ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

# Introduction

This document sets out West Dean Parish Council’s (“the Council”) policy for the use of email facilities (personal and dedicated) and more general computer use (BYOD) in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) for the purposes of the business of the Council.

# 2. Objectives

The objectives of the policy are to ensure that the email addresses and BYODs used by Councillors are:

* in accordance with the values, principles and standards of the Council and
* ensure GDPR is complied with so as not to incur legal liability.

# 3. Acceptance of the Policy

The policy applies to all West Dean Parish Council Cllrs. Each Cllr is responsible for individually complying with this policy.

# 4. Security

Access to Cllrs email accounts must be restricted to individual users and MUST not be shared accounts.

* The access of each user is controlled by means of their own password.
* Passwords must be kept confidential and not disclosed to others; disclosure could result in email misuse being attributed to the owner of the password.
* Care should be taken not to leave a device that is connected to Cllr emails unattended or unlocked.
* Breaches of security of the computer system e.g. disclosure of personal passwords, giving unauthorised access to emails to external parties, may result in action from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).

For further protection of personal data, all files containing names, telephone numbers, addresses and email addresses, etc. must be password protected. These files are likely to take the form of internal databases, registers etc.

If you suspect there has been data breach or your email/IT has been hacked you must inform the Parish Clerk immediately. The Parish Clerk will then decide the most appropriate way to deal with the breach.

# 5. Guidance

This section of the document provides guidance on the acceptable use of Councillor emails. It must be read in conjunction with the Council’s other policies, e.g GDPR (Data Protection) and Document Retention.

## Email as a Communication Medium

Email is a standard means of communicating with customers and internal colleagues and as such the Council expects email messages to be written in a professional business-like manner the same way as all other business communications, e.g. letters, memos, faxes, scanned documents have always been.

On the occasions when it is appropriate to send an email please consider the following before composing and sending the message:

* Make sure you set the language on your device to English (UK).
* Be clear as to the objective of the message you want to send.
* Summarise the objective in the subject box so it is clear to the receiver prior to opening the message.
* Ensure you are you sending it to the right people, i.e. only those required to react/take action in response to it.
* Compose the message clearly and succinctly as a business communication should be.
* Get the tone right. Be polite at all times, terseness can be misinterpreted. Use humour and irony sparingly, it can be all too easily misinterpreted.
* Don’t type in capitals as this is considered to be shouting and is one of the rudest things you can do.
* Don’t use ‘cc’. The only people who need to receive your email are those required to react/take action in response to it. It is perfectly acceptable for anyone ‘cc’ on an email to put it at the bottom of their task list or to delete it without reading it.
* Don’t set Outlook to automatically request a read receipt. This facility should only be used for the rare
* occasions when there is a valid business reason for tracking the receipt.
* Don’t ‘reply to all’ if not absolutely necessary.
* Don’t reply to an email message when angry, as you may regret it later. Once the message has been sent, you will not be able to recover it.
* Don’t mark things as urgent if they aren’t, because when you really do have to do an urgent message it may not be treated in the way it deserves.

## Personal Email Use

The use of West Dean Parish Council’s email (**currently only applicable for the Parish Clerk**) for personal purposes is not permitted.

## Email Awareness

Email is not a secure method of transmission - it should not be assumed that any email communication is secure or private. Users should take this into account particularly when emailing confidential or sensitive information.

## Prohibited Email Activities

The following email activities may breach the Councils ‘Code of Conduct’ and/or prompt action by the Information Commissioners Office:

* + Examining, changing or using another person’s files, output or user name without explicit authorisation.
	+ Sending or forwarding any material that is obscene, defamatory or hateful, or which is intended to annoy, harass or intimidate others.
	+ Sending or forwarding emails which are likely to damage the reputation of the Council.
	+ Sending or forwarding electronic chain letters.
	+ Soliciting emails that are unrelated to Council activities or soliciting non Council business for personal gain or profit.
	+ Intentionally interfering with the normal operation of the Council, including the propagation of computer viruses and the generation of sustained high volume network traffic.

## Email Housekeeping

* Create folders in your inbox and file your emails accordingly – this will make it much easier to manage them.
* Don’t retain emails in your inbox or sent folder any longer than absolutely necessary, especially those with large attachments. Move them to your deleted folder.
* Empty your deleted and junk folders on a weekly basis.
* Don’t post your email address on web sites and other public parts of the Internet as you will be deluged with spam.

*Any communication by a Cllr that is not associated directly with West Dean Parish Council business (i.e. it is carried out by a Cllr acting on their own or on behalf of another) is not considered as acting as a Cllr by the ICO ‘the business of the Council’.*

# 6. Email Access

On the receipt of a Freedom of Information or Subject Access Request it may necessary for the Parish Clerk (or nominated councillor) to be given access to the Cllr email account (whether that be a personal email account or not). You will be informed if this is necessary to allow the Council to fulfil the request.

*This is a non-contractual document that is subject to revision and re-issue in accordance with changing legislation and needs of West Dean Parish Council.*

Approved by West Dean Parish Council 06 November 2019

Review November 2020