



Coxhoe Parish Council

Computer and Equipment Use Policy

Approved: May 2023

Review Date: May 2024

1 Purpose

This policy formalises how information technology and associated equipment should be used by employees, volunteers, Councillors and where appropriate contractors of Parish Council.

2 Scope

Computer equipment, software, data access and services provided by Coxhoe Parish Council for use in conducting Council business is supplied on the following terms and conditions as set out below.

3 General

3.1 These Conditions of Use may be modified from time to time, in response to changing circumstances of an operational, legislative or technological nature.

3.2 Periodic checks may be made by Internal Audit or the Clerk to ensure compliance with these conditions. Where required to do so you must disclose passwords for this purpose. Always check with the Clerk before disclosing passwords to anyone else.

4 Ownership

4.1 The mobile phones, computer equipment, software, accessories, data access and services provided are the property of Coxhoe Parish Council. The equipment shall be recorded in the inventory of IT equipment and software. They are provided for the duration of your work with the Council.

4.2 At the end of that period services provided will be terminated and equipment and software must be returned to Coxhoe Parish Council in full working condition.

4.3 If equipment has been lost or damaged whilst on loan, a charge may be made for its replacement or repair if it is believed to have been handled unreasonably.

5 Installation

5.1 The equipment, software and services will be prepared for your use by an officer of Coxhoe Parish Council.

5.2 Coxhoe Parish Council will be responsible for supplying the equipment and any leads necessary to operate the equipment.

6 Training

It is the responsibility of the Clerk to ensure that every member of staff working on Coxhoe Parish Council Systems has been given sufficient training to use the systems where needed. If any employee or volunteer believes they need training this should be raised with their line manager.

7 Use of Computer Equipment, Software and Services

7.1 The equipment, software and services are provided for use in respect of Coxhoe Parish Council business. In making use of the facilities provided you are required to comply with Coxhoe Parish Council's policy and guidelines with respect to the use of Information Communications Technology.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Financial Regulations.
- Data Protection Policies.
- The Council's Personnel Policies and Procedures.

7.2 The relevant policies will have been supplied to you and are available on the Coxhoe Parish Council shared drive and website.

7.3 Access to the Internet may be provided by Coxhoe Parish Council. You should be aware that the Internet contains potentially offensive material.

7.6 Coxhoe Parish Council accepts no liability for any offence, injury or consequences that may result from your use of the Internet and its associated facilities. See section 8 for more detail.

7.7 You are also reminded of your responsibility of probity (see section 9 below).

8 Legal Implications

8.1 Coxhoe Parish Council must comply with all UK legislation with respect to the use of ICT. In using Coxhoe Parish Council facilities you must do likewise. You may be held personally liable for any breach of current legislation and any future legislation that may be enacted.

8.2 Examples of current legislation include, but are not limited to:

- Data Protection Act 1998.
- General Data Protection Regulations.
- Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988.
- Computer Misuse Act 1990.
- Obscene Publications Act 1959.
- Freedom of Information Act 2000.

8.3 It is your responsibility to ensure that your use of any personal information complies with the provisions of the Data Protection legislation.

8.4 The transmission of personal information contained within electronic mail or as an attachment to electronic mail is also subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

8.5 Personal information must not be sent over the internet without consent.

8.6 Printed reports must be disposed of with regard to the sensitivity of the information concerned and all material making reference to personal data must be disposed of in accordance with Coxhoe Parish Council's policies and procedures.

8.7 All recordable media (e.g. disks, magnetic tapes, recordable CDs and DVDs) must be returned to the parish council office for disposal.

8.8 Please also be aware that no unauthorised disclosure of information is permitted and all requests for access to personal data must be referred to the Clerk.

8.9 The use, or possession, of unlicensed copies or "pirated" versions of software is illegal and is expressly prohibited under the Copyright Designs and Patents Act.

8.10 The use of equipment must be in compliance with all relevant legislation.

8.11 For specific guidance, please contact the Clerk.

9 Computer Security

9.1 The Information Security Policy must be complied with at all times.

9.2 All Passwords should conform to these minimum requirements: passwords must not contain personal information such as your name or date of birth; passwords must contain at least one letter, one number and one special character e.g. # !; passwords must be changed periodically which is at least every six months.

9.3 Information concerning Coxhoe Parish Council's computer security arrangements and access methodologies must not be divulged to unauthorised persons.

9.4 The use of all media (e.g. floppy disks, CDs, Memory Sticks) must conform to the media policy, and must be checked for viruses before use.

9.5 Where a virus is suspected or detected, the matter must be reported to the Clerk immediately. Until virus repair is affected, an infected PC must not be used.

9.6 Virus repair must be undertaken only by or under the guidance of the Clerk.

9.7 Software or programs (including screen savers and wallpaper), must not be downloaded from the Internet or installed from removable media. This includes programs or software available for trial purposes or those that are free of charge.

9.8 No software can be loaded onto Coxhoe Parish Council ICT equipment, except by the prior approval of the Clerk.

9.9 Data stored on portable IT equipment must be backed-up on a regular basis. A suitable method will be provided to facilitate this.

9.10 Where information is kept on portable media, such as USB sticks, then such media must be kept securely when not in use.

9.11 Where stolen equipment and/or software are recovered; or where it is suspected that equipment or software have been tampered with, they must be returned to the Clerk to take the appropriate action.

10 Risk Management and Insurance

10.1 As part of its risk management and risk financing arrangements, the Council maintains insurance on the equipment provided to you.

10.2 All computer equipment must be secured from theft or unauthorised use as far as is practical.

10.3 If you travel with a laptop or other equipment, it should not be left in an unattended vehicle unless there is no other option, in which case it should be secured out of sight in the boot. There is no insurance cover for losses arising from unlocked vehicles, hotel rooms or other unsecured situations. Therefore, you should be especially careful when taking a laptop away from Council offices, as you will be liable for any such loss.

10.4 Any loss of, or damage to, the equipment should be reported as soon as possible to your line manager in the first instance and to the Clerk, and any criminal damage should be reported to the Police.

10.5 Any loss of personal data as the result of loss or theft of equipment shall be reported to the Clerk and the Clerk will arrange reporting to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).

11 Internet Access and Electronic Mail

11.1 Internet access, electronic mail, electronic diaries and associated services may be made available for your use, if required in connection with Council business.

11.2 The policy for acceptable use of the Internet must be adhered to at all times.

11.3 If required, email will be provided using the corporate email service. You will be provided with an official Council electronic mail address. You are requested to monitor and manage your electronic mail and calendar on a regular basis.

11.4 While the corporate electronic mail system is provided primarily for official business, personal use is permitted provided it complies with the Council's policies and guidelines, and such use does not hamper or conflict with official business.

11.5 In accordance with the Telecommunications (lawful business practice) Interception of Communications Regulations, the Council may lawfully view and monitor all email created, sent, forwarded, received or saved on the corporate email system without prior notice, and reserves the right to do so. You are therefore advised to think carefully before the facilities provided are used to communicate personal or sensitive information. The nature and content of electronic mail should be considered carefully and treated in the same way you would conventional mail.

11.6 The Council may also lawfully view and monitor all internet access and reserves the right to do so.

11.7 You are reminded that Council facilities may only be used for lawful purposes. Viewing or transmission of any material which may be regarded as offensive or in violation of any UK law or legislation is not permitted. Such material may include copyright material, material judged to be threatening, pornographic, obscene or sexually explicit and material protected by trade secret.

12 Probity

12.1 All officers and members are reminded that you are bound by the relevant codes of conduct and policies and that general principles contained within these also apply to specific instances, such as the use of the Internet or e-mail. You should ensure that your conduct accords with the requirements of the codes and policies.

12.2 Any allegations of breach of the Code will be referred to the Clerk or for the Clerk the Chair of the Council for investigation.

13 Support

13.1 Any computer equipment or software problems which occur should be reported to the Clerk.

13.2 No support will usually be provided outside of normal working hours.

13.3 In the event that the equipment suffers a complete hardware malfunction, Coxhoe Parish Council will be responsible for putting the equipment back to the condition in which it was first supplied. Coxhoe Parish Council will also reinstate, in so far as is reasonable and possible, information and data secured from the most recent backup.

14 Consumables

14.1 Coxhoe Parish Council will provide consumable items such as paper and toner cartridges for printers.

15 Data Use

15.1 Any data that is available to be accessed must only be used for Coxhoe Parish Council purposes and must not be transferred to any third party or other employers without the explicit agreement of the Clerk.

15.2 Confidential information held by Coxhoe Parish Council must never be stored on a personal laptop or drive.

17 Record of Equipment Software and Services Issued

Number:

Software:

Services:

18 DECLARATION

I confirm that: I have received the equipment, software and services specified above.

I agree to abide by the terms and conditions of use as set out above.

Signed

Print Name

Date