

KINGSTON SEYMOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Electronic Communications Policy

Adopted May 11th, 2026

1. Introduction

This Electronic Communications Policy outlines the appropriate use, management, and security of electronic communications by Kingston Seymour Parish Council (the council) staff, councillors, and associated volunteers (as applicable). It aims to ensure that any electronic communications, issued in the name of Kingston Seymour Parish Council, are done so effectively to support the council's work while maintaining professionalism, safeguarding privacy, and protecting sensitive information.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the council, including councillors, officers, employees, and volunteers (as applicable). It covers all forms of electronic communication, including emails, mobile messaging, and official websites. The council's Social Media policy (Ref A) covers all use of social media platforms.

3. General Principles

- All electronic communications must comply with applicable UK laws, including the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and the council's own Code of Conduct.
- All communications must be respectful, accurate, and non-discriminatory.
- Personal use of the council's electronic systems is not permitted unless authorised by the council.

4. Email Usage

- **Official Communication:** Council business should be conducted via the official council email address (clerk@kingstonseymourparish.gov.uk). Councillors will be provided with a specific email address, and this is to be used exclusively when dealing with the council's business. Personal email addresses should not be used.
- **Confidentiality:** Sensitive or confidential information must be clearly marked and only shared with authorised individuals. Emails containing confidential information should clearly identify this within the email by using "In Confidence:" as the opening of the subject line.
- **Retention:** Emails related to council business should be stored according to the council's record retention policy (Ref B).

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- **Security:** Users must follow guidelines to secure their email accounts, including using strong passwords and not sharing credentials. Where possible National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) guidance on passwords should be followed (Ref C).

5. Website Management

- **Content:** The parish council's website is housed on a government authorised domain (<https://kingstonseymourparish.gov.uk>) and will be managed by the Clerk or a designated officer (if applicable). All content should be accurate, up-to-date, and relevant to the council's work.
- **Accessibility:** The council's website must comply with accessibility standards to ensure that all individuals can access information equally. UK Government accessibility standards should be followed (Ref D).
- **Data Protection:** Any personal data published on the website must comply with GDPR and be removed promptly when no longer relevant. Use UK Government Data Protection Act 2018 for specific details to be followed (Ref E).

6. Mobile Messaging

- **Official Use:** Mobile messaging platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, SMS) must not be used for the sharing of sensitive information. Platforms of this type should only be used for the internal management between council members.
- **Privacy:** Personal devices must be password-protected (or make use of two factor authorisation (2FA) i.e. fingerprint or Face ID) if used for council communications.

7. Security Measures

- **Password Protection:** All devices and accounts used for council business must be protected with strong, unique passwords in accordance with Ref C.
- **Data Breaches:** Any suspected data breach involving council information must be reported immediately to the Clerk.
- **Training:** Council members and staff should receive periodic training on cybersecurity and data protection best practices.

8. Breaches of Policy

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action in line with council procedures. Serious breaches, including those compromising personal data or council confidentiality, may result in further legal or regulatory action.

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9. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required to keep in line with legislative changes or council needs.

Reference Material

Reference ID	Kingston Seymour Specific
A	Social Media Policy (<i>readopted 22 September 2025</i>)
B	Record Retention Policy (<i>adopted 7 May 2025</i>)
	National Guidance
C	<u>National Cyber Security Centre Password Guidance</u>
D	<u>UK Government Accessibility Requirements</u>
E	<u>UK Data Protection Act 2018</u>

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