Oldbury-on-Severn
Parish Council

Clerk:
Cllr Matthew Riddle 07877413298
Responsible Financial Officer:
Cllr Laura Day 07977484515

oldburyonsevernpc@gmail.com www.oldburyonsevern.org.uk

Information Technology Policy

Changes from April 2025 state that every Smaller Authority must have an Information Technology policy in place to comply with the new Practitioners' Guide 2025, **Assertion 10: Digital and Data Compliance**.

Purpose

To establish guidelines for the secure, efficient and ethical use of information technology (IT) within the Smaller Authority, ensuring services to the public are delivered reliably and securely.

The Information Technology (IT) Policy will explain how officers, members and other staff should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal devices.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who use Oldbury on Severn Parish Council's IT systems to carry out Council business, whether owned by the Oldbury on Severn Parish Council or on personal devices.

- IT systems and personal devices refer to anyone using a Council-owned or personal computer, network, software, phone, tablet, iPad and email accounts.

Objectives

- Ensure data confidentiality, integrity and availability of data.
- Maintain compliance with Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Freedom of Information (FOI) Act.
- Support business continuity and disaster recovery.
- Promote responsible use of IT resources.

Device and Software acceptable use

- Oldbury on Severn Parish Council's IT assets, i.e., laptops, phones and iPad's must be used for official business only.
- Personal use must be minimal, lawful, and not impact productivity.

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- Prohibited actions include accessing illegal content, harassment, and unauthorised software installation. Unauthorised installation of software on authorised devices, including personal software, is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.
- All users must adhere to ethical standards, respect copyright and intellectual property rights.

Data Management and security

All sensitive and confidential information held on the Oldbury on Severn Parish Council devices should be password protected. Backup of data is supported Oldbury on Severn Parish Council's IT provider.

Oldbury on Severn Parish Council's IT provider is able to support and to recover any lost data and destroy data in accordance with GDPR.

Access Control

- Role-based access granted on the principle of least privilege.
- Immediate revocation of access upon termination or role change.

Network and Internet Usage

Oldbury on Severn Parish Council's network and internet connections should be used responsibly and efficiently for official purposes. Downloading and sharing copyrighted material or data without proper authorisation is prohibited.

Email and communication

- All members and employees of Oldbury on Severn Parish Council that deliver official communications must come from an Oldbury on Severn Parish Council owned email address, e.g., oldburyonsevernpc@mail.com If a clerk leaves everything could be lost if the email address is – someone@parishclerk@gmail.com – and this breaches GDPR.
- If any user becomes locked out of their email account, the individual must contact the Oldbury on Severn Parish Council's IT provider to resolve. The use of a personal email address in the meantime is strictly prohibited.
- Emails should be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. A regular review of mailbox(es) should be conducted and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organised email account.

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- When a member leaves Council they will be denied access to their email account. This will be arranged with the Oldbury on Severn Parish Council's IT provider.
- All communications through Oldbury on Severn Parish Council's email must be professional and related to council activities.
- No forwarding of sensitive or confidential information to personal accounts.
- Always verify the source of the email before opening any attachments or clicking on links. Phishing and spam emails must be reported immediately to the council's IT provider.

Password and account security

Oldbury on Severn 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. Some iPads, laptops and phones have a function that enables multi-factor authentication (MAF), e.g., face recognition.

Password creation requirements –

- Must be at least 8 characters in length.
- Must contain at lease one of each of the following
  Uppercase letter A-Z

  Lowercase letter A-Z

  Number (0-9)

  Special character, e.g., @ # £ &

- The password must not contain easily guessable information such as the user's name or common words, e.g., password123

Data Protection and Privacy

The Data Protection Act 2018 supplements the GDPR and classifies an authority as both a Data Controller and a Data Processor.

Website Management and Accessibility

Oldbury on Severn Parish Council's website must be accessible to Website Management and Accessibility

(WCAG) 2.2 AA standards and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 to ensure that public sector websites and mobile applications are accessible to all users, particularly those with disabilities.

WCAG provide internationally recognised recommendations for improving web accessibility. They explain how to make digital services, websites and apps accessible to everyone, including users with impairments to their:

- vision - like severely sight impaired (blind), sight impaired (partially sighted) or colour blind people
- hearing - like people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- mobility - like those who find it difficult to use a mouse or keyboard
- thinking and understanding - like people with dyslexia, autism or learning difficulties

The office administrator is responsible for ensuring the website is accessible and kept up to date and to publish required documents online, i.e., agenda's, minutes, member details, Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

To conduct a monthly inspection to ensure accessibility and check for broken links is maintained.

Failure to comply is in breach of the Transparency Code.

Cybersecurity and Online Safety

Smaller Authorities are required to have antivirus software, two-factor authentication, and regular updates on Oldbury on Severn Parish Council devices.

Annual training for all staff and members concerning email security, cybersecurity and data protection.

Software and Hardware Use

Only licensed and approved software may be installed.

Regular software updates and patching is mandatory.

Use of personal devices for work must follow Oldbury on Severn Parish Council policies.

Anyone who borrows a council laptop must not install additional software without permission.

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Mobile devices and remote work

Mobile devices supplied by Oldbury on Severn Parish Council must be secured with passcodes. All devices must be returned to the Parish Clerk when the individual ceases to be associated with Oldbury on Severn Parish Council.

Email, Internet and Network Monitoring

Oldbury on Severn Parish Council reserves the right to monitor email communications to ensure compliance with this policy and in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

Internet access is monitored and filtered to protect against threats.

Virtual Private Network (VPN) use is required for remote access.

Public wi-fi should not be used to access Oldbury on Severn Parish Council systems unless secure methods are in place.

Asset Management

Inventory of all IT assets maintained.

Devices must be returned at the end of employment or engagement.

Monitoring and Auditing

IT systems may be monitored for compliance, security and performance.
Logs will be kept and audited regularly.

Reporting security incidents

Any suspected security breach(es) or incidents must be reported to the Oldbury on Severn Parish Council's Chairman for investigation and resolution.

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Report any email breaches to the Chairman immediately.

Review and updates

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required due to legislative or technological changes.

Updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.

Contacts

For IT related enquiries or assistance, contact the Council's Clerk

All staff and members are responsible for the safety and security of Oldbury on Severn Parish Council's IT and email systems. By adhering to the Information Technology Policy, Oldbury on Severn Parish Council aims to create a safe, secure and efficient IT environment that supports its mission and goals.

Adopted July 2026

Review July 2027