Thaxted Parish Council
Equipment Policy

1. E-mail

Increasingly, e-mail messages are now used as the routine method of correspondence. This facility, together with access to the internet, is available through the Councils computer network.

The following guidance is given to ensure that the facility is properly used and not abused.

The overriding principle is that e-mail messages are to be controlled and processed to the same standards as for normal correspondence. Because e-mails, both received and sent, are processed on an individual personal computer, in the majority of instances without the knowledge of a Line Manager, there must inevitably be a high degree of trust from everyone in the use of e-mails.

We monitor and read all e-mails as only business e-mails are permitted to be sent and received.

We also monitor e-mails for compliance reasons and to ensure that unauthorised disclosure of confidential information is not passed via the e-mail system.

Outgoing messages

1.1   No potentially offensive messages are to be sent. Defamation, harassment and breaches of the Councils discrimination policy are all potential risks. Please also be wary of the temptation to send off a hasty message that, on reflection, would seem unwise. A good rule is to reply later or the next day if annoyed or offended by action taken or a communication received; allowing yourself a 'cooling off period' can avoid putting yourself in the wrong.

1.2   All e-mails are to be restricted to the Councils professional work and personal e-mails should not be sent without manager approval.

1.3   Always check the state of attachments to see that you are sending the correct draft.

Virus protection

1.4   Our e-mail facility is protected by anti-virus software. All anti-virus updates are to be processed without delay.

1.5   Nobody may introduce to their PC any disk without our permission.

1.6   If a suspicious e-mail message is received, for example from an unidentifiable sender, especially with attachments, it should not be opened. Particular caution is needed where the message is from a familiar source but there is no text in the message. In such circumstances please telephone the sender before opening that attachment to see if they have indeed sent a bona fide message to you. Where there is still doubt, the message should be deleted without being opened.

2. Internet use

2.1   In no circumstances should any individual within the Council visit sites that could reasonably be regarded as pornographic, discriminatory or offensive. Users must also be wary of breach of copyright from inappropriate downloads.

2.2   Please note that we monitor internet access for the purpose of enforcing this policy.

2.3   Failure to follow this policy will be regarded as a disciplinary offence and could lead to the termination of employment.

3. The Hardware

3.1   The Parish Council have provided each Councillor with a 10.1" Lenovo Ideapad D330, a GETech 0770 Wireless Mouse and black carry case strictly for Parish Council usage.

3.2   All equipment remains the Property of the Parish Council at all times, upon leaving the role of Parish Councillor within Thaxted Parish Council all equipment must be surrendered immediately.

3.3   The Councillor who is the primary user of the equipment may not amend change or share any pre-configured password settings, access and admin rights will remain in the domain of the Parish Council's Proper Officer (The Clerk). Upon request and periodically the Clerk will request full access to the equipment which must be granted.

3.4   Councillors are not permitted to add or remove any software programmes without express permission of the Clerk.