**@WestonontheGreen-pc.gov.uk Email Policy**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Weston on the Green Parish Council has a Clerk email address, clerk@westononthegreen-pc.gov.uk This email account is monitored during office hours, Monday to Friday and we aim to reply to all questions sent as soon as we can. An ‘out of office’ message is used when appropriate. The Clerk is responsible for dealing with email received and passing on any relevant mail to members or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the council will usually come from the Clerk, and/or otherwise will always be copied to the Clerk.

Councillors now each have their own portfolio of responsibility on behalf of the council, to enable them to carry out this work effectively it has been suggested that similar email addresses would be helpful. These email addresses will enable Councillors to conduct their work as a Councillor separately from work, social or personal communications. Any emails sent to the Clerk or Councillors in their official capacity will be subject to the Freedom of Information Action 2018 therefore it is proposed in this document that the council agree how these email addresses will be used.

1. **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the policy are to ensure that the services made available to Councillors are used:

* In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council
* Ensure GDPR is complied with by ensuring Parish Council email addresses are used as much as is practical
1. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE POLICY**

The policy applies to all Parish Council Councillors. All Councillors are required to indicate their acceptance of the policy and will be asked to re-affirm their understanding and acceptance of the policy on an annual basis.

Each Councillor is responsible for individually complying with this policy.

1. **SECURITY**

Access to the Councillors network and files, including Internet services, is restricted to individual users and should not be shared accounts.

* The access of each user is controlled by means of their own password
* Passwords must be kept confidential and not disclosed to others
* Care should be taken not to leave a device that is connected to the Internet/system unattended or unlocked
* If you suspect there has been data breach on your email please inform the Clerk immediately. The Clerk will then contact the council’s IT provider.
1. **GUIDANCE**

This section of the document provides guidance on the acceptable use of the Council’s email service.

* 1. **Email Usage**

The Council’s email system enables users to email Officers and Members of the Council, as well as individuals outside of the organisation. Users should be aware that once an email is sent to an individual outside of the Council, it is beyond the Council’s control and is not guaranteed to be confidential.

Hoax and/or suspect emails should be reported to the Clerk. They should not be opened or forwarded but “double deleted” i.e. deleted from the users “Inbox” and then “Deleted Items”.

* 1. **Prohibited Email Activities**

The following email activities may breach the councils ‘code of conduct’:

* Sending or forwarding any material that is obscene, defamatory or hateful, or which is intended to annoy, harass or intimidate others
* Sending or forwarding emails which are likely to damage the reputation of the Council
* Sending or forwarding electronic chain letters
* Soliciting emails that are unrelated to Council activities or soliciting non Council business for personal gain or profit
	1. **Personal Email Use**

Weston on the Green Parish Council emails are for the primary purpose of council business, use for personal purposes is not permitted.

* 1. **Email Awareness**

Email is not a secure method of transmission – it should not be assumed that any email communication is secure or private. Users should take this into account particularly when emailing confidential or sensitive information.

* 1. **Email Monitoring**

The Council will not monitor email activity, compliance with this policy and other relevant policies and regulations is the responsibility of individual councillors.

* 1. **Email Viruses**

If you suspect an email virus has been sent to your email address, please notify the Clerk. As a guideline, attachments with names ending in “exe” should not be opened. If you receive notification of a virus via chain email do not forward to anyone. Please advise the Clerk.

* 1. **Email back up**

In order to keep the costs of this service to a minimum email back ups of this service are held locally, not centrally. The Council wishes to maintain an audit trail of work and therefore Councillors are requested to download a PST file back up of their emails and save it on the Dropbox annually. If for any reason a Councillor steps down, they are obliged to take a PST file download of their emails and provide it to the Clerk. Guidance on how to do this will be provided by the Clerk. This step will ensure that the Council continues to maintain a suitable electronic archive of its business.

Signed on behalf of the PC . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. . . . . . . . . . . . . Dated . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

*Approved at the meeting of the Full Council 5th June 2019*

*Amendments will be made as and when the size and nature of the Council changes or when new legislation is introduced.*