



IT POLICY

WINSFORD TOWN COUNCIL

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this protocol is to advise members and staff of their obligations regarding the use of the Town Councils Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources.
- 1.2 Members must ensure that their use of Council hardware or software does not contravene any legal requirement (for example, The Data Protection Act 1998; The Computer Misuse Act 1990; The Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act 1988; The Obscene Publications Act 1959 and 1964); or any internal Town Council policy.
- 1.3 Failure to act in accordance with this protocol could amount to a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, and disciplinary action against staff members.
- 1.4 In this age of inexpensive electronic communication, the protocol recognises and accepts that a degree of personal use of Council resources is inevitable.

However, such use must not undermine four of the key aims of this protocol, which are:

- a. To prevent Council resources from being used to promote political activity.
- b. To prevent the Council's name from being used to promote personal or business interests.
- c. To prevent the Council's private, personal and sensitive information from being inappropriately accessed by a third party.
- d. To prevent unnecessary cost being incurred by the Council

2. USE OF COUNCIL RESOURCES FOR COUNCIL BUSINESS

- 2.1 Subject to paragraph 1.4, Council resources are provided for members and staff to use only in connection with Council business.

"Council business" means matters relating to a member/staff duties as an elected Councillor, as a member of staff, a member of a committee, sub-committee, working group or as a Council representative on another body or organisation.

See Appendix 1 for Equipment Available to Members and staff.

- 2.2 Council resources are available to enable:

- a. Communications with individual members of the public, members, officers, and government officials in connection with those duties set out above.
- b. To facilitate discussion so long as it relates mainly to the work of the Council and not the political party.

- 2.3 The following do not constitute Council business, and Council resources should not be used for the following: -

- a. (Members) communications for constituency party meetings, ward party meetings, etc. or letters to party members collectively in their capacity as party members.
- b. Documents relating to the policy and organisation of political parties, particularly regarding the conduct of elections.
- c. Elected members must not ask officers to type, photocopy or otherwise process any party political or election material.
- d. Volume mailings even though in connection with Council business except following consultation with the Town Clerk.
- e. Council staff should not use resources for personal business unless deemed necessary.

3. COMPUTERS, THE INTERNET AND EMAIL

- 3.1 The Town Council provides IT equipment to members for the duration of their time in office and for staff.

- 3.2 Currently, the equipment provided for members/staff is intended to assist the member/staff member in his or her duties as a councillor/member of staff. It can be used for some personal use if this does not degrade the performance of the equipment or contravene Para 1.4 of this Protocol.
- 3.3 Members/staff must ensure that personal and sensitive information obtained from the Council and held by them on either the Council's equipment or their own equipment or any equipment provided by another body is protected from unauthorised access. The Council will provide advice and assistance to achieve this.
- 3.4 The Town Council will provide training to members regarding their obligations under the Data Protection Act/GDPR.
- 3.5 The Town Council will provide members/staff with a Council email address. Members may use this Council email address on any ward communications as a means of enabling their constituents to contact them. The email address, however, must not be used in ward communications during an election nomination period or any election material.
- 3.6 The Town Council's email address must not be used for business purposes or in any personal communications where it will add weight or support to the communication - see paragraph 1.4 of this protocol. See also Appendix 1 regarding the provision of a personal email address with the Council's Internet Service Provider.
- 3.8 The Town Council will provide advice and assistance to enable a member to have the Council's equipment connected to this Broadband connection (see Appendix 1)
- 3.9 The IT equipment provided to Members/staff will be subject to an annual Portable Appliance Test (PAT) to ensure electrical safety as part of the Council's Health and Safety Policy.
- 3.10 The material stored on all equipment supplied to Members/staff will be subject to annual audit to ensure compliance with the requirements of this protocol.

Appendix 1

Definition of 'Resources'

The Council will provide a range of support services for members including:

- A high specification laptop computer/tablet
- A printer
- Print cartridges
- A high-speed wireless broadband Internet connection
- A Winsford Town Council e-mail address for example jsmith@winsford.gov.uk
- The current version of Microsoft Office software
- Current Antivirus software
- Telephone or if necessary on-site help and advice