**CAWOOD PARISH COUNCIL**

**INFORMATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

**Equipment:**

The Clerk’s mobile phone, laptop computer, associated hardware and software and any other IT equipment are the property of Cawood Parish Council. As the authorised user, the Clerk is responsible for its safe keeping and appropriate use.

The Clerk must not attempt to modify or alter the hardware without the permission of the Council or in an emergency situation, the Chairman or the Chairman of Staffing Committee. Similarly, the Clerk must not attempt to modify, delete or alter the set up of the Windows environment or any software loaded on the Council’s computer.

The Clerk should not install any software at all, without permission of the Council. The Clerk will not make illegal copies of the Council’s software for personal use or by third parties, or in any way violate the Council’s software licence agreements.

Only the Clerk or a Councillor designated for the purpose, eg in a case of the Clerk being on long term sick leave, will use the Parish Council’s laptop computer, phone or access emails. The computer and phone will only be used for the purpose of Cawood Parish Council business both in terms of production and storage of documents.

**Faults**:

In the event of any hardware or software fault please seek advice from the Chairman or Staffing Committee.

**Acceptable use of the internet using the Cawood Parish Council computer:**

Intentional use of the computer or phone to access, transmit or retrieve any material or communications that are obscene, pornographic, or sexually explicit; of a discriminatory or harassing nature or which are derogatory to any individual or group; or are threatening in nature is prohibited.

The Clerk should not download files, including applications and games that are not connected with work for Cawood Parish Council.

Any sites which require registration or payment for services must not be accessed without due authority of the council.

**Use of Email**

The use of email and texts to exchange correspondence requires the same professional standards as other forms of communication. Nothing should be sent or forwarded which is defamatory or offensive for whatever reason.

The Clerk agrees that the e-mail address: cawood.pclerk@gmail.com is the intellectual property of Cawood Parish Council. The mobile phone number is exclusively for Parish Council business.

In order to protect the Parish Council from viruses, e-mail attachments which might contain macros (word processor and spreadsheet files) or applications, should not be opened if they are from a sender the Clerk does not recognise or trust. Simply delete.

The council, and any members using computers for the council’s financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.

**Data protection:**

The Clerk must not include in the text of e-mails to be sent, or in files attached to them, sensitive personal data without appropriate protection in order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

E-mail addresses should be treated as confidential and care taken that private e-mail addresses are not wrongly circulated. E-mail to multiple addresses outside of Councillors and the Clerk should be sent as blind copy (bcc).

**Passwords:** The Parish Council’s computer, mobile phone and email account will be password protected. The passwords will be shared with the Chair of the Staffing Committee and/or the Council Chairman and altered when necessary eg a new Chair of the Staffing Committee takes office.

**Backup of files and folders:**

The Clerk will back-up all electronic files and folders on a weekly basis.

**Relinquishment of information upon termination of employment:**

Upon the Clerk ceasing to be employed by the council, they will relinquish all IT equipment owned by Cawood Parish Council within a period of 7 days following the termination date/leave date whichever is the soonest.

No files or folders will be tampered with or destroyed prior to being passed to the Council.

**Non-compliance:**

Indications of non-compliance with the provisions of this Policy will be investigated, as appropriate. Subject to the findings of any such investigation, non-compliance with the provisions of this Policy will lead to appropriate disciplinary action, which could include dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct.

Furthermore, publication of some materials may not only amount to a disciplinary offence, but also a criminal offence, in which case the issue will be reported to the police for them to take appropriate action.

**Acknowledgement:**

The Clerk to Cawood Parish Council must receive a copy of these guidelines and sign to acknowledge receipt and that they have been read and understood.

I have received a copy of this IT policy and acknowledge that I have read, understood and agree to abide by its provisions:

Signed ............................................................................... Clerk to Cawood Parish Council

Print name ……………………………………………………

Date ..................................................

Policy reviewed October 2021, November 2023, next review 2025