

Banham Parish Council IT Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out the rules and guidance for acceptable use of Banham Parish Council's IT systems, devices, and data. It aims to protect Parish Council information, ensure compliance with legal obligations, and promote responsible use of technology.

Scope

This policy applies to all Parish Councillor, employees, contractors, volunteers, and any Third Parties who have access to Parish Council IT systems or data.

Acceptable use of IT resources and email

IT resources must be used primarily for official Parish Council business. Limited personal use is permitted provided it does not interfere with duties or breach this policy. Users must not access, store, or transmit inappropriate, offensive, or unlawful material, and emails must be used professionally and in accordance with Parish Council standards.

Device and software usage

Where possible, only authorised devices, software, and applications may be used to access Parish Council systems and 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 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. Sensitive or personal data must be stored securely and only accessed by authorised individuals.

Email communication

Email accounts provided by the Parish Council are for official communication only. Emails should be professional and respectful in tone. Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless properly secured. Users must be vigilant against phishing and suspicious communications, and must verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

Password and account security

Parish council users are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts and passwords. Passwords should be strong and not shared with others. Strong passwords must be used and must not be shared. These should be regularly changes to encourage and enhance security. A copy of all passwords is held by the Chair to the council in a sealed envelope, only to be accessed should the clerk be

incapacitated.

Mobile devices

Mobile devices provided by the Parish Council should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication. Loss or theft of devices must be reported immediately, and public Wi-Fi should be avoided when accessing sensitive information.

Email monitoring

The Parish Council reserves the right to monitor email usage 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 and digital records should be retained and archived in line with the Parish Council's legal and regulatory requirements. Emails should be regularly reviewed and unnecessary emails should be deleted to maintain an organised inbox. Important communications must be properly archived.

Training and awareness

The Parish Council will provide appropriate training on IT security and data protection to educate users about best practices, privacy concerns, technology updates, and email security.

Compliance and consequences

Failure to comply with this policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges and further consequences as deemed appropriate.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required 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 the clerk.

All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of the Parish Council's IT and email systems. By adhering to this IT and Email Policy, Banham Parish Council aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment that supports its mission and goals.

Adopted by Banham Parish Council April 2026. To be reviewed April 2029