



The Sampfords Parish Council

Information Technology Policy

Introduction

The Sampfords Parish Council (SPC) 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 software applications and email system by council members, employees, volunteers, and contractors.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who use IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email account to process council data.

Acceptable use of IT resources and email

The SPC IT software applications and email accounts are to be used specifically for official council-related activities and tasks. 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 possible, authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by the 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 SPC 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.

Where SPC data is held as hard copies, staff and councillors shall ensure the information is held securely. Hard copies should be destroyed securely when no longer required, beyond retention requirements.

Personal Network and internet usage

When working remotely, council members using personal network and internet connections for council business, should use devices and applications that are protected by anti-virus software and act responsibly and efficiently as to not adversely affect council compliance. Downloading and sharing copyrighted material for council business without proper authorisation is prohibited.

Email communication

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Email accounts provided by SPC via CloudNext, are for official communication only. Emails should be professional and respectful in tone. Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless it is encrypted.

Council members should 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

Staff and councillors that use the council email (CloudNext), website (Eyelid Productions) and accounting application (SCRIBE) 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. Where possible 2 factor authentication should be used.

Personal Mobile devices

Personal mobile devices used for council business should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication.

Email monitoring

SPC reserves the right to monitor council email communications to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant laws. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

Annually, staff and councillors are required to complete the Declaration (as per the document in Appendix A) that they have taken the necessary precautions to ensure that their devices that they use for council email are secure using id and password and that no council personal data is held unnecessarily and emails are archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements or, deleted where they are no longer required.

Reporting security incidents

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

Training and awareness

SPC will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors will receive regular training on email security and best practices.

Compliance and consequences

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

Individual Responsibilities

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

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Policy review

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

Sign off:

Sampfords Parish Council Chairman:

Date:

Sampfords Parish Council RFO:

Date:

Meeting Date of Full Council Approval

Date: 16TH DECEMBER 2025

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Sampfords Parish Council Password Management

Email Application

SPC use CloudNext to register and host its .gov email addresses and data. CloudNext is certified by the UK Government-backed Cyber Essentials accreditation which demonstrates its adherence to the recommended IT security practices to keep customer data safe and protected against cyber-attacks.

As a Crown Commercial Service Provider, CloudNext is approved to provide cloud hosting services to the UK public sector under the Crown Commercial Services framework agreements. As a consequence, the application is constantly updated to ensure compliance.

The SPC data is constantly backed up via the cloud to safeguard data.

Passwords are set by users and can be changed regularly, through the CloudNext dashboard, which is also password protected and requires Two-Factor Authentication. Each Councillor and the Clerk have a unique email address.

Full audit logs of system access and usage is available.

Scribe

SPC uses SCRIBE Cloud Accounts services to manage its finances. Users are able to set IDs and passwords and require Two-Factor Authentication to sign in. Currently, the application is only used by the Clerk, but reports, including full bank reconciliation, are validated and signed off by the Full Council.

Data is backed up real time to safeguard data.

Software is regularly updated to ensure compliance with financial regulations and security requirements.

Full audit logs of system access and usage is available.

EyeLid Productions

Eyelid Productions provide WordPress websites primarily for the public sector with a specific focus on parish and town councils.

The SPC website is accessibility compliant and meets WCAG 2.2 AA standards. It is also compliant with the government Transparency Code.

Access to the website content pages is ID and password protected.

Full audit logs of system access and usage is available.

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APPENDIX A - Declaration

To the Council,

This is to confirm:

- I am using the required password security on all devices that I use to process council data
- I have anti-virus software installed on devices that hold council data.
- I regularly review council emails and files to ensure personal data relating to council business is not held unnecessarily
- Council emails and data have been archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements and / or deleted where they are no longer required.
- Where hard copies of council data are held by me, it is managed securely. When hard copies are no longer required, they are destroyed securely.

I am not aware of any breaches to the IT, Management Information and Data Protection policies.

Councillor:

Signed:

Date: