

Acceptable use of IT & Communications Policy

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the acceptable use of computer and communications equipment and software at Cottenham Parish Council.

Inappropriate use exposes Cottenham Parish Council to risks including virus attacks, compromise of network systems and services, and legal issues.

2 Scope

This policy applies to the use of information, electronic and computing devices, and network resources to conduct Cottenham Parish Council business or interact with networks and business systems, whether owned or leased by Cottenham Parish Council or a third party.

All Councillors, employees, and other workers at Cottenham Parish Council are responsible for exercising good judgment regarding use of information, electronic devices, and network resources in accordance with Cottenham Parish Council policies, and local laws and regulations.

3 Policy

General Use and Ownership

Cottenham Parish Council proprietary information, however stored, remains the sole property of Cottenham Parish Council and must be protected.

Use or sharing of Cottenham Parish Council confidential or proprietary information should be limited to the extent necessary to fulfill your role.

Any theft, loss or unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information should be reported to the Clerk as soon as reasonably practicable.

All users are responsible for exercising good judgment regarding personal use, and in case of doubt, should seek advice from their manager or a member of the HR Working Party.

Cottenham Parish Council reserves the right to audit devices, networks and systems on a periodic basis to ensure compliance with this policy.

Security

Passwords should be robust (eight or more characters with at least one numeric, one alphabetic and one non-alpha-numeric) and be changed at least every 6 months.

A sealed copy of current passwords should be held by a colleague or a named Councillor.

All computing devices must be screen-locked or logged-off when the device is unattended. Users should ensure that any devices used for Council business are protected by up-to-date anti-virus and similar software.

All users must be cautious when opening e-mail attachments, which may contain malware.

Etiquette & Good Order

When using Council resources to access and use the Internet, users represent the Council and such communications can be brought into the public domain through legal processes.

Whenever users state an affiliation to the Council, they must also clearly indicate that "the opinions expressed are my own and not necessarily those of the Council".

Limited and occasional use of Cottenham Parish Council's systems to engage in social media is acceptable, provided that it is done in a professional and responsible manner.

Please, unless there is good reason:

- include a short but clear title as the subject of each email
- address an email "to" the person(s) from whom you expect a reply or acknowledgement
- include all other members of the relevant Working Party, Committee or Council using ".cc" (never .bcc) to include others for information only.
- include using ".cc" the Clerk and RFO or Assistant Clerk.
- include a clear summary and expected response, even if a longer attachment is provided.
- Take special care to check the recipient list and full message content when "replying all".

Please avoid:

- lengthy email bodies.
- debate, especially intense interactions on matters on, or likely to soon be on, a public agenda; clarification queries are acceptable, decision-making is not – except for delegated activity by the Clerk or Working Parties.
- replying (especially by "reply all") to emails not addressed "to" you; the inclusion was only intended to ensure inclusion "for information".

Unacceptable Use

The list below contains examples of unacceptable use:

- Violations of the intellectual property rights of any person or organisation, including the installation or distribution of "pirated" or other unlicensed software products.
- Accessing data, a server or an account for any purpose other than conducting Cottenham Parish Council business, even if you have authorized access.
- Revealing your account password to others or allowing use of your account by others. This includes family and other household members when work is being done at home.
- Sending unsolicited email messages, including the sending of "junk mail" or other advertising material to individuals who did not specifically request such material.

4 Policy Compliance

Violating this policy may lead to appropriate disciplinary action.

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