



HELSTON TOWN COUNCIL

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Reviewed: March 2024

1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- 1.1 Many workplaces allow staff personal use of information technology (IT), including email and the internet. Helston Town Council acknowledges that reasonable use of these technologies at work assists staff with their work-life balance by enabling them to make personal arrangements quickly and efficiently. However, it is necessary to prevent abuse of the system and protect IT equipment from malicious software.
- 1.2 It is important to formalise this arrangement so that the employer and all employees have a clear understanding of what activities are and are not allowed.

2 POLICY COVERAGE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees and all Helston Town Council computer equipment.
- 2.2 This policy also applies to Members when using Helston Town Council computer equipment or email accounts.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 Personal use of computer equipment is permitted, but should be kept to a minimum during working hours.
- 3.2 All computers used to send/receive emails or access the internet must have recognised antivirus software installed and regularly reviewed. All employees/Members must report any virus problems immediately to the IT contractor.

4 HELSTON TOWN COUNCIL INTERNET USAGE

- 4.1 Internet use will be checked for misuse and all misuse is prohibited.
- 4.2 Misuse includes, but is not limited to:
 - 4.2.1 Browsing offensive or pornographic websites.
 - 4.2.2 Downloading Pornographic or offensive material from the internet.
 - 4.2.3 Posting indecent remarks, proposals or materials on the internet.
 - 4.2.4 Knowingly downloading malicious software (including logic bombs, Trojan horses, viruses and worms) from the internet.
 - 4.2.5 Posting confidential information on the internet.
 - 4.2.6 Downloading, sharing or distributing any material which would amount to a criminal offence.

5 EMAIL

- 5.1 Employees/Members must not solicit, send or willingly receive emails of an obscene nature, or which are intended to annoy, harass, intimidate or cause offence to colleagues or members of the public.
- 5.2 Personal or sensitive data must not be sent via email unless agreement has been received from the individual concerned or this processing is necessary to carry out public functions.
- 5.3 Emails should be regularly deleted or archived, when they are no longer current or required as per the Document Retention policy.
- 5.4 Employees/Members must not download files from the internet, email, floppy disk or CD without implementing virus protection measures.
- 5.5 Emails sent by employees must have the following disclaimers:

“Any opinions expressed in this email are those of the individual and are not necessarily those of Helston Town Council. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you are not the recipient, the use of the information by disclosure, copying or distribution is prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this email in error please notify the Town Clerk at townclerk@helston-tc.gov.uk.

Alternatively please contact the Helston Town Council, The Guildhall, Helston, TR13 8ST or telephone 01326 572063.

Helston Town Council has scanned this email and attachments for viruses but does not accept any responsibilities for viruses once this email has been transmitted. The recipient is responsible for scanning emails and any attachments for viruses themselves.”

- 5.6 Emails sent by Members must have the following disclaimers:

“Any opinions expressed in this email are those of the individual and are not necessarily those of Helston Town Council. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you are not the recipient, the use of the information by disclosure, copying or distribution is prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this email in error please notify the Town Clerk at townclerk@helston-tc.gov.uk.

Alternatively please contact the Helston Town Council, The Guildhall, Helston, TR13 8ST or telephone 01326 572063.”

6 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 6.1 Employees/Members must not reveal or publicise to a third party confidential or proprietary information, which includes, but is not limited to: personal or sensitive data as defined under the Data Protection Act (2018), computer software source codes, logins, or passwords, unless they have the permission of the Town Clerk or it is in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- 6.2 Helston Town Council respects the privacy and autonomy of its employees and Members.

7 MONITORING

- 7.1 Helston Town Council currently does not monitor emails or internet usage. However, monitoring may be employed under the following circumstances:
 - 7.1.1 complaints are received about malicious emails
 - 7.1.2 evidence of criminal activity or sending/downloading pornographic images
 - 7.1.3 staff are spending unreasonable amounts of time visiting non-work related internet sites or sending personal emails
- 7.2 Before monitoring is undertaken, all staff would be informed and provided with information on Helston Town Council's approach to monitoring. Any monitoring would comply with the Data Protection Act and information obtained from monitoring would only be used for the purpose it was obtained. Random checks of internet sites visited are included in regular internal audits by Members and are conducted in the presence of the staff member.

8 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

- 8.1 If an employee breaches the IT policy, they will be subject to the Council's disciplinary procedures. Breaches of the IT Policy by Members could contravene the Code of Conduct and action may result from this contravention.

9 REVIEW

- 9.1 Helston Town Council will periodically review the quality of its IT systems.

Appendix A

Definitions

Pornographic material

Material that, all or in part, contains any description or representation of nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement or sado-masochistic abuse which predominantly appeals to the prurient, shameful or morbid interest of adults and is without serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

Offensive material

Any published or broadcast content (such as articles, photographs, films, or websites) that is intended or likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress.