review policy to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.