

WICKEN PARISH COUNCIL

Use of emails

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Email is regularly used for the management and administration of the business of Wicken Parish Council.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This Policy applies to:
 - 2.1.1. employees
 - 2.1.2. elected members (councillors)
 - 2.1.3. members of the public
 - 2.1.4. other people, companies and organisations in contact with Wicken Parish Council
- 2.2. Any email sent to one or more of the above categories in relation to Parish Council business is governed by this policy

3. POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1. Wicken Parish Council encourages the effective use of email. Such use must always be lawful and must not compromise the Council's information and the Clerk's computer system.
- 3.2. All users must ensure that their use of email will not adversely affect the Council or its business and not damage the Council's or its employees' reputations or otherwise violate any of the Council's policies.

4. USE OF EMAIL FACILITIES

- 4.1. All users must use email responsibly. Wicken Parish Council reserves the right to take disciplinary or legal action against any person who fails to comply with this policy.
- 4.2. All email users communicating with or from Wicken Parish Council must have a proprietary anti-virus and anti-malware program on the device which they use.
- 4.3. All users must accept that communications to the Clerk's email address are not secure or encrypted and they should take particular care when sending potentially sensitive or confidential information.
- 4.4. All users must accept and agree that communications both to and from the Council via email may be monitored for the purpose of ensuring appropriate use of this methodology. Users should also be aware that deleted emails may still be accessible from back-up procedures

5. GENERAL GUIDANCE

- 5.1. Email users are advised to be aware of the following:
 - 5.1.1. Messages sent to groups of people must be relevant to all concerned
 - 5.1.2. Messages sent by this method are not necessarily seen by the recipient within the current week. If the message is urgent, an alternative method of contact should be used.
 - 5.1.3. The Parish Council does not expect its Councillors to respond to emails at a weekend (Friday evening to Monday morning) unless the individual Councillor chooses and would prefer to do so.
 - 5.1.4. Wicken Parish Council cannot be held responsible for damages, losses, expenses, demands and/or claims that may be suffered by a user of this facility
 - 5.1.5. The Clerk may, from time to time, choose to operate a filtering system in order to monitor offensive or clearly inappropriate material and may quarantine any messages in that category.

6. BUSINESS USE

- 6.1. The Clerk has the sole authority to purchase or acquire goods or services on behalf of the Council via email.
- 6.2. Users are informed that email messages have the same status in law as written correspondence and are subject to the same legal implications, e.g. may be required to be disclosed in Court.
- 6.3. Users are required to apply the same high standards to emails as those applied to written correspondence.
- 6.4. Email inboxes must be checked regularly to ascertain all correspondence within that system

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- 6.5. The Parish Clerk must ensure that the Clerk's inbox is checked during times of absence due to holiday or sickness.
- 6.6. Discovery of an email which appears to contain a virus, or a solution to correct a previously transmitted virus, must be reported immediately to the Clerk.
- 6.7. All users must comply with the relevant copyright, licence terms and conditions when copying and/or downloading material
- 6.8. Users accept that there is no guarantee of delivery of emails unless acceptance of delivery is requested of the recipient.
- 6.9. All users must comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 when placing personal data in messages or attachments.

7. **INAPPROPRIATE USE**

- 7.1. Users must not use email to abuse or inflame others or to bully, harass or threaten anyone. Responding to abuse, harassment or threatening will not be accepted as an excuse for inappropriate language and/or behaviour.
- 7.2. The use of capitals within an email will be regarded as "shouting" and falls under abusive behaviour.
- 7.3. Recipients of abusive or threatening emails related to the business of the Council must immediately inform the Clerk or Chairman.
- 7.4. Users must not send emails containing obscene, abusive or profane language.
- 7.5. Users must not send, access, display, download, copy or circulate information containing stories, jokes or anecdotes that contain any of the following:
 - 7.5.1. pornography or sexually orientated images
 - 7.5.2. gambling
 - 7.5.3. gaming (playing computer games)
 - 7.5.4. promotion of unlawful discrimination of any kind
 - 7.5.5. promotion of racial or religious hatred
 - 7.5.6. threats including the promotion of violence
 - 7.5.7. fraudulent or illegal material promotion of illegal and/or unlawful acts
 - 7.5.8. information considered to be offensive, inappropriate or disrespectful to others
 - 7.5.9. unauthorised and copyrighted material including music
- 7.6. Users must not send, receive or disseminate proprietary data or any confidential information belonging to Wicken Parish Council to or from a third party unless authorised.
- 7.7. Wicken Parish Council reserves the right to report to the Police any email, intentionally sent or otherwise, that contains material which appears to breach one or more Acts of Parliament.

8. **MONITORING**

- 8.1. Serious breaches of this policy by a Council employee will amount to gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.
- 8.2. Serious breaches of this policy by councillors, members of the public or members of any other organisation or company will result in legal or police action.
- 8.3. The Parish Clerk will be responsible for the monitoring and administration of this policy on behalf of Wicken Parish Council and will report breaches to the Chairman of the Council for advice about further action.

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