Stroud Parish Council

IT and Email Policy

Adopted January 2026 – Review January 2028

Introduction

Stroud Parish Council recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, 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 contractors.

Scope

The policy applies to all individuals who use Stroud Parish Council's IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts.

Acceptable use of IT resources and email accounts

Stroud Parish Council's IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks. Limited personal use if permitted, provided it does not interfere with work responsibilities or violate any part of this policy. All users must adhere to ethical standards, respect copyright and intellectual property rights, and avoid accessing inappropriate or offensive content.

Device and software usage

Where possible authorised devices, and applications will be provided by Stroud Parish Council for work related tasks.

Unauthorised installation of software on authorised devices, including personal software is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.

Data Management and Data Security

All sensitive and confidential Stroud Parish Council data should be stored and transmitted securely using approved methods. Regular data backups should be performed to prevent data loss, and secure data destruction methods should be used when necessary, in accordance with Stroud Parish Council's Data Protection and Data Retention Policies.

Network and Internet Usage

Stroud Parish Council's network and internet connections should be used responsibly and efficiently for official purposes. Downloading and sharing copyrighted material without proper authorisation is prohibited.

Email communication

Email accounts provided by Stroud Parish Council are for official communications only. Emails should be professional and respectful in tone. Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless it is encrypted.

Do not download any attachments or click any links before verifying the source.

Password and account security

Stroud Parish Council users are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts and passwords. Passwords should be strong and not shared with others. Regular password changes are encouraged to enhance security in accordance with the council's data protection policy.

Mobile devices and remote working

Mobile devices provided by Stroud Parish Council should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication. When working remotely, users should follow the same security practices as if they were in the office.

Email monitoring

Stroud Parish Council 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 the council's data retention and protection policies and in accordance with any legal and regulatory requirements. Regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organised inbox.

Reporting Security Incidents

Any suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the data controller, clerk@stroud-pc.gov.uk, for investigation and resolution. Report any email related security incidents or breaches immediately.

Training

Stroud Parish Council will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors will receive regular training on email security and best practices.

Compliance and consequences

Any breaches in this IT and email policy will be investigated and any action arising will follow the council's disciplinary procedures.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.

Contacts

For any queries with reference to this policy, please contact clerk@stroud-pc.gov.uk.

All members of staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of Stroud Parish Council IT and email systems. By adhering to this IT and email policy Stroud Parish Council aim to create a secure and efficient IT environment.