



## **INTERNET:**

### **Acceptable Internet Use Policy**

Limited use of the internet by all employees of Heath Hayes & Wimblebury Parish Council (the Council) is permitted. However, employees must ensure that they:

- comply with current legislation.
- use the internet in an acceptable way.
- do not create unnecessary business risk to the Council by their misuse of the internet.
- ensure that usage does not interfere with completion of their work.

Use of the Parish Council's internet facilities by Parish Councillors is restricted.

### **Unacceptable behaviour**

The following is deemed unacceptable use or behaviour by all employees and also Parish Councillors using their own internet facilities for Parish Council business:

- visiting internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, pornographic or otherwise illegal material.
- using the computer to perpetrate any form of fraud, or software, film or music piracy.
- using the internet to send offensive or harassing material to other users.
- downloading commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties unless this download is covered or permitted under a commercial agreement or other such licence.
- hacking into unauthorised areas.
- publishing defamatory and/or knowingly false material about Heath Hayes & Wimblebury Parish Council, colleagues, other Councillors and/or customers on social networking sites such as Facebook, 'blogs' (online journals), 'wikis and any online publishing format.
- revealing confidential information about Heath Hayes & Wimblebury Parish Council in a personal online posting, upload or transmission - including financial information and information relating to customers, business plans, policies, staff, other Councillors and/or internal discussions.
- undertaking deliberate activities that waste staff effort or networked resources.
- introducing any form of malicious software into the network.

## **Council Owned Information Held on Third Party Websites**

If you produce, collect and/or process business related information in the course of your work, the information remains the property of the Council. This includes such information stored on third party websites such as webmail service providers and social networking sites, such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

The Council accepts that the use of the internet is a valuable business tool. However, misuse of this facility can have a negative impact upon employee productivity and the reputation of the Council.

In addition, all of the Council's internet related resources are provided for business purposes. Therefore, the Council maintains the right to monitor the volume of internet and network traffic, together with the internet sites visited. The specific content of any transactions will not be monitored unless there is a suspicion of improper use.

## **EMAIL:**

### **Acceptable Email Use Policy**

Use of email by employees of the Council and Councillors is permitted. However, the Council has a policy for the use of email whereby employees and Councillors must ensure that they:

- comply with current legislation.
- use email in an acceptable way.
- do not create unnecessary business risk to the council by their misuse of email.
- ensure that usage does not interfere with completion of their work.

### **Unacceptable behaviour**

The following behaviour by all employees and Councillors is considered unacceptable:

- using the Council's communications systems, including email and telephone to set up or promote personal businesses or send chain letters.
- forwarding of the Council's confidential messages to external locations.
- distributing, disseminating or storing images, text or materials that might be considered indecent, pornographic, obscene or illegal.
- distributing, disseminating or storing images, text or materials that might be considered discriminatory, offensive or abusive, in that the context is a personal attack, sexist or racist, or might be considered as harassment.
- Creating a nuisance or harassing employees, other Councillors or members of the public.
- accessing copyrighted information in a way that violates the copyright.
- breaking in to the Council's or another organisation's system or unauthorised use of a password and or mailbox.
- broadcasting unsolicited personal views on social, political, religious or other non-business-related matters.
- transmitting unsolicited commercial or advertising material.
- undertaking deliberate activities that waste staff effort or networked resources.
- introducing any form of computer virus or malware into the network.

## **Monitoring**

The Council accepts that the use of email is a valuable business tool. However, misuse of this facility can have a negative impact upon employee productivity and the reputation of the Council.

All of the Council's email resources are provided for business purposes, therefore, the Council maintains the right to examine any systems and inspect any data recorded in those systems.

In order to ensure compliance with this policy, the Council also reserves the right to use monitoring software in order to check up on the use and content of emails. Such monitoring is for legitimate purposes only and will be undertaken in accordance with a procedure agreed with employees.

## **Sanctions**

Where it is proven that an employee has failed to comply with this policy, they will be subject to the Council's disciplinary procedure. If an employee is found to have breached the policy, they will face a disciplinary penalty ranging from a verbal warning to dismissal. The actual penalty applied will depend on factors such as the seriousness of the breach and the employee's disciplinary record and only after a proper investigation having taken place.

Where it is proven that a Parish Councillor has failed to comply with this policy, they will be subject to appropriate sanctions in line with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct.

## **Agreement**

All Council employees and Parish Councillors who have been granted the right to use the Council's internet and email access are required to sign this agreement confirming their understanding and acceptance of this policy.

**Signed:** 

**Dated:** 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023

**Minute Reference:** 11/23/114.0