Adopted on 14 Sept 26

# Claydon and Whitton Parish Council

## Councillor Tablet and Council IT Equipment Policy

**Council:** Claydon and Whitton Parish Council

**Policy adopted:** 14 Sept 26.

**Review date:** 14th Sept 28

**Policy owner:** Parish Clerk / Responsible Officer

### 1. Purpose

Claydon and Whitton Parish Council may provide councillors with a tablet or other electronic equipment to enable them to carry out their duties as elected or co-opted members of the Council.

Council-provided equipment remains the property of Claydon and Whitton Parish Council at all times and is provided solely for legitimate Parish Council business.

This policy sets out the conditions under which councillors may use Council-provided tablets and other IT equipment.

### 2. Council Business Only

Council-provided tablets must only be used for activities directly connected with the councillor's role and the business of Claydon and Whitton Parish Council.

Appropriate use includes:

- Accessing Council emails.
- Receiving and reading agendas, minutes and meeting papers.
- Accessing Council policies, procedures and other documents.
- Undertaking research relevant to Council business.
- Accessing information from the District Council, County Council, Government or other organisations relevant to Council work.
- Participating in authorised online Council meetings or training.
- Completing Council-related training.

- Communicating with the Clerk, fellow councillors and other organisations on legitimate Council matters.
- Accessing Council-approved applications and systems.

The tablet must not be used for general personal purposes.

3. Personal Use

Councillors must not use Council-provided tablets for personal activities, including:

- Personal email accounts.
- Personal social media accounts.
- Personal shopping or banking.
- Streaming films, television programmes or other entertainment.
- Gaming.
- Personal cloud storage.
- Personal photographs or videos, except where photographs are legitimately taken as part of Council business.
- Installing applications for personal use.
- Allowing family members, friends or any other person to use the device.

Limited incidental use should only take place where specifically authorised by the Council or Clerk.

4. Council Email

Where a councillor has been provided with an official Claydon and Whitton Parish Council email address, Council business should be conducted through that account rather than through a personal email address.

Councillors should take particular care when sending emails containing personal or confidential information and must check recipients before sending.

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5. Applications and Software

Only applications and software required for Council business should be installed on the tablet.

Councillors must not:

- Install unauthorised applications or software.
- Alter security settings.
- Remove security or device-management software.
- Attempt to bypass restrictions placed on the device.
- "Jailbreak", "root" or otherwise modify the operating system.
- Connect the device to unauthorised file-sharing or cloud-storage services.

Where possible, applications required for Council business should be approved by the Clerk before installation.

6. Passwords and Security

Councillors are responsible for taking reasonable precautions to keep Council equipment and information secure.

The tablet must:

- Be protected by a PIN, password, biometric security or other Council-approved security method.
- Be locked when not in use.
- Have operating system and security updates installed when required.
- Not have passwords or PINs shared with another person.
- Be stored securely when not in use.

Councillors should not leave a Council tablet unattended in a public place or visible in an unattended vehicle.

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7. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Councillors may have access to personal, sensitive or confidential information through their Council duties.

All information accessed through the tablet must be handled in accordance with Claydon and Whitton Parish Council's Data Protection Policy, Privacy Policy, document retention arrangements and any other relevant Council policies.

Confidential Council information must not be:

- Shared with unauthorised individuals.
- Copied to personal devices.
- Forwarded to personal email accounts.
- Uploaded to personal cloud-storage accounts.
- Printed or reproduced unnecessarily.
- Discussed or displayed where unauthorised people could see or hear it.

Particular care must be taken when using the tablet in public places.

8. Photographs and Recordings

The tablet's camera, microphone or recording facilities may only be used where there is a legitimate Council purpose.

Councillors must consider privacy and data-protection requirements before taking photographs, video or audio recordings.

Council meetings must not be recorded using a Council tablet unless recording is permitted and undertaken in accordance with the Council's procedures and applicable legislation.

9. Internet Use

Internet access using the Council tablet must be appropriate to the councillor's official duties.

Councillors must not knowingly access, download, store or distribute material that is unlawful, offensive, discriminatory, inappropriate or unrelated to Council business.

Councillors should be particularly cautious when opening links or attachments and should not proceed where they suspect an email, website or file may be fraudulent or malicious.

Any suspected phishing email or security incident should be reported to the Clerk.

10. Public Wi-Fi

Councillors should avoid accessing confidential or sensitive Council information using unsecured public Wi-Fi.

Where public Wi-Fi must be used, councillors should exercise particular caution and follow any security instructions issued by the Council.

11. Loss, Theft or Damage

Any loss, theft or suspected unauthorised access to a Council tablet must be reported to the Clerk immediately or as soon as reasonably practicable.

This is particularly important where the device contains or provides access to personal or confidential information.

The Clerk will determine whether the incident needs to be dealt with as a personal data breach.

Damage or malfunction must also be reported promptly.

Councillors must not arrange repairs themselves without prior authorisation.

12. Council Ownership and Monitoring

The tablet, accessories, Council accounts, Council email address and information held on Council systems remain the property of Claydon and Whitton Parish Council.

Councillors should have no expectation that information stored on a Council-owned device is personal or private.

Where lawful, necessary and proportionate, the Council may access or manage its equipment and accounts for purposes including:

- IT support.
- Cybersecurity.
- Investigating suspected misuse.
- Responding to information requests.
- Meeting legal or regulatory obligations.
- Protecting Council information.
- Recovering Council records.
- Preparing equipment for reassignment.

Any access or monitoring will be undertaken appropriately and in accordance with applicable law and Council policies.

## 13. Freedom of Information and Information Requests

Councillors should be aware that information created, received or held in connection with Council business may potentially fall within the scope of legislation relating to access to information, including Freedom of Information and Environmental Information requirements.

Councillors must therefore manage Council information appropriately and cooperate with the Clerk when information is required in response to a lawful request.

## 14. Use of Artificial Intelligence and Online Services

Councillors must not enter confidential, personal, sensitive or otherwise restricted Council information into artificial intelligence services, online tools or third-party websites unless their use has been specifically authorised by Claydon and Whitton Parish Council.

Council documents containing personal or confidential information must not be uploaded to unauthorised online services.

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15. Councillor Responsibility

Each councillor issued with a tablet is responsible for its reasonable care and security.

Councillors must not:

- Sell, lend or give the equipment to another person.
- Allow another person to use their Council account.
- Remove Council identification or asset labels.
- Dispose of the equipment themselves.
- Attempt to erase or reset the device without authorisation.

Normal wear and tear will not normally be the responsibility of the councillor.

Where equipment is deliberately damaged, seriously neglected, lost through unreasonable carelessness or used in breach of this policy, the Council may consider appropriate action after considering the circumstances.

16. Accessories and Equipment

Any charger, case, keyboard, stylus or other accessory supplied with the tablet remains the property of Claydon and Whitton Parish Council and should be looked after and returned with the device.

The Council should maintain an asset register recording equipment issued to individual councillors.

17. Leaving the Council

When a councillor resigns, is not re-elected, is disqualified or otherwise ceases to be a member of Claydon and Whitton Parish Council, all Council equipment must be returned to the Clerk or another authorised officer.

Unless otherwise agreed, equipment should be returned within 7 days of ceasing to be a councillor.

This includes:

- Tablet.
- Charger and cable ( if provided)
- Case.
- Keyboard or stylus ( if provided)
- Any other equipment supplied by the Council.

Councillors must not delete Council records before returning the device unless instructed to do so by the Clerk.

Claydon and Whitton Parish Council may reset or securely erase the device before it is issued to another councillor.

18. Breaches of this Policy

Suspected breaches of this policy should be reported to the Clerk.

Where the alleged breach concerns the Clerk, it should be reported to the Chair of Claydon and Whitton Parish Council.

Depending upon the circumstances, the Council may:

- Require the equipment to be returned.
- Remove or restrict access to Council systems.
- Take steps to protect or recover Council information.
- Refer a data-protection or security incident to the appropriate authority where required.
- Consider whether the matter should be dealt with under another Council procedure.

Nothing in this policy overrides the statutory rights and responsibilities of elected members.

Adopted on 14 Sept 26.

19. Return of Equipment on Request

Claydon and Whitton Parish Council may require a Council-owned tablet or other equipment to be returned temporarily or permanently where reasonably necessary, including for:

- Maintenance or repair.
- Security updates.
- Replacement.
- Investigation of a security incident.
- Reconfiguration.
- Asset checks.
- Reallocation following a councillor leaving office.

20. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically and whenever there is a significant change to legislation, technology, cybersecurity guidance or the Council's working practices.

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