Puttenham Parish Council

IT POLICY

1. **Introduction**
   Puttenham 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 Puttenham Parish Council's IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts.

3. **Acceptable use of IT resources and email**
   Puttenham 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. **Data management and security**
   All sensitive and confidential Puttenham 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.

5. **Email communication**
   Email accounts provided by Puttenham Parish Council are for official communication only. Emails should be professional and respectful in tone. Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless it is encrypted. Be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

6. **Password and account security**
   Puttenham Parish Council users are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts and passwords. Passwords should be strong and not shared with others.

7. **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.

8. **Reporting security incidents**
   All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the Clerk for investigation and resolution. Report any email-related security incidents or breaches to the Clerk immediately.

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

10. **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.

11. **Contacts**
    For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact the Clerk in the first instance.

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

    Adopted: July 2026

    Date of Review: July 2027