



# MORETON, BOBBINGWORTH AND THE LAVERS PARISH COUNCIL

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## IT POLICY

### Introduction

Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council recognises the importance of effective and secure Information Technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its 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 where relevant others.

### Scope

As a small Council, IT equipment is not provided to Councillors, however a dedicated email address is. IT equipment is however provided to staff also with a dedicated email address. This policy applies to both staff and Councillors in the use of their Councillor emails, Council communication, any Parish Council provided equipment, and the use of their own personal computers or phones when processing data regarding Parish Council business.

### Acceptable use of IT resources and email

Each Councillor and staff member is provided with a Parish Council dedicated email address. This email should be used for all correspondence and official council-related activities and tasks. Access to this email is available directly via the web, or if IT equipment has been provided, via that medium. Personal use is not permitted of either the email address, or any equipment provided. All users must adhere to ethical standards, respect copyright and intellectual property rights, and avoid accessing inappropriate or offensive content.

### Data management and security

All sensitive and confidential Parish Council data should be stored and transmitted securely, using encryption where relevant. Councillors are required to review their Councillor email accounts on a regular basis, ensuring they appropriately remove any data for which there is no legal basis to continue to hold it. Councillors should not forward, store, or use any personal information relating to the Council or residents unless there is a clear legal basis for doing so.

### Email communication

Email accounts provided by the 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. Councillors should contact the Parish Clerk if they have any concerns.

### **Password and account security**

Parish Council users are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts by regularly amending access passwords. Passwords should be strong and not shared with others.

Mobile devices - If Councillors or staff members access their Councillor email account using a mobile phone, they should ensure there are relevant security measures to protect data, such as passcodes and/or biometric authentication.

### **Email monitoring**

The Parish Council as a body 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.

### **Retention and archiving**

Emails should be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements, regularly reviewed and unnecessary emails deleted to maintain an organised inbox.

### **Reporting security incidents**

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk for investigation and resolution, and if necessary, reporting to the ICO.

### **Training and awareness**

The Parish Council will provide on request training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors are eligible for this training, and should contact the Parish Clerk should they wish to undertake any training.

### **Compliance and consequences**

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

### **Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Date</b>
Last reviewed	Full Parish Council	January 2026
Next review due:		July 2026