



ALTON TOWN COUNCIL

IT Policy

1. Introduction

Alton Town Council recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations, and communications.

This policy outlines guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of IT resources and email by council members, employees, volunteers and contractors.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who use Alton Town Council's IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts.

3. Acceptable use of IT resources and email

Alton Town Council's IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks. Limited personal use of council IT is permitted (e.g. internet and WiFi connections, but not @alton.gov.uk email accounts), 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 without a legitimate business reason.

4. Device and software usage

Where possible, software, applications and/or authorised devices, will be provided by Alton Town Council for work-related tasks.

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

5. Data management and security

All sensitive and confidential Alton Town Council data should be stored and transmitted securely using approved methods. Regular data backups should be performed to prevent data loss, and secure data destruction methods should be used when necessary.

6. Network and internet usage

Alton Town Council's network and internet connections should be used responsibly and efficiently for official purposes. Sharing copyrighted material without proper authorisation is prohibited.

7. Email communication

Email accounts provided by Alton Town Council are for official communication only. Private email accounts should not be used for official Council communication.

Emails should be professional and respectful in tone. As a public service organisation, Alton Town Council may be required to disclose any emails or other digital records as a result of an enquiry under the Freedom of Information Act, the Environment Information Regulations or the Data Protection Act. If personal email accounts have been used, the above legislation will apply to them.

Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless it is encrypted.

Be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

8. Password and account security

Alton Town Council's 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.

9. Mobile devices and remote Work

Mobile devices provided by Alton Town Council should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication. When working remotely, users should follow the same security practices as if they were in the office.

10. Monitoring

Alton Town Council reserves the right to monitor email communications and internet usage on council accounts if required to do so to investigate compliance with this policy and relevant laws. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

11. Retention and archiving

Emails are retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organised inbox.

12. Reporting security incidents

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the Town Clerk (or, in his absence, the Deputy Town Clerk) for investigation and resolution. Report any email-related security incidents or breaches to the Town Clerk (or, in his absence, the Deputy Town Clerk) immediately.

13. Training and awareness

Alton Town Council will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors will receive training on email security and best practices.

14. Compliance and consequences

Breach of this IT Policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges. Councillors should be mindful of the Code of Conduct and the Nolan Principles. Any inappropriate or unauthorised use by employees may lead to formal action, including disciplinary proceedings or, in serious cases, dismissal.

15. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address emerging technological trends and security measures.

16. Contacts

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

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

Adopted by Full Council	4 March 2026
To be reviewed	March 2028