



## **Email, Internet & Social Media Policy**

### **Objective**

Kelsale-cum-Carlton Parish Council is committed to providing a high quality service to its parishioners and works in an open and accountable way to build trust and respect in the community. This policy has been devised to provide guidance to both the Clerk and Councillors when using any means of digital and electronic communication

### **Introduction**

Kelsale-cum-Carlton Parish Council understands that the use of digital and electronic communication enables it to interact in a manner that improves the communications both with the Parish Council and the people, businesses and agencies it works with and serves.

The Parish Council has a website and uses email to communicate. The Parish Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. Should the Parish Council add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers, this policy will be updated accordingly.

Communications from the Parish Council will:

- Not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually orientated or racially offensive.
- Not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere for which the Parish Council does not own the copyright
- Not contain any personal information, other than necessary basic contact details
- Will be considerate and respectful of others.
- Encourage differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas but will ensure that personal attacks on anyone including the Parish Council members or staff will not be tolerated.
- Ensure that the Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on any relevant mail to Council members or external agencies for information and/or action.
- Ensure that all communications on behalf of the Council will (usually) come from the Clerk and otherwise will always be copied to the Clerk.
- Understand that emails to the Parish Council become official and will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act.
- Ensure that as more information becomes available electronically, it will be treated sensitively and securely.

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- Understand that Parish Councillors are expected to maintain an awareness of the confidentiality of information that they have access to and not to share confidential information with anyone.

### Email

Emails should be regarded as written paper documents for the purposes of production, use, retention and disclosure and can be called upon under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Personal information should be kept in accordance with the principles established under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

The following guidelines for email use will be observed by the Clerk and Councillors:

- When conducting Parish Council business use your allocated Parish Council email address at all times in order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
- Access to this email address must be via a password. This password must not be disclosed to anyone else or written down and left on public display. If it is suspected that the password has been compromised, it must be re-set immediately.
- When sending emails on behalf of the Parish Council use the authorised email template which contains a link to the Privacy Notice, a link to the website and a confidentiality disclaimer. (See Appendix 1 below)
- When sending group emails that include people from outside the Council you **must** blind copy (bcc) them to prevent their private email addresses from showing in the address bar. This is to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
- Do not forward on emails from members of the public. Instead copy and paste any relevant information into a new message. This ensures that their personal data is protected and complies with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
- When dealing with a query from a member of the public, ensure that any email correspondence is deleted immediately the query has been resolved.
- Ensure that any device from which Parish Council business is conducted is password protected in order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
- Ensure that any device from which emails are being sent have effective virus checking software installed.
- Only copy emails to others where appropriate and necessary.
- Use appropriate language to avoid unintentional misunderstandings.
- Respect the confidentiality of information contained within emails, even if encountered inadvertently.
- Check with the sender if there is any doubt regarding the authenticity of a message.
- Emails which create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the Council must be sent by the Clerk only and not by Councillors.
- Emails must comply with common codes of courtesy, decency and privacy.

### Internet and Social Media Usage

The Clerk and Councillors are encouraged to use the internet responsibly as part of their official and professional activities.

Any Information obtained via the internet and published in the name of Kelsale-cum-Carlton Parish Council must be relevant, accurate and professional. A disclaimer must be stated where personal views are expressed.

The use of the internet or email facilities to access or distribute any kind of offensive materials will not be tolerated and may be subject to further action being undertaken.

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### **Unacceptable use of the Internet and Social Media**

Unacceptable use of the internet by the Clerk or Councillors when conducting Council business includes, but is not limited to:

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing or threatening messages or images.
- Using computers to perpetuate any form of fraud and or software, film/music piracy.
- Sharing confidential material or proprietary information outside of the Parish Council.
- Sending or posting information that is defamatory to the Parish Council, Councillors or members of the public.
- Passing off personal views as those representing the Parish Council.

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## Appendix 1

### Authorised Email Template

Dear <>

<Message>

<Email signature>

### Link to Privacy Notice

<**Confidentiality:** This e-mail and any attached files are confidential and intended for the use of the addressee only. Please notify the Parish Council Clerk at [clerkkelsalepc@gmail.com](mailto:clerkkelsalepc@gmail.com) immediately if you have received it in error and then immediately delete it. It is solely for the use of the intended recipient(s). Any opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of Kelsale-cum-Carlton Parish Council. This e-mail has been checked for viruses, however, Kelsale-cum-Carlton Parish Council will not accept responsibility should any viruses be present.>

### Link to Website