



CHADDLEWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Information Technology (IT) Policy

Version number	2.0		
Adopted by	Full Council		
Date adopted	12th May 2026	Review due	Each annual meeting

- 1. Introduction:** Chaddleworth 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 (clerks, councillors, staff and volunteers) whether they are using council-owned or personal devices. Chaddleworth Parish Council's IT resources, whether council-owned or personal devices, include computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts. The authority endeavours to provide digital devices but acknowledges that some smaller authority staff and members may be using their own personal devices (phones, laptops or tablets) for council business (known as Bring Your Own Device, or BYOD). Everyone must adhere to this policy to maintain digital security.
- 3. Training and Awareness:** Chaddleworth Parish Council will source regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. You should engage regularly on email security and best practices, including but not limited to:
 - Parish Council Domain Helper Service's virtual cybersecurity workshops for councils <https://forms.office.com/e/3rw7Cq81dF>
 - The National Cyber Security Centre Cyber Security training for small organisations <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/training/cyber-security-for-small-organisations-scorm-v2/scormcontent/index.html>
 - and free Cyber Action Toolkit <https://cybertoolkit.service.ncsc.gov.uk>
- 4. Acceptable use of IT resources and email:** Chaddleworth 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.
- 5. Device and software usage:** Where possible, authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by Chaddleworth Parish Council for work-related tasks. Unauthorised installation of software on authorised devices, including personal software, is strictly prohibited because of security concerns.

6. **Use of your own personal devices:** If you are using your own device you must make sure you are:
 - i. using strong passwords for all your accounts (preferably using a password manager)
 - ii. using anti-virus software
 - iii. keeping all devices updates, install the latest operating system security updates, including operating system patches, antivirus software, and applications used for council business, within 14 days of their release.

7. **Data management and security:** This policy acknowledges the council's role as a Data Controller under UK GDPR. All staff and councillors share responsibility for handling personal data lawfully. All sensitive and confidential Chaddleworth 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. Data may be stored in a specific Council account and Google Drive is approved for this use. Councillors should not store council documents in personal cloud accounts such as personal iCloud or Google Drive. This cloud storage forms the Council's data backup, is updated weekly and maintained in separate folders for each Financial Year. As the cloud is used for the Clerk/RFO tasks, its integrity is constantly tested.

8. **Network and internet usage:** You must be careful about which Wi-Fi networks you join. Public Wi-Fi networks in coffee shops or on trains can be targeted by hackers. Always make sure you are using a trusted internet connection, which is password protected when carrying out official business. Chaddleworth 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.

9. **Password and account security:** Chaddleworth 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. You are responsible for maintaining the security of your accounts and passwords. Use the National Cyber Security Centre's advice for choosing a strong password. <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/top-tips-for-staying-secure-online/three-random-words> . For business continuity, login details and passwords need to be stored securely so they can be accessed by trusted individuals in an emergency and any shared system passwords changed when someone leaves the council.

10. **Email and communication:** All council business must be conducted using council-owned email addresses. Personal accounts such as Gmail, Outlook, Yahoo or similar aren't the best practice for official correspondence. Email accounts provided by Chaddleworth Parish Council are for official communication only, are owned by the council, not the individual using them. 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. Do not download and open anything if you are unsure who has sent it. Email accounts provided for official communication will use the @ChadleworthParish.gov.uk domain.

11. **Mobile devices and remote work:** Mobile devices provided by Chaddleworth 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.
12. **Email monitoring:** Chaddleworth 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. Clerks may need to access emails so that they respond to FOI or subject-access requests. If you are using a personal email account for council business, this is still subject to data protections laws and FOI requests. No monitoring of personal use will be carried out beyond the protection of council data.
13. **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.
14. **Website:** A website shall be provided and maintained by Chaddleworth Parish Council.
 - i. Purpose: To provide a useful, accessible, online resource and an information point for the benefit of all as a statutory duty in relation to the Transparency Regulations. To raise awareness of Chaddleworth Parish Council. To disseminate Chaddleworth Parish Council and other Regional Government information and notices.
 - ii. To include: Chaddleworth Parish Council contact details and Councillor list. Statutory documents and notices, including agenda, minutes, associated meeting papers and annual accounts. To provide news and articles to promote the activities of the Parish Council and other formal village groups. To provide contact information and links to other regional and national government organisations.
 - iii. The domain name of the website to be www.ChaddleworthParish.gov.uk
 - iv. Chaddleworth Parish Council retain overall responsibility for the content of the website. Day to day management, monitoring and approval of content (where necessary) is delegated to the Clerk. To comply with best practice on public websites the policy is to generally avoid presenting any names of individuals or businesses on the site itself. If for any reason it is considered necessary or appropriate to do so, then the explicit permission of the individuals concerned will be acquired in advance of any posting.
 - v. The website will be maintained to the accepted current levels of security and accessibility.
 - vi. Accessibility: The websites will meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (where applicable). An accessibility statement will be maintained on the website and kept under regular review. This statement should include reasons for not meeting accessibility requirements, ways to source alternative copies of non-accessible documents and a point of contact.

- vii. **Legal responsibility:** A Disclaimer will be included '*Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this website are correct at time of publication. The Council cannot accept responsibility for errors, omissions and changes to information subsequent to publication. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means unless with the permission of the publisher beforehand.*' All photographs published should have the permission of the copyright holder, general photographs of village events may be included, provided notices warn that photographs are being taken and may be included on the website, where images of children (14 years and under) are taken that are easily identifiable then written parental consent should be obtained.
15. **Finance:** All costs of domain, email and website hosting and management are to be met by Chaddleworth Parish Council. Where necessary or suitable, a third-party service provider shall be used.
16. **Social Media:** At this time the Council does not have official social media accounts. Social media should not be used to post publicly in the capacity as councillors. The main mechanism for Council's communication and transparency is the website. Any issues or complaints or disputes raised should be addressed to the Clerk initially.
17. **Reporting security incidents:** All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the designated IT point of contact and the clerk for investigation and resolution. ICO guidance recommends that personal and council data are kept separate, that any loss or theft of a device is reported immediately to the clerk, and that devices (including personal devices) allow for remote wipe or manual deletion of council data when required.
18. **Leavers' Procedure:** When a councillor or staff member leaves, their council email account is closed, any council data on personal devices is deleted, and all passwords to shared systems are changed. The clerk will only use the provided council email account to conduct council business and will not do so through any personal accounts.
19. **Compliance and consequences:** Breach of this IT and Email Policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges and further consequences as deemed appropriate.
20. **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.
21. **Contacts:** For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact the Clerk. All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of Chaddleworth Parish Council's IT and email systems. By adhering to this IT and Email Policy, Chaddleworth Parish Council aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment that supports its mission and goals.