

Stanford Dingley Parish Council

IT and Email Policy

Adopted: 24th March 2026

Next review due: May 2027

1. Introduction

Stanford Dingley 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.

2. Scope

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

3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email accounts

Stanford Dingley Parish Council's 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.

4. Device and software usage

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

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

5. Data Management and Data Security

All sensitive and confidential Stanford Dingley 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.

6. Network and Internet Usage

Stanford Dingley 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.

7. Email communication

Email accounts provided by Stanford Dingley 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.

Be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

8. Password and account security

Stanford Dingley 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.

9. Mobile devices and remote working

Mobile devices provided by Stanford Dingley 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.

10. Email monitoring

Stanford Dingley 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.

11. Retention and Archiving

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

12. Reporting Security Incidents

Any suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the designated point of contact for investigation and resolution. Report any email related security incidents or breaches to the IT administrator immediately.

13. Training

Training and resources are available to inform users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns and technology update. All employees and councillors should receive regular training on email security and best practices.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. Contacts

For any queries with reference to this policy, please contact the Clerk.

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