



# Somersham Parish Council

## **EMAIL, INTERNET, AND COMPUTER USE POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Somersham Parish Council provides email facilities for use by councillors who have access to a desktop, laptops or mobile devices. The Executive Officer has a designated laptop provided by the council and has access to email facilities through Vision ICT and Microshade, and holds the administration rights for the council's website and Facebook page (dealt with in the Website & Social Media Policy"). This document sets out the council's policy for the use of these services and more general computer use in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that the services made available to councillors and staff are used:

- In accordance with the values, principles, and standards of the council.
- Ensure GDPR is complied with by ensuring **only** Somersham Parish Council approved email accounts are used for council business.
- So as not to incur legal liability.

### **Acceptance of the Policy**

This policy applies to all Somersham Parish Council councillors & staff members. All councillors and staff members are required to sign to indicate their acceptance of the policy content at the time of joining the council and will be asked to re-affirm their understanding and acceptance of the policy as required.

Each councillor and staff member is individually responsible for complying with this policy.

### **Security**

Access to email accounts and the shared areas through Microshade are restricted to individual users and cannot be shared outside of the council or between individuals.

### **Email Accounts:**

- The Executive Officer will be wholly responsible for the councils incoming emails, using [executiveofficer@somersham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:executiveofficer@somersham-pc.gov.uk)
- When joining the council, each councillor will be issued with an email address in a set format, [firstname.lastname@somersham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:firstname.lastname@somersham-pc.gov.uk) Along with instructions of how to access their mailbox.
- The access of each user is controlled by means of their own password.
- Passwords **must** be kept confidential and not disclosed to others.
- System generated passwords may be supplied by the Executive Officer if necessary, but a password re- set must be performed by the councillor immediately after access is gained.
- Emails should not be forwarded to personal email address; the council is the Data Controller of all the data it holds and processes, and information should be retained in its own systems.
- Care should be taken not to leave a device that is connected to an email account unlocked or unattended.



# Somersham Parish Council

## **File Storage:**

The council uses Microshade/ Citrix to store all its documents on a secure cloud-based system. The Executive Officer has full access and councillors have access to the shared folders through this system.

- Documents should not be shared outside of the council.
- Guidance on password protection of files is available from the Executive Officer.
- Care should be taken not to leave a device that is connected unattended or unlocked.
- For further protection of personal data, all files containing names, telephone numbers, addresses and email addresses, etc. must be password protected. These files are likely to take the form of internal databases, registers etc.
- No personal data/confidential documents should be kept on any storage facility e.g. USB's, laptops or personal computers, as this could result in legal action from third parties.

Breaches of security of the computer system e.g., disclosure of personal passwords, giving unauthorised access to emails to external parties, may result in action from the ICO<sup>1</sup>.

Councillors should notify the Executive Officer immediately of any suspected data breach or email account hack. The Executive Officer will then contact the ICO for guidance on the most appropriate way to deal with the breach.

## **Safeguarding Access to the Council's Systems**

To safeguard access to the council's systems in the event of the Executive Officer being incapacitated, contact through Microshade directly will provide access to SPC systems, with relevant permissions.

As stated in the email accounts section of this policy, councillors will use a dedicated.gov.uk email associated with their council status.

## **Email Usage**

The council's email system enables users to email other Members of the council, staff and individuals outside of the organisation. All users are encouraged to use an email signature, assistance with this can be obtained from the Executive Officer.

It should not be assumed that any email communication is secure or private. Users should take this into account particularly when emailing confidential or sensitive information. Once an email is sent to an individual outside of the council, it is beyond the council's control and is not guaranteed to be confidential.

Hoax and/or suspect emails should be reported to the Executive Officer. They should not be opened or forwarded but "double deleted" i.e., deleted from the user's "Inbox" and then also from "Deleted Items".

## **Prohibited Activities:**

The following email activities may breach the councils 'Code of Conduct' and/or prompt action by the ICO:

- Use of council email accounts for personal purposes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Information Commissioners Office



# Somersham Parish Council

- Sending or forwarding any material that is obscene, defamatory, or hateful, or which is intended to annoy, harass or intimidate others.
- Sending or forwarding emails which are likely to damage the reputation of the council.
- Sending or forwarding electronic chain letters.
- Examining, changing, or using another person's files, output or username without explicit authorisation.

## **Review**

This Policy is to be reviewed annually by the Executive Officer and will be considered at a meeting of the council before being re-adopted.

**Approved on: 12/2/25**

**Minute reference: 5 (personnel and governance meeting)**

**Due for review: As required**



# Somersham Parish Council

## COUNCILLOR ACCEPTANCE LIST

To be disseminated yearly at the Annual Meeting of the Council for ongoing acceptance.

I have received, read, understood, and agree to abide by the Council's Email, Internet and Computer Use Policy.

Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	
Cllr	



# Somersham Parish Council