

Greatham Parish Council Information Technology (I.T.) Policy

Adopted: 15th October 2025

Review Date: October 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Greatham Parish Council makes safe, effective, and responsible use of Information Technology (I.T.) resources. This includes computers, email, internet access, software, mobile devices, and data storage systems. The policy sets out expectations for councillors, employees, contractors, and volunteers when using I.T. facilities on behalf of the Council.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All councillors and staff using Council-owned or Council-funded I.T. equipment.
- Any personal devices used to access, process, or store Council information (Bring Your Own Device – BYOD).
- Third parties engaged by the Council who have access to Council information systems.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- **The Parish Clerk** is the Council's Responsible Officer for I.T. and data management.
- **All users** are responsible for complying with this policy, reporting breaches, and safeguarding equipment and information.
- **The Council** will provide resources, training, and updates to support compliance.

4. Acceptable Use

- I.T. resources must only be used for legitimate Council business. Limited personal use may be permitted by staff if it does not interfere with Council work.
- Users must not install unauthorised software or connect unauthorised hardware to Council systems.
- Internet and email must be used responsibly and in line with Council values. Offensive, discriminatory, or unlawful material must never be accessed, created, or shared.
- Social media accounts representing the Council may only be set up or managed with Council authorisation.

Greatham Parish Council Information Technology (I.T.) Policy

5. Security

- All devices must be protected with strong passwords and automatic screen locking.
- Council data must be stored on secure systems approved by the Clerk, not solely on personal devices.
- Portable devices (laptops, USB sticks, mobile phones) must be encrypted or password protected.
- Anti-virus and security updates must be kept current.

6. Data Protection and Privacy

- All users must comply with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- Personal data must be collected, stored, and shared only as necessary and in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- Email containing personal or sensitive data must be encrypted where appropriate.
- Councillors using personal email accounts for Council business must ensure compliance with data protection requirements.

7. Remote Working and Personal Devices

- Remote access to Council data and systems must use secure connections.
- Personal devices used for Council business must have up-to-date security software and must not be shared with unauthorised users.
- Council data stored on personal devices must be deleted when no longer required.

8. Records Management

- All Council documents and correspondence (including emails) that form part of the official record must be retained in accordance with the Council's Document Retention Policy.
- Users must not delete or alter Council records without authorisation.

9. Software and Licensing

- The Council will ensure that all software used is properly licensed.
- Users must not copy, install, or distribute software without permission.

Greatham Parish Council Information Technology (I.T.) Policy

10. Monitoring and Compliance

- The Council reserves the right to monitor the use of I.T. resources to ensure compliance.
- Any suspected breaches of this policy must be reported to the Clerk immediately.
- Breaches may result in disciplinary action, withdrawal of I.T. access, or referral to law enforcement where appropriate.

11. Training and Awareness

- The Council will provide training to councillors and staff on cyber security, data protection, and safe use of I.T. systems.
- Users are expected to participate in mandatory training when required.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or when significant changes occur in legislation, technology, or Council operations.

Signed:

Chairman Greatham Parish Council

Date: 15th October 2025