

Bishopthorpe Parish Council IT Policy

Introduction

Bishopthorpe 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

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

Acceptable use of IT resources and email

Bishopthorpe Parish Council IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks. Limited personal use is 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 necessary, authorised devices will be provided to the Parish Clerk. The Parish Clerk and Councillors will be provided with necessary software and applications by Bishopthorpe 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 security

All sensitive and confidential Bishopthorpe 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.

Network and internet usage

Bishopthorpe 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 Bishopthorpe Parish Council are for official communication. Emails should be professional and respectful in tone. Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless it is encrypted. Be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

Password and account security

Bishopthorpe 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.

Email monitoring

Bishopthorpe Parish Council will not routinely monitor emails but where necessary will review email communications to ensure compliance with Parish Council policies and applicable laws. Any such reviews will be conducted proportionately and in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act and GDPR, respecting privacy and confidentiality.

Emails should be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organised inbox.

Reporting security incidents

All suspected email related security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk and Cllr. Ian George for investigation and resolution.

Training and awareness

Training and resources will be available by The Yorkshire Local Council Association (YLCA) to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates.

Compliance and consequences

Breach of this IT and Email Policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges and further consequences as deemed appropriate.

Policy review

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

Contacts

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact Cllr. George. All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of Bishopthorpe Parish Council's IT and email systems. By adhering to this IT and Email Policy, Bishopthorpe Parish Council aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment that supports its mission and goals.