

# Upper Hardres Parish Council

## IT Policy

### Introduction

Upper Hardres Parish Council (UHPC) recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its 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.

### Scope

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

### Acceptable use of IT resources and email

UHPC's 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.

### Device and software usage

Where possible, authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by UHPC for work-related tasks. Unauthorised installation of software on authorised devices, including personal software, is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.

### Data management and security

All sensitive and confidential UHPC 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.

### Network and internet usage

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

### Email communication

Email accounts provided by UHPC 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.

### Password and account security

UHPC 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.

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## **Mobile devices and remote work**

Mobile devices (including laptops) provided by UHPC should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication.

## **Email monitoring**

UHPC 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.

## **Retention and archiving**

Emails should be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Emails will be regularly reviewed and unnecessary emails deleted to maintain an organised inbox.

## **Reporting security incidents**

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the Clerk or website or email administrator. Any email-related security incidents or breaches should be reported to the Clerk or email provider immediately.

## **Training and awareness**

UHPC will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT.

## **Compliance and consequences**

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

## **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.

## **Contacts**

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact the Clerk at [clerk@upperhardres-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@upperhardres-pc.gov.uk)

The Clerk will engage professional IT support or contractors if appropriate to resolve issues.

All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of UHPC's IT and email systems.

By adhering to this IT and Email Policy, UHPC aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment.

Website and email host: HugoFox.com

Reviewed May 2026