



STOKESLEY TOWN COUNCIL

INFORMATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the policy of Stokesley Town Council (the 'Council') with respect to Information and Information Technology

2 EQUIPMENT

All Information Technology (IT) equipment (e.g. desktop computers, laptop computers, scanners, copiers and printers) and their associated hardware and software are, and will remain, the property of Stokesley Town Council. As authorised users the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk, and any councillor who is provided with equipment, are responsible for the safe keeping and appropriate use of such equipment and software.

No person provided with such equipment must attempt to modify or alter the hardware without the permission of the Council, or in an emergency situation, the Chair of the Council. Similarly, no person must attempt to modify, delete or alter the set-up of the Windows environment or any other software loaded on the Council's computer. No person should install any software at all, without permission of the Council.

No person will make illegal copies of the Council's software for use by him / herself or third parties, or in any way violate the Council's software licence agreements.

Only the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and persons authorised by the Council will use the Council's IT equipment, which will only be used for the purpose of the Council's business for the production and storage of documents and for the accessing of information.

3 FAULTS

In the event of any hardware or software fault advice should be sought in the first instance from the Clerk and then from the approved IT suppliers.

4 ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE INTERNET FROM THE COUNCIL'S COMPUTERS

Intentional use of the computers to access, transmit or retrieve any material or communications that are obscene, pornographic, or sexually explicit; of a discriminatory or harassing nature or which are derogatory to any individual or group; or are threatening in nature is prohibited.

No person should download files, including applications and games that are not connected with work for the Council. Any sites which require registration or payment for services must not be accessed without the prior authority of the Council.

5 USE OF EMAIL

The use of email to exchange correspondence requires the same professional standards as other forms of communication. No employee or councillor should send or forward mail which is defamatory or offensive for whatever reason.

All employees and councillors agree that e-mail addresses in the format xxx.xxx@stokesleytowncouncil.gov.uk are the intellectual property of the Council.

In order to protect the Council from viruses, e-mail attachments which might contain macros (word processor and spreadsheet files) or applications, should not be opened if they are from a sender whom any employee or councillor does not recognise or trust. They should be deleted.

Upon a councillor resigning or not being re-elected, the Clerk will delete the relevant e-mail address in the format xxx.xxx@stokesleytowncouncil.gov.uk not later than 7 days following the date of resignation or non-re-election.

6 COMPLIANCE WITH COUNCIL POLICIES

All employees and councillors must ensure they comply with the published policies of the Council when using Council-owned or personal IT equipment and software. This includes, but is not limited to, the Data Protection Policy.

Additionally, all employees and councillors must ensure they comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations.

Any outputs uploaded to the Council's website should comply with the accessibility guidance in place at the time.

7 DATA PROTECTION

All employees and councillors must not include in the text of e-mails to be sent, or in files attached to them, sensitive personal data without appropriate protection in order to comply the Council's obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

E-mail addresses should be treated as confidential and care taken that private e-mail addresses are not wrongly distributed. E-mails to multiple addresses outside of Councillors and the Clerk should be sent as blind copies (bcc).

8 PASSWORDS

All the Council's computers, including laptops, are password protected.

The main desktop PCs are routinely used by only the Town Clerk and Assistant Clerk. The passwords for these PCs will be additionally stored in the code number protected safe in the Council office in the Town Hall. The code number to the safe will be shared with the Chairman and Vice Chairman (at the time). Only in the presence of a witness will either the Chairman or Vice Chairman, in exceptional circumstances, have access to the safe to access the computer passwords. The code number to the safe will be changed when either a new Chairman or a new Vice Chairman takes office. The computer passwords will routinely be changed by the Town Clerk and Assistant Clerk at least quarterly and exceptionally more frequently.

9 BACKUP OF FILES AND FOLDERS

All electronic files and folders on the main desktop PCs used by the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk are backed up to the Cloud on a daily basis.

10 RELINQUISHMENT OF EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION UPON TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT / RESIGNATION / NON-RE-ELECTION

Upon the Clerk or the Assistant Clerk ceasing to be employed by the Council, or a councillor resigning or not being re-elected, he / she will relinquish all IT equipment owned by the Council not later than 7 days following the termination date / leave date whichever is the soonest. No files or folders will be tampered with or destroyed prior to the equipment being returned to the Council.

Upon a councillor resigning or not being re-elected, he / she will delete from all personal IT equipment all files relating to **non-public** Council matters or activities.

11 NON-COMPLIANCE

Indications of non-compliance with the provisions of this Policy will be investigated, as appropriate, initially by the Employment Committee.

Subject to the findings of any such investigation, non-compliance with the provisions of this Policy will lead to appropriate disciplinary action, which could include dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct. Furthermore, publication of some materials may not only amount to a disciplinary offence, but also a criminal offence, in which case the issue will be reported to the police for them to take appropriate action.

Failure to return all IT equipment owned by the Council not later than 7 days following the termination date / leave date, whichever is the soonest, will result in the Council taking appropriate action to recover its loss and / or the value of its loss, including legal action if necessary.

12 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Clerk and Assistant Clerk to the Council and any councillor to whom IT equipment is provided must receive a copy of these guidelines and sign to acknowledge their receipt and that they have been read and understood the guidelines.

I have received a copy of this IT policy and acknowledge that I have read and understood them and agree to abide by its provisions:

Signed

Position

Date