Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council

Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council　　**IT Policy**　　　　**Adopted March 2026**

1. Introduction
Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations, and communications.

This policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities to support the Council's Data Protection Policy and assist us in compliance under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, The General Data Protection Regulation and The Data Protection Act 2018 and associated legislation.

2. Aims and objectives
Up to date, reliable and accurate information is vital to support the work that the Council does and the services that it provides to residents.
This document will help us to:

- Ensure the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information necessary for the Council to operate and provide services.
- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Save time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily.
- Ensure archival records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

3. Scope
This policy applies to all individuals who use **Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council's** IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts.

4. Acceptable use of IT resources and email
Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council 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 policy. All users must adhere to ethical standards, respect copyright, and intellectual property rights, and avoid accessing inappropriate or offensive content.

5. Device and software usage
Where possible, authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by **Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council** for work-related tasks.

Unauthorised installation of software on authorised devices, including personal software, is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.

6. Data management and security
All sensitive and confidential **Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council** data should be stored and transmitted securely using approved methods. Monthly data backups should be performed by the Clerk to prevent data loss, and secure data destruction methods should be used when necessary.

7. Network and internet usage
Downloading and sharing copyrighted material without proper authorisation is prohibited.

8. Email communication
Email accounts provided by **Stanton Fitzwarren Parish 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.

All users should be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

9. Password and account security
Stanton Fitzwarren Parish 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.

10. Mobile devices
Mobile devices provided by **Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council** should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication.

11. Email monitoring
Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council reserves the right to monitor email communications on its domain to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant laws. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

12. Retention and archiving
Emails should be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements.

Timeframes for retention of documents have been set using legislative requirements and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Professional Development (CIPD) guidelines.

During retention, the conditions regarding safe storage and controlled access will remain in place. The attached Appendix A shows the minimum requirements for the retention of documents. Officers holding documents should exercise judgement as to whether they can be disposed of at the end of the periods detailed below.

13. Reporting security incidents
All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the designated IT point of contact for investigation and resolution. Any email-related security incidents or breaches should be reported to the **Clerk & RFO of Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council** as IT administrator immediately.

14 Training and awareness
Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. The Clerk will receive occasional training on email security and best practice, which will be shared with Councillors.

15. Compliance and consequences
Breach of this IT and Email Policy may result in the suspension of email access.

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

17. Contacts

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact the **Clerk & RFO of Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council**

All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of **Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council's** IT and email systems. By adhering to this IT and Email Policy, **Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council** aims to create a secure and efficient IT environment that supports its mission and goals.

Retention Schedule

This list is not exhaustive; if you are unsure about any document, contact the Clerk for clarification.

Document	Retention Period	Reason for retention	Destruction method
Minutes & Correspondence			
Signed Minutes of Council Meetings, Minute Books & Agendas	Indefinite	Legal requirement for Parish Councils	N/A
Supporting papers on issues deemed important to the history of the Parish	Indefinite	Historical interest	N/A
Routine correspondence, papers & emails	1 year	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Finance			
Annual Accounts	Indefinite	Legal requirement for Parish Councils	N/A
Annual Returns	Indefinite (legal requirement is that they remain available for public access for "not less than 5 years")	Legal requirement for Parish Councils	Shred/Delete
Receipt Books	6 years	VAT requirement	Shred/Delete
Bank Statements	Last completed Audit year	Audit requirement	Shred/Delete
Cheque Book stubs	Last completed Audit year	Audit requirement	Shred/Delete
Petty Cash	Last completed Audit year	Audit requirement	Shred/Delete
Paying in Books	Last completed Audit year	Audit requirement	Shred/Delete
Paid Invoices	6 years	VAT requirement	Shred/Delete
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980	Shred/Delete
VAT records	6 years	VAT requirement	Shred/Delete
Payroll	12 years	Superannuation requirement	Shred/Delete
Insurance	General policies – while valid Employers – 40 years Public Liability – 21 years	Only kept while operationally relevant Employers' Liability Regulations (s1, 2753) Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Insurance claim records	7 years after all obligations are concluded	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Policy renewal records	While valid	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
General Management			
Title Deeds, leases, variation and valuation queries, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit/Operational requirement	Shred/Delete

Members allowances	6 years	Tax/Limitation Act 1980	Shred/Delete
Quotations & Tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980	Shred/Delete
Routine correspondence & emails	1 year	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Complaints	1 year after closure of case	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Information requests	1 year after closure of case	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Public Consultation: surveys and returns	5 years	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Public consultations: summary results	10 years	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Reports/newsletters/information from other bodies	Retain as long as valid/useful	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Policies and procedures	Until updated or reviewed		Shred/Delete
Asset Management records	Indefinitely		N/A
Asset Management reports	Indefinitely		N/A
Internal audit records	3 years		Shred/Delete
Internal audit fraud investigation	7 years from date of final outcome of investigation		Shred/Delete
Risk register	Indefinitely		N/A
Risk management reports	Indefinitely		N/A
Members			
Register of Officers Interests	Term of Office + 1 year	Localism Act 2011, s29	Shred/Delete
Register of Members Interests	Term of Office + 1 year	Localism Act 2011, s29	Shred/Delete
Parish Council elections/applications	1 year	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Personnel			
Unsuccessful applications forms	6 months	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Unsuccessful reference requests	1 year	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Successful application forms and CVs	For duration of employment +5 years	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
References received	For duration of employment +5 years	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Personnel files and training records	5 years after employment ceases	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Disciplinary or grievance investigations proven: Verbal Written Final warning Anything involving children	6 months 1 year 18 months Permanently	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Disciplinary or grievance investigations unproven	Destroy immediately after investigation or appeal	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete

Wages/salary records, overtime, bonuses, expenses etc	6 years	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Health & Safety			
Parks and play area inspection reports	5 years	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete
Planning			
Planning applications - large	5 years. Older applications available from Swindon Borough Council	For comparison against later revisions	Shred/Delete
Planning applications – small	Not retained	Available from Swindon website indefinitely	Shred/Delete
Planning policies	While relevant	Only kept while operationally relevant	Shred/Delete