

**Swaffham Town Council****INTERNET USAGE POLICY**

The spread of electronic communications and access to multiple sources of information and access through the internet is an increasingly necessary part of the work for everyone. This accessibility confirms further advantages, but also brings risks in its wake that need to be taken into account. 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 a policy relating to the use of information technology mechanisms.

All members of staff 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 fax.

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 web sites is a necessary requirement of the job of Clerk to the Council and other staff and is permitted.

3. Staff and users are expected to use technology in a courteous, reasonable and responsible manner. 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 offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Improper use of e-mail and the internet:
  - Personal excessive use of Council or private e-mail
  - Personal use of the internet i.e. searches or downloads
  - Personal use of Social Media
- Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks
- Violating copyright laws
- Using other's passwords and identities
- Trespassing in other's folders, works, or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Employing the system for commercial purposes
- Employing the system for illegal activities
- Downloading any commercial software

4. The Council encourages electronic communications with local, national and international organisations; including the use of the Council operated social media.

5. 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.

6. 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 personal use. Staff should immediately alert the Town Clerk/Deputy Clerk or Mayor/Chairman of the Council of any suspect material found stored on any computer or elsewhere on the premises.

7. The computer equipment and software must be used as installed; as the Council use a common server system. Staff and users may not install / uninstall, delete or change anything on Council computers; unless instructed to do so. Any requirements to change anything should be authorised by the Town Clerk.

8. The Council uses a virus-checker (Anti-Virus Software as Security) on the computers. Staff are forbidden to load CD/memory sticks that have not been virus checked by the system.

9. Access to chat rooms and gaming are not permitted on Council computers.

**THIS POLICY MUST BE COMPLIED WITH AT ALL TIMES.**