

# **TOLLESHUNT D'ARCY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **EMAIL POLICY V2.0**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Email is regularly used for the management and administration of the business of Tolleshunt D'Arcy Parish Council (TDPC). Members should only use the Clerk's email system with the domain name [tolleshuntarcyparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:tolleshuntarcyparishcouncil.gov.uk) for council business and not personal or other addresses. Members must not copy, print or forward TDPC emails to third-party addresses even if they are personal addresses of the member. Neither should members show or share the content of TDPC emails with any non-member, without the explicit approval of the clerk who will deal with any Freedom of Information requests.

### **2. SCOPE**

This Policy applies to:

- Employees
- Elected members (councillors)
- Members of the public
- Other people, companies and organisations in contact with TDPC.

### **3. POLICY STATEMENT**

TDPC relies on the effective use of email. All users must ensure that their use of email is lawful and will not adversely affect the Council or its business and not damage the Council's or its employees' reputations or otherwise violate any of the Council's policies. Users must ensure that they do not cause damage to the Clerk's computer system.

### **4. USE OF EMAIL FACILITIES**

All users must use email responsibly. TDPC reserves the right to take disciplinary or legal action against any person who fails to comply with this policy. All users must accept that communications via the Clerk's email system is not secure or encrypted and they should take particular care when sending potentially sensitive or confidential information.

All users must accept and agree that communications both to and from the Council via email may be monitored for the purpose of ensuring appropriate usage. Users should also be aware that deleted emails may still be accessible from back-up procedures.

### **5. GENERAL GUIDANCE**

Email users are advised to be aware of the following:

- Messages sent to groups of people must be relevant to all concerned
- Messages sent by this method will not necessarily be seen immediately by the recipient. If the message is urgent, an alternative method of contact should be used
- TDPC cannot be held responsible for damages, losses or expenses that may be suffered by a user of this facility

- The Clerk may, from time to time, choose to operate a filtering system or other methods in order to monitor offensive or inappropriate material/usage and may quarantine any messages in that category.

## **6. BUSINESS USE**

The Clerk has the sole authority to purchase or acquire goods or services on behalf of the Council via email. With email messages having the same status in law as written correspondence and subject to the same legal implications, e.g. may be required to be disclosed in Court or as part of a Freedom of Information Request.

Users must not use the Clerk's system in the furtherance of any non-council activity or by use of the email address infer a connection with or involvement of TDPC that does not exist.

Users are required to apply the same high standards to emails as those applied to written correspondence. Email inboxes must be checked regularly to ascertain all correspondence within that system.

The Clerk must ensure that the Clerk's inbox is checked during times of absence due to holiday or sickness.

Discovery of an email which appears to contain a virus, or a solution to correct a previously transmitted virus, must be reported immediately to the Clerk. All users must comply with the relevant licence terms and conditions when copying and/or downloading material. Users accept that there is no guarantee of delivery of emails unless acceptance of delivery is requested of the recipient. All users must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 when placing personal data in messages or attachments.

## **7. INAPPROPRIATE USE**

Users must not use email to abuse or inflame others or to harass or threaten anyone. Responding to abuse, harassment or threatening will not be accepted as an excuse for inappropriate language and/or behaviour. Recipients of abusive or threatening emails related to the business of the Council must immediately inform the Clerk or Chair. Users must not send emails containing obscene, abusive or profane language. Users must not send, access, display, download, copy or circulate information containing stories, jokes or anecdotes that contain:

- Pornography or sexually orientated images
- Gambling
- Gaming (playing computer games)
- Promotion of unlawful discrimination of any kind
- Promotion of racial or religious hatred
- Threats including the promotion of violence
- Fraudulent or illegal material promotion of illegal and/or unlawful acts
- Information considered to be offensive, inappropriate or disrespectful to others
- Unauthorised and copyrighted material including music.

TDPC will report to the police all known incidents in which users intentionally send or receive emails containing the following:

- Images of child pornography or child abuse (i.e. images where children are or appear to be under the age of 16 and are involved in sexual activities or posed to be sexually provocative)
- Adult material/pornography that breaches the Obscene Publications Acts (1959 & 1964)
- Criminally racist material
- Users must not send, receive or disseminate proprietary data or any confidential information belonging to TDPC to or from a third party unless authorised.

## **8. ACCIDENTAL ACCESS TO INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL**

If inappropriate material is accessed accidentally, users must report this immediately to the Chair. It can then be taken into account as part of the Council's monitoring procedure.

## **9. MONITORING**

Serious breaches of this policy by a Council employee will amount to gross misconduct and may result in dismissal. Serious breaches of this policy by councillors, members of the public or members of any other organisation or company will result in legal or police action.

## **10. RESPONSIBLE OFFICER**

The Clerk will be responsible for the administration of this policy on behalf of TDPC and will report breaches to the Chair of the Council for advice about further action.

Last Review: May 2025

Next Review: May 2026