

Winterborne St Martin Parish Council

Information, Financial and Systems Access Policy

23 February 2023

Background

Over the past year the Council has suffered from Clerk churn, poor information handover and sickness absence. This has led to periods of no system access. It is clear that the Council needs a more robust electronic office that enables it to function in the absence of the Clerk, who only works 25 hours per month.

Information Management

1. We hold data without a retention policy for archiving purposes in the public interest and data must only be used for that purpose.
2. We will audit our personal data holdings annually.
3. The Clerk's document store, both confidential and non-confidential, will be replicated from the laptop to the Microsoft One Drive service. This is a secure service which will also act as a back-up in the event of laptop loss or failure.
4. On request Councillors will be given read only access to the non-confidential record store. This will give Councillors access to historic documents e.g., leases, contracts, financial documents, to help inform their decision-making. This read-only access must not be shared with others.
5. The Clerks mailbox will be made accessible to the Chair and Vice Chair so in the event of absence or extended periods of non-working hours the mailbox is still available.
6. The Clerk will save substantive emails as records in the document store.
7. The Clerk's mailbox will have a maximum of 2 years of mail items with last year's email being transferred to an archive folder every year. Councillor's holding data on personal device must do similar or delete the data after two years.
8. The Clerk will seek written confirmation from departed Councillors that they have deleted all the Council information they hold.
9. Passwords will not be saved to the Clerk's laptop, as was previously the practice, as this allows anybody with the laptop to access systems such as our bank account. Passwords will be recorded separately. This is in line with our Financial Regulation 6.16. *Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.*
10. Passwords will be recorded in a sealed envelope and retained by the Chairman as per Finance Regulation 6.11

11. An out-going Clerk must change telephone numbers and physical addresses on all systems where they have entered such information before their departure. All passwords will be changed by an incoming Clerk within 2 months.
12. All Council data held on personal devices remains the responsibility of the Council in terms of confidentiality integrity and availability.

Financial and Banking

1. The Clerk, as RFO, manages the accounts on behalf of the Council and will usually initiate payments.
2. As our Electronic Banking and Cheque book requires two “signatures” the Council will maintain the Clerk and three Councillors as approved to initiate or approve payments.
3. No individual may initiate or approve payment to themselves.
4. The council, and any members using computers for the council’s financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.