

LYNDHURST PARISH COUNCIL

POLICY FOR ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTERS, TABLETS, EMAIL AND THE INTERNET BY COUNCILLORS AND EMPLOYEES

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Use of tablet devices and dedicated email accounts will enable councillors to access information on the move, take advantage of Wi-Fi and contribute to the reduction in paper and printing costs
- 1.2 Under the Data Protection Act 2018 (including the General Data Protection Regulation) it is important that Lyndhurst Parish Council ensures that its data is kept secure. Councillors are required to comply with this Policy.
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- 1.4 Please note that additional instructions may be issued from time to time regarding the use of Council-owned computers or systems.
- 1.5 This policy sets out general rules for the acceptable use of digital systems
 - How we use the facilities made available to us reflects on the Council.
 - Reminds us of our responsibilities to handle personal and sensitive information properly and that customers'/constituents' e-mail addresses themselves may be personal information
 - To consider before sending confidential or sensitive information via email
 - Describes how and when personal use of e-mail and internet is permissible
 - Requires us to remove personal e-mail from the council's systems
 - Prohibits the use of Council e-mail addresses on public websites for non-business purposes
 - Sets out the circumstances in which the council may monitor communications.

2 IT Devices

- 2.1 The tablet passcode is an important piece of confidential information and should be treated as such. Councillors must not share it with unauthorised persons and must make sure that it is not written down anywhere where an unauthorised person can find it.
- 2.2 Councillors must not delete any of the tablet software installed and must not install any software without permission from the Clerk. This ruling does not apply to apps available from the Apple store.
- 2.3 Councillors must take care of the tablet and ensure that it is safe and secure at all times. Any loss of the equipment must be reported immediately.

3 Email

- 3.1 All email correspondence should be dealt with professionally and diligently. Emails are subject to the Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information requests.
- 3.2 Councillors should be mindful that, when using their Council email account, any email sent will be identifiable as coming from the Council. Councillors should therefore take care not to send anything via email that may reflect badly on the Council. In particular, they must not send content of a sexual or racist nature, junk mail, chain letters or any offensive materials from their Council email address.
- 3.3 Using a Council email address to send inappropriate material, including content of a sexual or racist nature, is strictly prohibited. Should Councillors receive any offensive or inappropriate content via email they should delete it. Councillors should inform the Clerk of this as soon as possible.
- 3.4 Councillors should also take care that emails are seen only by the person intended. Particular care should be taken when sending confidential information that the email has been correctly addressed, marked "private" and not copied to those not authorised to see the information. Sending confidential information via email without proper authorisation or without taking sufficient care to ensure that it is properly protected will be treated as misconduct.
- 3.5 In cases where Councillors are sending an email to more than one personal account they should blind copy all recipients to avoid a data breach.
- 3.6 While a reasonable amount of personal use of email is perfectly acceptable, Council emails remain the property of the Council and Councillors should not use Council email to send or receive any information that they regard as private. The Council may, in the course of its operation, read emails that Councillors have sent or received - although in the absence of evidence of wrongdoing the Council will avoid taking this action.

4 Internet Use

- 4.1 Councillors accessing the internet on Council-owned devices should do so responsibly.
- 4.2 Councillors must not use the internet to view or download offensive or sexually explicit material.
- 4.3 Councillors must not use Council-owned devices to download music, video or any other entertainment content.
- 4.4 Firewalls and anti-virus software may be used to protect the Council's systems. These must not be disabled or switched off without the express authorisation of the Clerk.

5 Social Media

- 5.1 Councillors' behaviour on any social networking or other internet site must be consistent with the behaviour required of being a representative of the Council generally.

- 5.2 Councillors should take particular care not to behave in a way which reflects badly on the Council. Inappropriate or disparaging comments about the Council, colleagues or the Parish should be avoided.
- 5.3 Social media interactions can be copied and widely disseminated in a way that people are unlikely to be able to control. The Council will take a particularly serious view of any misconduct that occurs through the use of social media.
- 5.4 Councillors should not operate a social media account or profile that purports to be operated on or on behalf of the Council without express permission of the Council.

6 Personal / Business Use

- 6.1 The Council's communications facilities are provided for the purposes of Council business. A certain amount of limited and responsible personal use by users is also permitted.
- 6.2 Although the Council's e-mail facilities are provided for the purposes of Council business, Councillors may occasionally want to use them for their own personal purposes. This is permitted on the condition that all the procedures and rules set out in this policy are complied with. Councillors should, however, be aware, that if they choose to make use of Council facilities for personal correspondence, they can expect very little privacy because the Council may need to monitor communications.
- 6.3 Under no circumstances may the Council's facilities be used in connection with the operation or management of any other business or for commercial activity. The facilities should also not be used by Councillors for general party-political activity and, in particular must not be used for campaigning or election activities. They may, however, be used for correspondence within the political group, general political research, casework as a councillor and similar activities. If you have any doubts, please ask.
- 6.4 Councillors must also ensure that personal e-mail use:
 - does not take priority over their responsibilities as a Councillor;
 - is minimal;
 - does not cause unwarranted expense or liability to be incurred by the Council;
 - does not have a negative impact on the Council in any way; and
 - is lawful and complies with this policy.
- 6.5 After being read, personal e-mail should be either deleted or forwarded to a personal e-mail account and then deleted.
- 6.6 If Councillors make personal use of Council facilities for sending and receiving e-mail they will be treated as having agreed to abide by the conditions imposed for their use and consented to the Council monitoring personal e-mail in accordance with this policy. Councillors who do not agree or consent to this must not use the system to send or receive personal e-mail.

7 Breaches of this Policy

- 7.1 If Council rules and procedures are not followed, then use of Council facilities may be curtailed or withdrawn. Serious breaches of this policy may amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct and the withdrawal of permission to use Council equipment for personal purposes.
- 7.2 Some aspects of this policy also deal with matters which amount to criminal offences under the Computer Misuse Act.
- 7.3 Councillors should ask the Clerk for clarification if there is anything in this policy that they do not understand.

8 Review

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed every four years unless changes in legislation dictate otherwise.

USER AGREEMENT

I have received a copy of the following Lyndhurst Parish Council documents.

- Councillors e-mail, internet and tablet acceptable use policy

I understand that the Council's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) systems and associated equipment are to be used for conducting council business or for personal use only as stated in the policy documents.

I have read the policy documents and agree to abide by all the terms and conditions set out in the documents for the duration association with the council.

I am aware that the Council may, where it considers it to have reasonable grounds to do so, and without notice to me, monitor or examine all or any telephone, e-mail or internet traffic and documents or files initiated, manipulated, stored, responded to or examined by me.

I am aware that violations of the policies may amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct. I understand that I may be personally liable for any criminal offence, which I may commit in relation to these policies.

I will take care of my tablet and bring to meetings in a charged and useable condition.

I further understand that my internet usage and e-mail communications must at all times reflect the good name and character of Lyndhurst Parish Council.

I understand that the policies and this document may be amended at any time and that I will be informed of changes in the manner described in the policy.

I accept that I am responsible for ensuring my personal knowledge and understanding of any change to the policy.

Signature

Date.....

Printed name