



BOLTON LE SANDS PARISH COUNCIL

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) POLICY

Adopted: 2nd December 2025

Review Due: Annually December 2026

Version: 1.1

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Bolton-le-Sands Parish Council manages and uses information technology (IT) systems in a responsible, secure and efficient manner. It follows guidance from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and reflects the scale and resources of the council.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all councillors, the Clerk, and any person acting on behalf of the council who uses council IT systems or email accounts for parish business.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- The **Clerk** is responsible for:
 - Administering all council IT systems and accounts, together with the assigned Working Group.
 - Managing access for new or departing councillor ,together with the assigned Working Group.
 - Ensuring data security and compliance with this policy, together with the assigned Working Group.
- Councillors are responsible for:
 - Using council IT systems appropriately and securely.
 - Reporting any issues or potential breaches promptly.

4. Email Use

- All official correspondence must be conducted through @**boltonlesandsparish.gov.uk** email accounts hosted by **Zoho Mail** within the **Zoho Workplace** suite. The Clerk will create, maintain, and close accounts as required, together with the assigned Working Group.
- The Clerk/Working Group will create, maintain, and close accounts as required.
- Emails must be written professionally and treated as public records that may be subject to disclosure under information law.
- Councillors should avoid forwarding council emails to personal addresses.
- When a councillor leaves office, their account will be closed and archived by the Clerk/Working Group.

5. Website Management

- The official website is hosted through **Parish Online**.
- Updates or amendments should only be made by, or through, the Clerk to ensure consistency, accessibility, and security.
- Councillors wishing to suggest changes should contact the Clerk.
- Official working group agreed - Cllr Taylor, Cllr Chaplin and Cllr Allinson.

6. Hardware and Equipment

- The Council provides the Clerk with a laptop, printer and mobile phone for council duties. These remain the property of the Parish Council.
- Devices must be protected with passwords and kept secure at all times.
- The Clerk will ensure devices are updated regularly and any faults or losses are reported to the Chair as soon as possible.
- Councillors generally use their own personal devices to access Zoho Mail; they must take reasonable care to keep their accounts and passwords secure.

7. Data Protection and Privacy

- All users must comply with the **UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018**.
- Confidential or personal information must be kept secure and only shared when necessary for council business.
- Documents containing personal data should not be stored permanently on personal devices.
- Any data breach or suspected loss of information must be reported immediately to the Clerk.

8. Passwords and Account Security

- Passwords for Zoho and other council systems must be strong (at least 12 characters) and not shared with others.
- If a password is suspected to be compromised, it must be changed immediately, and the Clerk informed.
- Access for former councillors or staff will be revoked without delay.

9. Acceptable Use and Conduct

- Council IT systems must be used solely for council business.
- Inappropriate or offensive content must never be sent, accessed, or shared.
- Councillors must avoid clicking on suspicious links or attachments and report any phishing attempts to the Clerk.
- Use of unapproved software or file-sharing tools for council work is not permitted.

10. Training and Support

- The Clerk/Working Group will provide basic guidance to new councillors on using Zoho Mail and online resources securely.
- Refresher guidance will be provided as systems or requirements change.

11. Monitoring and Compliance

- The Council reserves the right to monitor its IT systems and Zoho Workplace accounts for legitimate reasons, such as ensuring compliance with this policy, maintaining security, and protecting council data.
- Monitoring will be proportionate and limited to council business.
- Misuse of IT systems may result in disciplinary or governance action in line with the Council's Standing Orders and Code of Conduct.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** or sooner if there are significant changes in technology, regulations, or council operations.

Approval

Adopted by Bolton-le-Sands Parish Council on 2nd December 2025.

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