

SWALLOWFIELD PARISH COUNCIL



IT POLICY

*Adopted at the
Parish Council Meeting held on
11th November 2025*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Swallowfield Parish Council recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations, and communications.

This policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of IT resources and email by council members, employees, volunteers, and contractors.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals who use Swallowfield Parish Council's IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts.

3 ACCEPTABLE USE OF IT RESOURCES AND EMAIL

Swallowfield Parish Council IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks. Limited personal use is permitted, provided it does not interfere with work responsibilities or violate any part of this policy. All users must adhere to ethical standards, respect copyright and intellectual property rights, and avoid accessing inappropriate or offensive content.

4 DEVICE AND SOFTWARE USAGE

Where possible, authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by Swallowfield Parish Council for work-related tasks.

Unauthorised installation of software on authorised devices, including personal software, is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.

Do not use USB sticks or personal devices to.

5 DATA MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY

All sensitive and confidential Swallowfield Parish Council data should be stored and transmitted securely using approved methods. Regular data backups should be performed to prevent data loss, and secure data destruction methods should be used when necessary.

6 NETWORK AND INTERNET USAGE

Swallowfield Parish Council's network and internet connections should be used responsibly and efficiently for official purposes. Downloading and sharing copyrighted material without proper authorisation is prohibited.

7 EMAIL COMMUNICATION

Email accounts provided by Swallowfield Parish Council are for official communication only. Emails should be professional and respectful in tone.

Care should be taken when distributing confidential or sensitive information under GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018 (e.g. personal data, financial details, legal and commercial matters). Councillors should not share such information outside the council domain; all communication of this nature will be undertaken by the Clerk. Only share such data to those councillors who need it for council business.

Personal or business email addresses should not be used for council business

Be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

8 PASSWORD AND ACCOUNT SECURITY

Swallowfield Parish Council users are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts and passwords. Passwords should be strong and not shared with others. Regular password changes are encouraged to enhance security.

9 MOBILE DEVICES AND REMOTE WORK

Mobile devices provided by Swallowfield Parish Council should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication. When working remotely, users should follow the same security practices as if they were in the office.

10 USE OF USB STICKS AND REMOVEABLE MEDIA

The use of USB sticks and other removable media is discouraged due to the risk of data loss, malware, and unauthorised access.

If the use of USB sticks is unavoidable:

- Only council-issued, encrypted USB sticks may be used.

Sensitive or confidential data must never be stored on unencrypted or personal USB sticks.

- USB sticks must be scanned for viruses and malware before use.
- Data on USB sticks should be deleted as soon as it is no longer required.
- Lost or stolen USB sticks must be reported immediately to the Clerk or designated IT contact.

Where possible, use secure cloud storage or council-approved file-sharing platforms instead of USB sticks.

11 EMAIL MONITORING

Swallowfield Parish Council reserves the right to monitor email communications to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant laws. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

12 RETENTION AND ARCHIVING

Emails should be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organised inbox.

13 REPORTING SECURITY INCIDENTS

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the designated IT point of contact for investigation and resolution. Report any email-related security incidents or breaches to the IT administrator immediately.

14 TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Swallowfield Parish Council will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors will receive regular training on email security and best practices.

15 COMPLIANCE AND CONSEQUENCES

Breach of this IT and Email Policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges and further consequences as deemed appropriate.

16 POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.

17 CONTACTS

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact Mrs. E. Halson, Clerk.

All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of Swallowfield Parish Council's IT and email systems. By adhering to this IT and Email Policy, Swallowfield Parish Council aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment that supports its mission and goals.