Holbeach PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk/RFO: Jan Hearsey

Coubro Chambers, 11 West End
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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY

1. What is Information and Communication Technology? Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a loose term which is used to describe a wide range of tools and techniques, usually electronic in nature, which speed up and/or aid communication. Holbeach Parish Council recognises the importance of embracing ICT to ensure that its customers benefit from efficient levels of service delivery. The Council supports the Government's aim of improving electronic access to public services.

2. Aims The aims of this policy are to:

a) facilitate the ongoing development of the efficient management and delivery of the Council's services.
b) provide opportunities for staff to acquire and develop core ICT competencies.
c) ensure that the Council's ICT systems are reviewed regularly and adjusted to meet new or changing need.

3. Management The Parish Clerk has overall responsibility for ICT and the implementation of this policy.

4. Technical Support. The Parish Council shall appoint an independent and competent ICT support provider F1 Group and will be subject to a 1-year review to confirm the service they provide meet service delivery needs.

5. Security

a) Individuals shall:

- be responsible for the Parish Council's usernames and passwords.
- protect user credentials against misuse.
- not share or disseminate any user credentials with another person.
- only attempt to access ICT where permissions have been given.
- not misuse or alter the configuration or settings of any ICT.
- not attempt to bypass or subvert ICT security controls.
- not leave a computer system/tablet/phone open if it is unattended.
- operate a clear screen policy when you leave ICT unattended, for example by temporary "locking" the computer/tablet/phone.
- protect all ICT portable media and devices at all times, in particular when transporting them outside of Council premises
- Data recovery – the Chair of the Council, if the Clerk and Deputy Clerk are indisposed shall be able to request password resets from F1 Group by using an agreed pass phrase.
- Return the devices to the Council when requested for updating

b) All ICT media and portable devices used to process Council information shall be password protected and encrypted.

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c) Staff, Councillors & Volunteers will seek to prevent inadvertent disclosure of personal or sensitive information by avoiding being overlooked when working

d) Take care when printing information and by carefully checking the distribution list for any material to be transmitted.

e) Staff, Councillors & Volunteers shall securely store or destroy any printed material which contains private information, sensitive, disclosive or identifiable records or which is not for public circulation.

f) Staff Councillors shall not introduce unofficial software, hardware, removable media, or files without appropriate authorisation.

g) Staff, Councillors & Volunteers shall report any security incident or suspected security incident to the Council as soon as is reasonably possible.

6. Hardware Computers and peripherals - The Parish Council's computer systems and computer peripherals will be subject to annual review to confirm that they are meeting service delivery needs. All computers and computer peripherals will be listed, and revisions / deletions will be assessed for replacement or upgrade over a maximum of a 3-year period.

7. Telephones and related systems - Answer machines (or such combined units, where supplied) will be maintained within the Parish Council office. Any information contained in outgoing messages (conveyed by the latter machine) will conform to national minimum standards with messages being clear and concise. The Parish Clerk has the discretion to engage providers of more cost-effective telephone network services. Except in exceptional circumstances, use of the telephone, related and electronic communication systems for personal use must be authorised by the Parish Clerk. All staff and councillors are issued with mobile phones. All telephone and related systems will be assessed over a 3-year period and assessed for replacement / repair where necessary.

8. Software: The Parish Council's computer software will be subject to annual review to confirm that it is meeting service delivery needs and demand. To ensure adequate maintenance and development support, the Council shall normally avoid bespoke software packages. The Parish Council's approved applications are: • Microsoft 365 • accounting: EdgeIT • payroll: Moneysoft Payroll Manager. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk have the Sum-up software on their Council mobile phones.

9. Internet access: The Parish Council recognises that the Internet is a valuable information resource with the potential to improve the delivery of its services. The Council has a web site controlled by Lincolnshire County Council and The Parish Council's aim is to deliver its services within the spirit of the Government's 'E-Government Strategy'.

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- Access to the Internet must be approved by an authorised user - as appropriate, usually the Parish Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

• Access for personal reasons is permitted in certain circumstances, however it is the responsibility of the 'user' to ensure no illegal or prohibited sites are accessed; should this happen by error a report should be immediately submitted to the Parish Clerk / Chair of the Council.

10. e-mail: The Council recognises that email is an increasingly popular, speedy, and cost effective method for communication and data transfer. The Council requires that the Parish Council office, Coubro Chambers, West End has the capability of sending/receiving email messages and data. Members of staff, Councillors and authorised users shall ensure:

- e-mail use must be lawful and inoffensive - and be approved by an authorised user, normally the Parish Clerk.
- they do not send personal or sensitive data over public networks such as the Internet unless an approved method of protection or encryption has been applied to it.
- they check that the recipients of e-mail messages are correct so that personal, or sensitive information is not accidentally released into the public domain.
- that personally owned email accounts are not used to conduct Council business.
- They do not use Parish Council e-mail address(es) to send personal emails.
- That devices other than Council issued mobile phones and tablet are not authorised to be used for Council business or access the Council's wifi. Personal phones should not be used during working time, Councillors should not use personal mobile phones whilst attending meetings.
- All documentation will only be sent by email or other electronic communication.
- All devices are returned to the Council when the individual ceases being a member of staff or councillor.

11. Unacceptable Use: Members of staff and Councillors users shall ensure:

- any security incident or suspected security incident is reported to the Council as soon as is reasonably possible.
- they do not send personal or sensitive data over public networks such as the Internet.
- they do not communicate information via an ICT system knowing it or suspecting it to be unacceptable within the context and purpose for which it is being communicated.
- they do not process or access racist, sexist, defamatory, offensive, illegal, or otherwise inappropriate material.
- they do not carry out illegal, fraudulent, or malicious activities.
- they do not store, process or displaying offensive or obscene material, such as pornography or hate literature.

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- they do not annoy or harass another individual, for instance by sending chain letters, uninvited e-mail of a personal nature or by using lewd or offensive language.
- they do not break copyright.

12. Remote Access: The Parish Council recognises that staff may need to work from remote locations from time to time. To address this issue, provision for remote access is available. Log on and password information will be issued to staff members. Staff members shall report any security incident or suspected security incident to the Parish Clerk and the Council as soon as is reasonably possible.

13. Personal Data: Any member of staff processing personal data must comply with the eight enforceable principles of good practice (Data Protection Act 2018). These stipulate that data must be:

a) fairly and lawfully processed.
b) processed for limited purposes.
c) adequate, relevant, and not excessive.
d) accurate.
e) not kept longer than necessary.
f) processed in accordance with the data subject's rights.
g) secure.
h) not transferred to countries without adequate protection.

14. Data Protection: The Parish Clerk is the Data Controller

a) Confidentiality Passwords are to be used to restrict access to personal and/or confidential data. If there is any doubt about whether access to certain data should be restricted, guidance should be sought from the Parish Clerk/Data Controller.
b) Viruses All computers used to send/receive emails or to access the Internet must have recognised anti-virus software installed - such as Norton Anti-Virus or McAfee. No disk, drive or memory stick from any external source shall be opened until it has been checked for viruses.
c) Back-ups All data is to be stored in the Cloud and not on any individual device.

15. Training: The Council recognises that training staff using new technology products is essential. Therefore:

a) all users of IT office productivity facilities (such as word processing and spreadsheets) shall be given appropriate training.
b) adequate training in the use of specialised software packages will be given to all users of that software.
c) training will be given to users of any new software as part of the implementation programme.

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16. Awareness Individuals shall make themselves aware of, and comply with, requirements and legislation regarding information security and data protection along with any other legal, statutory, or contractual obligations identified by the Parish Council.

17. Breaches of Policy All Council employees have a contractual responsibility to be aware of and conform to the Council's values, rules, policies, and procedures. Breaches of policy may lead to disciplinary proceedings. Individuals who fail to comply with the Councils policies and who are not Council employees may have their access to Council information and ICT revoked and such action could have impacts on contracts with third party organisations.

Version	Date Approved	Amendments Made	Next Review Date
V1	08/04/2024		April 2025
V2	12-08-2024	Regarding Council issued devices	May 2027