Sedgeford Parish Council

Serving the Community

INTERNET USAGE POLICY

Internet usage

The use of the Internet by the clerk is permitted and encouraged where such use is part of the normal execution of an employee's job responsibilities. The Internet is to be used in a manner that is consistent with the Council's standards of conduct. Any information (including email messages) that has been downloaded from the Internet by whatever means should be checked for computer viruses before being loaded onto any machine which is connected to the Parish Council's network. This policy is necessary in order to avoid the Parish Council's information systems being subjected to computer hacking and software viruses.

Appropriate Usage

The Parish Council's connections to the internet are to be used for the Parish Council's business / provision of services. Connections to the Internet must only be via IT equipment authorised for the purpose. This equipment must be operated by authorised staff i.e. Parish Clerk except where access has been specifically sanctioned for use by other councillors. There is no automatic right to use email for personal use even if it is paid for.

Non Permitted Usage

The following is not allowed. This list is not exhaustive:

Downloading any software or electronic files without the required virus protection measures in place.

- Making or posting indecent remarks and proposals.
- Visiting websites that contain obscene, hateful or other objectionable material or distributing and forwarding such material.
- Soliciting for personal gain or profit.
- Gambling.
- Conducting illegal activities.
- Hacking i.e. attempting unauthorised access into or intentionally interfering with any Internet / Intranet gateway / system / server.
- Uploading / downloading commercial software in violation of its copyright.
- Receiving list serve (newsgroup) emails that are unrelated to the business of the Council.
- Sending electronic 'chain letters'.
- Using Facebook other than the Sedgeford Village Page.

Security

Nothing confidential is to be sent via email. All information received / retrieved over the Internet must be authenticated and/or validated before being used in the services of the Parish Council. The clerk must report Internet security weaknesses that he becomes aware of. The distribution of any information through the Internet, the web, computer based on line services, email and messaging services is subject to the scrutiny and approval of the parish Council, which reserves the right to determine the suitability and confidentiality of the information disseminated.

Virus Protection

The Internet is a high-risk source of computer virus infection. Thus, it is essential that all material received over the internet is checked before use or distribution. In particular, all email and attachments must be opened and checked before storing and distributing further. Viruses that are detected must be reported to the Chair. The Council also has the responsibility not to distribute viruses. Consequently items dispatched over the Internet must be checked to ensure that they are virus free. The final responsibility for virus checking will always remain with the user.

Information disclosure rules and individual's liability

The clerk is prohibited from revealing or publishing proprietary, confidential or personal information via the Internet that has not been specifically authorised. Such information includes but is not limited to:

- Financial information not already publicly disclosed through authorised channels.
- Client information.
- Operational information.
- Information provided to the Parish Council in confidence or under a non-disclosure agreement.
- Computer and network access codes and similar or related information that might assist unauthorised access.
- Legal proceedings.
- Information that might provide an external organisation with a business advantage.
- Computer programs.
- Databases and the information contained therein.

This policy must be complied with at all times.

I have read the above policy and agree to abide by these instructions.

Signed_____ Print name_____

Date _____

Adopted May 2025

Review May 2026