



Hythe Town Council
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ICT and Email Policy

WWW.HYTHERTC.GOV.UK/POLICIES/GDPR

This Policy was adopted by the Council at its meeting held on: 04/03/21

Minute 277/20

GOVERNING BODY: HYTHE TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, OAKLANDS, 1 STADE STREET,
HYTHE, KENT. CT21 6BG



Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Town Council's ICT and e-mail facilities are used correctly and are in compliance with all relevant legislation. The policy covers all hardware, software, applications, and data owned or used by the Town Council.

1. Restrictions on the Use of Town Council Computer Equipment

Employees and members must not use any of the Town Council's ICT facilities to send, solicit or download unauthorised or inappropriate material via any medium including, but not restricted to, the internet, e-mail or social networking facilities, or other devices which can be connected.

Employees and members must ensure that their workstation is protected from potential physical hazards.

Employees and members must not install or remove any software from the Council's ICT platform without prior agreement from the Town Clerk.

All portable equipment and software must be stored securely when not in use. Personal use of computer equipment is permitted, provided:

- a) It is sanctioned by the Town Clerk.
- b) It is reasonable, occasional, and kept to a minimum.

2. Confidentiality

Employees and members must not upload, download, or otherwise transmit commercial software, or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties inside or outside the Town Council without the explicit permission of the Town Clerk.

Employees must not reveal or publicise to a third party confidential or proprietary information, which includes, but is not limited to personal or sensitive data as defined under the Data Protection Act, computer software source codes, logins, or passwords unless they have the express permission of the Town Clerk.

Access to the Council's ICT facilities, applications, and data is granted on a 'need to have' basis. Authorisation for the granting, suspension, or removal of access privileges is confined to those having 'administrator' privileges i.e. the Town Clerk and named support staff.

All access privileges of staff or members who leave the Town Council must be suspended immediately.

Council staff and members (if appropriate) must keep their passwords confidential within the Office for all Town Council-owned equipment.

Passwords must not be reset without the specific request of the user concerned.



3. Use of E-mail, Internet, and Social Networking Facilities

This section applies to all Town Council Staff / Councillors and covers the misuse of the Town Council's internet, e-mail, and social networking facilities – if the latter were to be introduced.

Use of the Internet, e-mail and social networking facilities shall comply with all relevant legislation.

Access to such facilities is provided to employees and for business purposes only. Private use of these facilities will be tolerated only if it does not interfere with the work of the Council, its employees, or Councillors and it has been sanctioned by the Town Clerk. Any use deemed unacceptable will be dealt with via the Town Council's disciplinary procedure.

Abuse of these facilities could lead to dismissal or criminal prosecution.

Disclosure

Town Council staff and members must not make any unauthorised or inappropriate disclosures of personal or business information regarding the Town Council's assets.

4. Legal risks

Email is a business communication tool and users are obliged to use this tool in a polite, responsible, effective, and lawful manner. While email seems to be less formal than other written communication, the same laws and guidelines should apply. Users should refrain from using words in block capitals as this may be regarded as "shouting" in an e-mail. Staff should use the same salutation as they would in letters, i.e. "Dear" and write as if they were writing a letter.

Users should be aware of the legal risks in email transmission:

- If you send or forward emails with any libellous, defamatory, offensive, racist, or obscene remarks, both you and the Council can be held liable. In addition, it may be considered to have been an infringement of the Code of Conduct.
- If you unlawfully forward confidential information, you and the Town Council may be held liable.
- If you unlawfully forward or copy messages without permission, you and the Council can be held liable for copyright infringement.
- If you knowingly send an attachment that contains a virus, you and the Town Council can be held liable.

Please follow the guidelines in this policy to minimise the legal risks to yourself and the Town Council. If any user disregards the rules set out in this policy, the user will be fully liable and the Town Council will disassociate itself from the user, as far as is legally possible.

