

## BUXTED PARISH COUNCIL

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY

#### General Statement

The Parish Council recognises that the spread of electronic communications and access to multiple sources of information and access through the internet is an increasing and necessary part of work for everyone. This accessibility confers many advantages but also brings risks which need to be taken into account. Recent events in several employment sectors has shown that it is in both the employer's and the employee's interest to have an appropriate policy in place relating to the use of information technology.

#### Policy

1. All members of staff are required to read and to comply with the conditions of the policy in respect of the way in which information technology is used. The policy includes computers and fax machines
2. The Council recognises that reasonable use of e-mail facilities to communicate brief personal non-offensive messages is acceptable and is a privilege that the Council is prepared to allow, but the amount of time spent must not be abused or it will be stopped
3. The Council recognises that access to professional information by e-mail, fax or through web sites is a necessary requirement of the job of the Clerk to the Council and other staff and is permitted
4. Staff are expected to use technology in a courteous, reasonable and responsible manner. The following activities are not acceptable and anyone found to be involved in them may face disciplinary action. In certain instances the matter will be considered to be gross misconduct:
  - Receiving, sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
  - Using obscene language
  - Improper use of e-mail and faxes
  - Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks
  - Violating copyright laws
  - Using others' passwords and identities (unless authorised)
  - Trespassing in others' folders, works, or files
  - Intentionally wasting limited resources
  - Employing the Council's systems for commercial purposes
  - Employing the Council's systems for illegal activities
  - Downloading any commercial software
5. The Council encourages electronic communications with local, national and international organisations
6. The Council cannot control and is not responsible for the accuracy or content of information gathered over the internet. Security is maintained by appropriate software, internal computer security settings and passwords
7. It is a requirement of the Council and the duty of all staff to avoid deliberate use of the Council's internet connections and technology for inappropriate personal use. Staff should immediately alert the Parish Clerk, or Parish Chairman, as appropriate, of any suspect material found stored on a computer or elsewhere on the premises.  
The Council is prepared to allow staff the use of the Council's internet connections for personal access to the internet provided that this is carried out in their own time and whilst there is no cost to the Council.

**11<sup>th</sup> October 2016 – Reviewed 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

8. The computer equipment and software must be used as installed and staff may not install, uninstall, delete or change anything on a Council computer without the express authority of the Parish Clerk or the Parish Council, as appropriate.
9. The Council uses a virus checker on its computers and staff are forbidden to load data disks which have not been virus checked by the system.
10. Access to chat rooms and gaming is not permitted on Council computers

Any concerns on the policy must be raised with the Clerk or the Chairman (as appropriate) in the first instance and will be resolved, if necessary, by the Personnel Committee or the Parish Council.

This policy is subject to the normal grievance and disciplinary rules.

**I have read the policy and agree to abide by it.**

Signed..... Print name.....

Date ...../...../.....