



# GRENDON UNDERWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

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## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

CP07.02

Authorised & Adopted: **GRENDON UNDERWOOD PARISH COUNCIL**

Authorisation & last review as shown in the Policy Review Record CD08A

CHANGE LOG	
26 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	Adopted by resolution of full Council at a properly constituted general meeting held 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2018 - minute: 1806.05-1
02- 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2020	New email & web addresses

### I PURPOSE

Electronic mail – email – and documentation in electronic file form are increasingly being used for Council business communications, replacing the traditional forms of communication such as fax and letter. The points outlined below provide guidelines on the access and use of Grendon Underwood Parish Council electronic communications hardware & software systems.

The use of Grendon Underwood Parish Council Internet facilities is a privilege, not a right either of Membership or employment, which may be revoked at any time for misconduct. This Policy establishes the conditions under which access and use of the Council electronic Internet facility is granted.

Grendon Underwood Parish Council recognises that the efficient management of its electronic communications, and the equipment that generates it, is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the Parish Council.

This Policy provides the framework within which Council will effectively manage and conduct its administrative arrangements in relation to the requirements of the relevant legislation such as to ensure the timely and efficient compliance with its obligations and to deliver its duties in regard to the expectations of the residents of the Parish.

It lays out how Councillors and council employees are expected to abide by these requirements.

Council has made every effort to ensure all relevant statutory requirements to which a council is subject are encompassed in this Policy but confirm that, in any event, those requirements apply whether or not they are incorporated herein.

This Policy has been drawn up within the context of the Parish Council's obligations as an employer, its Freedom of Information Policy and its Data Protection Policy and every effort has been made to ensure this Policy is consistent with other Council Policies where relevant.

#### Notes:

- Where the word “councillor” is used, unless the context suggests otherwise, the meaning is intended to include non-councillors, with or without voting rights, and council employees.
- A ‘co-opted member’ is a person who is not an elected member of the Council but who has been co-opted onto the Council, or a committee or sub-committee properly constituted by Council, by a majority of elected Councillors at a properly constituted meeting of Council and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of Council or that committee or sub-committee.
- A ‘meeting’ is a properly constituted meeting of the Council, any of its committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.
- Unless otherwise expressed, a reference to a Member of the Council includes a co-opted member of the Council.
- Where gender specific wording is used, meaning is intended to be gender neutral.

### II SCOPE – applies to all Members and employees.

### III POLICY I **Email & Electronic File Data Policy.**

- Email is to be used only for Council business and not for any personal purposes.

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- Employees are not to encrypt their email messages unless instructed to do so by a Councillor.
- Council email is not to be used for illegal or wrongful purposes. Employees are not to use Council email systems to infringe the copyright or other intellectual property rights of third parties, to distribute defamatory, fraudulent or harassing messages. Failure to comply with this will be a disciplinary offence.
- Authorised personnel may access or disclose any electronic messages or files in an employee's mailbox for any valid business purpose. Employees will not be informed when or if this is to take place.
- Where necessary by statute or for any other legal purpose and by directive of the Chair, emails and electronic documents relevant to the course of business of Grendon Underwood Parish Council should be printed out and filed in the same manner as written correspondence via existing procedures.
- Email accounts are to be used only by those authorised by Council. Users are not to share their account name or password and will be held responsible for all activity on their account.
- Subscription to mailing lists, bulletin boards, chat groups and commercial online services and other information services, unless specifically requested by a Councillor, is not allowed.
- Occasionally, authorised personnel may check a random batch of email messages to ensure Council policy is being adhered to. Employees will not be informed when or if this is to take place. Users should be aware that, even after an email has been deleted from the system; backup copies may still exist on the system for several weeks.
- The sending and receiving of pornographic material is strictly prohibited. Any member of staff found distributing or downloading such material may face disciplinary procedures.
- The Council recognises the difficulty in preventing outside individuals from sending pornographic material to an employee's business email address. However, if such material is received, due to an individual distributing his or her email address for non-business purposes, then he or she will be held responsible for all material received to his or her address.
- If malicious or pornographic material is received to a user's email address, to prevent a user from being held responsible for the receipt of such material, either the Chair of the Personnel Committee or the Chair of Council are to be contacted in order to exclude receipt of future messages from the offending source.
- Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, which could lead to dismissal.

## **IV POLICY II Internet Usage Policy.**

Internet access will be limited to authorised personnel only and must be used solely to facilitate the daily running of Council business.

If non-authorised personnel wish to use the Council Internet facilities they must request permission from the Chair of Council and must justify both the desired usage and estimated surfing time.

Internet facilities are not to be used for accessing dubious websites or for downloading free software unless such software is deemed to be pertinent to the running of systems by the Chair of Council.

Any unauthorised or authorised member of staff found viewing, accessing or downloading illicit/pornographic material will face disciplinary procedures.

Council Internet facilities are not to be used for the retrieval or forwarding of any email messages from non-approved accounts, accessing bulletin boards, chat rooms and discussion groups unless specifically requested by a Councillor and passed by resolution of Council for valid Council business

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, which could lead to dismissal.

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Dated: 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020