

# WELFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## IT Policy - Policy on use of IT equipment

Welford Parish Council's internet equipment of a designated laptop and the email address [welfordpcclerk@btinternet.com](mailto:welfordpcclerk@btinternet.com) is provided to support the organisations legitimate business requirements and used solely by the Parish Clerk. Limited use of the email facility to send email messages for personal purposes is regarded as acceptable provided that the conditions as specified in this policy have been fulfilled.

**Equipment:** The IT equipment, associated hardware and software are the property of Welford Parish Council. As the authorised user the Parish Clerk is responsible for its safe keeping and appropriate use and must not attempt to modify or alter the hardware without the permission of the Parish Council. Similarly the Parish Clerk must not attempt to modify, delete or alter the set-up of the Windows environment or any software loaded on Welford Parish Council workstation and should not install any software at all, without permission.

The Parish Clerk should not make illegal copies of Welford Parish Council software for personal use or for use by third parties, or in any way violate the software licence agreements.

**Faults:** In the event of any hardware or software fault the Parish Clerk should seek advice from the Chairman or his authorised representative.

### Acceptable Use of the Internet Using Welford Parish Council Equipment

Intentional use of Internet resources 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.

Similarly there should be no downloading of files, including application and games that are not connected with work for Welford Parish Council. Any sites which require registration or payment for services must not be accessed without due approval of the Council.

Security Firewall/Virus protection to be kept updated and all files to be backed up on a regular basis. Software licences to be maintained.

### Use of Email

The use of email to exchange correspondence requires the same professional standards as other forms of communication. The Parish Clerk should not send or forward mail which is defamatory or offensive for whatever reason and Welford Parish Councillors should also adhere to these standards when corresponding on council/parishioner matters.

In order to protect Welford Parish Council from viruses, email attachments which might contain macros (word processor and spreadsheet files) or applications,

should not be opened if they are from a sender whom you do not recognise, simply delete.

## **Other Forms of Social Media Such as the Website and Facebook**

1. May be used to ·

- Post minutes and dates of meetings
- Advertise events and activities
- Deliver good news stories linked to website or press pages
- 'Share' information from partners i.e. Police, Health etc.
- Announce new information
- Advertise vacancies
- Post or Share information from other Parish related community groups/clubs/associations/bodies e.g. Schools, sports clubs and community groups
- Refer resident queries to the clerk and all other councillors

2. Code of Practice - When participating in any online communication:

- Be responsible and respectful; be direct, informative, brief and transparent
- Do not hide your identity and affiliation to the Parish Council
- Take responsibility for accuracy and never make false or misleading statements
- Parish Councillors should not present themselves in a way that might cause embarrassment
- All Parish Councillors need to be mindful of the information they post on sites and make sure personal opinions are not published as being that of the Council or bring the Council into disrepute or is contrary to the Council's Code of Conduct or any other Policies
- Keep the tone of your comments respectful and informative, never condescending or "loud." Use sentence case format, not capital letters, or write in red to emphasis points
- Refrain from posting controversial or potentially inflammatory remarks. Language that may be deemed as offensive relating in particular to race, sexuality, disability, gender, age or religion or belief should not be published on any social media site
- Avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications
- Avoid using an individual's name unless it is clearly appropriate or you have written permission to do so
- Permission to publish photographs or videos on social media sites should be sought from the persons or organisations in the video or photograph before being uploaded.

3. Respect the privacy of other councillors and residents.

4. Do not post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate laws or regulations such as libel and copyright.

5. Residents and Councillors should note that not all communication requires a response.

a. There will not be immediate responses to communications as they may be discussed by the Parish Council and all responses will be agreed by the Parish Council.

b. If a matter needs further consideration it may be raised at either the open forum or as a full agenda item for consideration by a quorum of Councillors. Again the poster shall be informed via the page or direct message that this is the case.

d. Where a question could be viewed as of a contentious nature this shall be referred to the Parish clerk. The poster will be informed by way of response to this fact and also be invited to correspond with the Parish Clerk directly.

e. Some communication from residents and other third parties may be required to be discussed at a Parish Council meeting. When this is necessary the item will be placed on the next available agenda. Any response will then be included in the minutes of the meeting.

6. The nominated moderator or moderators shall remove any negative posts which may contain personal and inflammatory remarks, libellous or defamatory information without further comment or notification.

a. Spell and grammar check everything.

b. Correct any errors promptly.

7. Councillors or parishioners who have any concerns regarding content placed on social media sites should report them to the Clerk of the Council. Misuse of such sites in a manner that is contrary to this and other policies could result in action being taken.

### **Data protection**

Neither the Parish Clerk nor any member of Welford Parish Council should include in the text of emails to be sent on behalf of the council, or in files attached to them, sensitive personal data without appropriate protection in order to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018.

The Parish Clerk and all members of Welford Parish Council should recognise Email addresses as confidential and be responsible for taking care that private email addresses are not wrongly circulated. Email to multiple addresses outside of Councillors and the Clerk should be sent as blind copy, (bcc).

### **Freedom of Information**

It is wise to remember that all usage of Welford Parish Council IT equipment and systems is in the public domain and as such any or all usage can be requested for disclosure.

### **Non-compliance**

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

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.

The Policy will be reviewed annually.

Signed .....Nigel Brotherton.....

Chairman Welford Parish Council

Signed .....Ian Kelly.....

Clerk to Welford Parish Council

6<sup>th</sup> December 2018