



# Combs Parish Council IT and Email Policy

## 1. Introduction

Combs Parish Council ('Combs PC') acknowledges the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations and communications.

This policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of IT resources and email by users.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who use Combs PC's IT resources. This encompasses council members and the parish clerk but could potentially be extended to include volunteers and contractors should they be given access to said systems. These include computers, networks, software, devices, data, online systems and email accounts.

## 3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email

Combs PC IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks. Limited personal use is permitted, provided it does not interfere with work responsibilities or violate any part of this policy. All users must adhere to ethical standards, respect copyright and intellectual property rights, and avoid accessing inappropriate or offensive content.

## 4. Device and software usage

Where possible and subject to affordability, authorised devices, software and applications will be provided by Combs PC for work-related tasks.

Unauthorised installation of software on authorised devices, including personal software, is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.

## 5. Data management and security

All sensitive and confidential Combs PC data should be stored and transmitted securely. Regular data backups should be performed to prevent data loss, and secure data destruction methods should be used when necessary.

## 6. Network and internet usage

Network and internet connections should be used responsibly for official purposes. Downloading and sharing copyrighted material without proper authorisation is prohibited.

## 7. Email communication

Email accounts provided by Combs PC are for official communication only. Emails should be professional and respectful in tone. Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless it is encrypted.



Users should be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware and should verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

## 8. Password and account security

Combs PC users are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts and passwords. Passwords should be strong and not shared with others. Regular password changes are encouraged to enhance security.

## 9. Mobile devices and remote Work

Mobile devices provided by Combs PC should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication. When working remotely, users should follow the same security practices as if they were in the office.

## 10. Email monitoring

Combs PC reserves the right to monitor email communications to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant laws. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

## 11. Retention and archiving

Emails should be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Users should regularly review and either delete unnecessary emails or file important ones in a structured folder hierarchy to maintain an organised inbox.

## 12. Reporting security incidents

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk, Chair or Vice Chair for investigation and resolution. Report any email-related security incidents or breaches to the Clerk immediately.

## 13. Training and awareness

Combs PC expects users to be familiar with and assume responsibility for IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. Combs PC will however provide training for individuals who feel that they would benefit from refreshing their capability. All employees and councillors will receive regular reminders on email security and leading practices.

## 14. Compliance and consequences

Breach of this IT and Email Policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges and further action as deemed appropriate by councillors.

## 15. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.

## 16. Contacts

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact Combs Parish Clerk. All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of Combs PC's IT and email systems. By



adhering to this IT and Email Policy, Combs PC aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment that supports its operational integrity.

## Reference

|                  |                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
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| Date             | 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2025 |
| Author           | Cllr AB Kitson                 |
| Next Review Date | November 2026                  |

## Authority

| Name             | Role       | Signature |
|------------------|------------|-----------|
| Cllr A Kitson    | Chair      |           |
| Cllr C Ratcliffe | Vice Chair |           |