Ottery St Mary Town Council

Information Technology Policy

Reviewed April 2018
Review Date April 2020

THE POLICY

The spread of electronic communications and access to multiple sources of information and access through the internet is an increasingly necessary part of work for everyone, This accessibility offers advantages, but also brings risks in its wake that need to be taken into consideration. Recent events in several employment sectors demonstrate that for the sake of the employer and the employee it is now appropriate to put in place policy relating to the use of information technology mechanisms.

Staff and Councillors

All staff and Councillors are required to read and comply with the conditions of this policy in respect of the way in which the communications mechanisms are utilised. The policy includes computers and all other electronic media.

1. The Council recognises that reasonable use of e-mail facilities to communicate brief personal non offensive messages is acceptable and is a privilege that the Council is prepared to allow, but the amount of time spent must not be abused or it will be stopped.
2. The Council recognises that access to professional information by e-mail or through websites is a necessary requirement of the job of the Town Clerk and other staff and is permitted.
3. Staff and users are expected to use technology in a courteous, reasonable and responsible manner.
4. The following activities are not acceptable and anyone found to be involved in them may face disciplinary action. In certain instances the matter will be considered to be gross misconduct:

    - Receiving, sending or displaying messages or pictures that are offensive or may be construed to be offensive in nature
    - Using obscene language
    - Improper use of e-mail and internet
    - Damaging computers, computers systems or computer networks
    - Violating copyright laws
    - Using others' passwords and identities
    - Issuing of passwords to third parties unless authorised to do so; trespassing in others' folders, works or files

- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Employing the system for commercial purposes
- Employing the system for illegal activities
- Downloading any commercial software
- Use of personal mobile phones in meetings and in the general workplace (unless authorised).

5.   The Council encourages electronic communications with local, national and international organisations

6.   The Council cannot control and is not responsible for the accuracy or content of information gathered over the internet. Security is maintained by appropriate software, internal computer security settings and passwords

7.   It is a requirement of the Council and the duty of all staff to avoid deliberate use of the Council's internet connections and technology for inappropriate use. Staff should immediately alert the Clerk or the Chairman of the Human Resource Management Committee (`the Committee`)of any suspect material found stored on any computer or elsewhere on the premises.

8.   The computer equipment and software must be used as installed. Staff and users may not install/uninstall, delete or change anything on Council computers. Any requirements to change anything should be authorised by the Clerk and or the Chairman of the Committee

9.   The Council uses a virus-checker on the computers. Staff are forbidden to load disks or memory sticks that have not been virus checked by the system

10.   Access to chat rooms, gaming and other associated sites are not permitted on Council computers

11.   The Council's email address is only to be used for Council business and must not be used for other personal use.

Public and Volunteers

All members of the public and volunteers are required to read and comply with the conditions of the policy in respect of the way in which the communications mechanisms are utilised. The policy includes computers and all other electronic media.

It is a requirement that members of the public/volunteers adhere to the policy for the use of a public computer (if applicable) and confirm their understanding of it by signing the agreement form (Appendix A).

Social Media
See separate Social Media Policy

APPENDIX A

Policy for the Use of a Public Computer

Please read the following information about acceptable use of public computers. Please note you must sign the User Registry before using a computer and remember to sign off after you have finished.

Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult (18+) when using the computer.

<u>Whilst connected to the Internet YOU MUST NOT</u>

- Access, download, possess or transmit in any way, illegal material
- Access, send, publish, distribute, circulate or otherwise propagate any material that may be deemed to be offensive to or of an indecent, obscene nature or menacing in character nor send, with the intention of causing annoyance or needless anxiety, a message that you know to be false, or to cause such a message to be sent or to persistently make use of our service for that purpose
- Gain, or attempt to gain, unauthorised access to any computer systems for any purpose, including accessing the internet
- Intentionally impair or attempt to impair the operation of any computer, prevent or hinder access to any program or data held in any computer or to impair the operation of any such program or the reliability of any such data (this could include deleting files, changing desktop settings, introducing viruses, etc.)
- Infringe upon the rights of others, including the right of privacy and copyright (an example would be sharing, without permission of the copyright owner, protected material such as a music or video file).

If you are in any doubt as to the legality of anything, ask the Clerk before proceeding. Please notify the Clerk of any issues or contraventions to the above policy. If individuals contravene any of these statements they may be blocked from using this public service.

Please complete the form below to acknowledge that you agree to abide by these terms and conditions of Ottery St Mary Town Council Use of a Public Computer policy.

Forename: ………………………………………………………………… (Capital letters)

Surname: ……………………………… …………………………………. (Capital letters)

Date: …………………………………………………..

Signature: …………………………………………..