

Godstone Parish Council

(serving the Villages of Godstone, South Godstone and Blindley Heath)

IT POLICY

1. Introduction

Godstone 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

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

3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email

Godstone Parish Council IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks. Limited personal use of devices is permitted, provided it does not interfere with work responsibilities or violate any part of this policy (in particular, section 7). 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

If Godstone Parish Council has provided authorised devices, software, and applications 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 security

All sensitive and confidential Godstone 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

This policy was adopted by Godstone Parish Council on the 12th January 2026

Godstone Parish Council

(serving the Villages of Godstone, South Godstone and Blindley Heath)

Godstone 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 Godstone 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 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

Godstone 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 Work

Mobile devices provided by Godstone Parish Council should where possible 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.

In the case of the Clerk and Assistant Clerk's Laptop, the Clerk will keep a sealed envelope containing the passwords which will be handed to the Chair together with the laptop in cases of emergency such as the Clerk and Assistant Clerk both being unavailable. Should the Clerk resign, the laptop together with the sealed envelope will be handed to the Chair on the Clerk's leaving date or a at time mutually agreed between the Clerk and the Chair. Should the Assistant Clerk resign the laptop together with the sealed envelope will be handed to the Clerk on the Assistant Clerk's leaving date or a at time mutually agreed between the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk.

10. Email monitoring

Godstone 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

This policy was adopted by Godstone Parish Council on the 12th January 2026

Godstone Parish Council

(serving the Villages of Godstone, South Godstone and Blindley Heath)

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

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the Clerk for investigation and resolution. Report any email-related security incidents or breaches to the Clerk immediately. In the case of a breach or incident created or made by the Clerk, the Clerk will report it to the Chair of the Parish Council immediately.

13 Training and awareness

Godstone Parish Council will provide training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors will receive regular reminders of the importance of email security and best practices.

14. Compliance and consequences

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

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 IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact the Clerk.

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