

HALSALL PARISH COUNCIL

Review / Change Date	Description
May 2025	Halsall Parish Council IT Policy adopted

Halsall Parish Council IT Policy

1. Introduction

Halsall parish council recognises 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 council members, employees, volunteers, and contractors.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who use Halsall parish council's IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts.

3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email

Halsall parish council 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, authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by Halsall parish council 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

HALSALL PARISH COUNCIL

All sensitive and confidential Halsall parish council data should be stored and transmitted securely using approved methods. Regular data backups should be performed to prevent data loss, and secure data destruction methods should be used when necessary.

Halsall parish council has a Google online account, and all information is stored in the Cloud. The only locally stored data is the HMRC Basic Payroll System which is backed up to the Cloud after every payroll run – and before any software release.

6. Network and internet usage

Halsall parish council's network and internet connections should be used responsibly and efficiently for official purposes. Downloading and sharing copyrighted material without proper authorisation is prohibited.

7. Email communication

Email accounts provided by Halsall parish council 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.

Be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

Halsall parish council email domain is halsallparish.gov.uk. All official email should be received, sent or copied through Clerk@HalsallParish.gov.uk.

Email Management

Easy Web Sites provide the email services for Halsall Parish Council. Easy Web Sites Ltd uses IONOS, a major email hosting provider, to host emails. IONOS implements industry-standard security protocols to protect client email data and systems from potential cyber security risks.

All Councillors are provided with a Parish Council .gov.uk email address for exclusive use of Parish Council business.

HALSALL PARISH COUNCIL

If a Councillor has a Parish Council email address, there will be no requirement to have a separate Trust email address as they are already using a compliant .gov.uk email address.

The emails are provided and supported by Easy Web Sites Ltd who provide the following support services;

1. Creating emails with a secure password. Councillors are not permitted to create or use their own (easy to remember) passwords, for security. Passwords are a combination of lowercase and uppercase letters, numbers and special characters.
2. Changing passwords (if a Councillor was no longer in post)
3. Deleting the email box in the event that a Councillor is no longer in the post through resignation or death

Should a Councillor no longer be in the position then the email box and all the content may at the discretion of the Council be immediately deleted.

Halsall Parish Council 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.

8. Password and account security

Halsall parish council 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.

The Chair will retain a sealed and signed envelope for any passwords to systems which do not have alternative business continuity users.

9. Mobile devices and remote Work

Mobile devices provided by Halsall parish council 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

Halsall parish council 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. Regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organised inbox.

12. Reporting security incidents

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the designated IT point of contact for investigation and resolution. Report any email-related security incidents or breaches to the Clerk@halsallparish.gov.uk immediately.

13 Training and awareness

Halsall parish council will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors will receive regular training on email security and best practices.

14. Compliance and consequences

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

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 Clerk@halsallparish.gov.uk.

HALSALL PARISH COUNCIL

All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of Halsall parish council's IT and email systems. By adhering to this IT and Email Policy, Halsall parish council aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment that supports its mission and goals.

Date: _____14th May 2025_____

Signature: _____J. C Pyne_____ (Approved Item 6.5 May 2025)

Role: _____ Clerk to Halsall Parish Council