



## COUNCILLORS EMAIL POLICY - for Westgate on Sea Town Council.

Adopted 03/09/2019

### **Policy Statement**

This policy is an advice note for Councillors setting out good practice in the use of emails between Members and between Members and Town Council staff.

In drawing up this advice, it is acknowledged that Councillor's private email accounts cannot be monitored in anyway. However, there are defined protocols within the existing Town Council policies for example the Press and Media Policy.

It should be noted that, as yet, within our Parish and Town Councils there is no policy precedent set for Councillor's use of emails. Council staff who have access to Council owned computers can however be subjected to a defined email policy; which is in place for Westgate on Sea Town Council.

This document outlines the protocol which Councillors are advised to follow when using email correspondence in the course of discharging their duties and responsibilities as Town Councillors. The Town Council uses Office 365 and all Councillors have a dedicated .gov.uk email address for their Town Council work; this should be used for all Council emails.

### **1. Email Usage**

1.1 In the interests of good practice Councillors are expected to refrain from creating unnecessary email congestion by sending messages of a trivial nature to the Town Council staff and Members.

1.2 The copying of emails should be relevant to those they are being sent to.

1.3 Councillors must honour the confidentiality statement, required with all email correspondence from all devices and not share or divulge information with third parties.

1.4 Councillors must be aware that all Town Council decisions are binding and therefore all public comments should be confined to matters on which the Council has reached agreement. More details concerning this can be found in the Council's Press and Media Policy relating to contact with the press and other media.

1.5 The content of emails must show respect for staff, Members and residents, bearing in mind the fact that first tier local government emails could be subjected to public scrutiny as evidence in court and under current law email messages may in certain circumstances have to be disclosed in litigation.

1.6 All emails must comply with General Data Protection Regulation; this requires organisations to protect personal data in all forms, it also changes the rules of consent and strengthens people's privacy rights.

1.7 Out of office automatic reply messages should be used when Councillors are away, this supports good communication.

1.8 It is considered best practice to have an email signature that is generated when sending emails from all devices to include; the Town Council address, website address, Councillors contact telephone number in addition to the disclaimer.