

## **Email and Social Media Policy Laverstock and Ford Parish Council**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Email and the website of **Laverstock and Ford** Parish Council (the Council) are regularly used for the management and administration of the Council's business. The Council has made a bespoke email address available to Councillors and employees and provides Councillors and employees with a username and password to access a secure area of the Council's website.
- 1.2 Councillors and employees who use or access the internet will adopt the bespoke email address for Council related matters.
- 1.3 The majority of correspondence to the Parish Council from outside bodies is via email. The Parish Clerk will try and minimise the amount of emails, which are forwarded on to Councillors. All correspondence forwarded by the Clerk is relevant to Council business, though some will be more urgent than others and some will require a response. To assist Councillors in prioritising which emails are most important, the Clerk will put a 'Please Read' or 'Please Respond' or 'For Info' in the header section of the email.

### **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This Policy applies to employees and Councillors in respect of their use of the bespoke Council email address and the use of any other email address in which the Councillor or employee, whether directly or indirectly, makes the communication as a member of the Council.

### **3. Policy Statement**

- 3.1 The Council encourages the effective use of email, the Internet and other forms of Social Media. Such use must always be lawful. All users must ensure that their use of email and social media 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.

### **4. Use of email facilities**

- 4.1 All users must use email responsibly. The Council reserves the right to take disciplinary or legal action against any person who fails to comply with this policy.
- 4.2 Use of the Council's email address is not secure or encrypted and care must be exercised when sending potentially sensitive or confidential information.
- 4.3 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 use of this methodology. Users should also be aware that deleted emails may still be accessible from back-up procedures.
- 4.4 A Councillor's email address will always take the following format: forenamefamilyname@laverstock-ford.co.uk and employees will use the format jobtitle@laverstock-ford.co.uk.
- 4.5 All Councillors must include the standard signature on external emails. The required text is **Appendix A**.

4.6 The Clerk of the Council will include the office's signature, which is shown at **Appendix B**

4.7 All Councillors and employees using email as a means of communication for the Council's business should take reasonable precautions to ensure that the communication is virus free.

## **5. General Guidance**

5.1 For the agreed general guidance on the use of emails see the Parish Council's **Guidance on the use of Email and Social Media**.

## **6. Business Use**

6.1 The Clerk has the sole authority to purchase or acquire goods or services on behalf of the Council by email.

6.2 Users are informed that email messages have the same status in law as written correspondence and are subject to the same legal implications, for example they may be required to be disclosed in Court.

6.3 Users are required to apply the same high standards to emails as those applied to written correspondence.

6.4 Email inboxes must be checked regularly to ensure all correspondence is assessed in a timely manner.

6.5 Users accept that there is no guarantee of delivery of emails unless acceptance of delivery is requested of the recipient. See also the Council's **Guidance on the use of Email and Social Media**.

6.6 All users must comply with the relevant licence terms and conditions when copying and/or downloading material.

6.7 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.

6.8 All users have a duty to record their absence for holidays etc. on the Council's Web site in the Councillors' window

## **7. Inappropriate Use**

7.1 The use of the Council's email address is allowed only for communication in respect of the Council's business. The use for personal communication is not allowed.

7.2 Users must not use email to abuse or incite others or to harass or threaten any other person. It is not a defence to claim that an email to which this subsection refers was a response to abuse, harassment or threatening behaviour.

7.3 Recipients of abusive or threatening emails related to the business of the Council must immediately inform the Clerk or Chair.

7.4 The Council's email address may not be used to 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.

7.5 Users must not send or disseminate proprietary data or any confidential information belonging to the Council to a third party unless authorised.

## **8. Accidental Access to Inappropriate material**

8.1 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. The Council Website**

9.1 The Council shall delegate the responsibilities for updating the Parish Council website and for its development, including 'news' items to a Web Manager appointed by the Council who could, if required, be a Councillor. Publicity or communication that promotes any matter subject to the business of the Council must only be undertaken in consultation with the Chair, ie proposals subject to Council approval.

9.2 The Web Manager will provide each member with a group username and password which allows the member to access the secure area of the website. They must not be disclosed by the member to any third party and must be retained for the use of the individual member.

9.3 Photographs and addresses of all Councillors and the Clerk will be displayed on the website, together with a telephone number and (where applicable) an email address for each Councillor.

## **10. Complaints and Breaches of the Policy**

10.1 The Council will appoint two Councillors as Social Media Adjudicators to consider any complaints received regarding the contents of the website or emails.

10.2 Any subsequent investigation will be led by the Chairman or Vice-Chair of the Council and at least one Social Media Adjudicator as appropriate.

10.3 Serious breaches of this policy by an employee will amount to gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.

10.4 Serious breaches of this policy by Councillors may result in action under the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

## **11. Responsible Officer**

11.1 The Clerk will be responsible for the administration of this policy on behalf of the Council and will report breaches to the Social Media Adjudicators for advice about further action.

15 May 2017

**Appendix A**  
**Standard format for the signature on Council external emails**  
**Laverstock and Ford Parish Council**

*Councillors can include further contact details above the name of the Parish Council.*

**REQUIRED TEXT:**



<http://www.laverstock-ford.co.uk>

This email is intended solely for the individual or individuals to whom it is addressed, and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. If you are not the intended recipient you are notified that disclosing, copying, distributing or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this email is prohibited. If you receive this email in error, please contact the sender and delete the email from any computer. All email communication may be subject to recording and/or monitoring in accordance with internal policy and relevant legislation. Any views expressed are those of the sender and, unless explicitly stated, do not necessarily represent the views of Laverstock and Ford Parish Council. The Council cannot accept any liability for any loss or damage sustained as a result of software viruses. It is your responsibility to carry out such virus checking as is necessary.

**□ THINK BEFORE YOU PRINT - Save paper if you don't really need to print this e-mail**

## Appendix B

### Standard format for the signature on Council external emails from the Clerk Laverstock and Ford Parish Council

*The Clerk can include further contact details above the name of the Parish Council.*

#### REQUIRED TEXT:



<http://www.laverstock-ford.co.uk>

This email originates from the Clerk to the Parish Council and any files transmitted with it may contain confidential information. It is intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender and delete the email from your inbox. Any disclosure, reproduction, dissemination, modification and distribution of the contents of the email is strictly prohibited.

## LFPC Email and Social Media Policy (002)

### **Related Documents**

Councillors' Code of Conduct  
Data Protection Guide for Councillors  
Guidance on the use of Email and Social Media by Councillors  
Data Protection Act 1998  
Freedom of Information Act 2000

### **Adoption and Review History**

Adopted at Parish Council Meeting on	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2017
Reviewed on	
Next Review Due	May 2018
Next Review of the Role of Facebook, Twitter and other forms of Social Media for the use by the Parish Council	May 2018
Next Review of the Guidance on the use of Email and Social Media by Councillors.	May 2018