IT PROTOCOL



**1. Introduction**

Biggleswade Town Council recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its operations and communications.

This protocol outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of IT resources and emails by Officers and Members, as well as contractors. This protocol compliments and reinforces the Password Policy, the Information and Data Protection Policy, the Social Media Policy, and the terms and conditions within the employment contracts of all Town Council Officers. The Town Council also completes an annual Cyber Security Assessment.

**2. Scope**

This protocol applies to all individuals who use Biggleswade Town Council’s IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts.

**3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email**

Biggleswade Town Council’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 protocol. 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**

Authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by Biggleswade Town 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**

All sensitive and confidential Biggleswade Town 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.

**6. Network and internet usage**

Biggleswade Town 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 Biggleswade Town 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.

**8. Password and account security**

Biggleswade Town 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. For more information, please see the Council’s Password Protocol.

**9. Mobile devices and remote Work**

Mobile devices provided by Biggleswade Town 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**

Biggleswade Town Council reserves the right to monitor email communications to ensure compliance with this protocol 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 Administration & HR Manager for investigation and resolution. Report any email-related security incidents or breaches to the Administration & HR Manager immediately. For more information, please see the Council’s Information & Data Protection Policy.

**13. Training and awareness**

Biggleswade Town Council will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All Officers and Members will receive regular training on email security and best practices.

**14. Compliance and consequences**

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

**15. Protocol review**

This protocol will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.

**16. Data Controller**

The Administration & HR Manager is responsible for being the data controller.

**17. Contacts**

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact the Administration & HR Manager.

All Officers and Members are responsible for the safety and security of Biggleswade Town Council’s IT and email systems. By adhering to this IT and Email Protocol, Biggleswade Town Council aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment that supports its mission and goals.