

# LOOE TOWN COUNCIL

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## Information Technology Policy



Adopted by Council:  
30th September 2025

Next review: 30th September 2026



# LOOE TOWN COUNCIL

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY



Looe Town Council's Information Technology (IT) Policy applies to officers, Councillors and anyone using Town Council systems or devices. It covers communications and equipment such as computers, smartphones, telephones, internet access, remote access connections, email servers, file storage, webmail and websites. Looe Town Council systems such as these are essential to our successful operation and the security and reliability of these systems is therefore paramount.

It is important that all workers are aware of the need for the security of these systems. The Town Clerk will undertake regular reviews of this policy.

The use of IT is subject to a number of legislative acts and internal policies, all of which must be complied with:

- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Surveillance Camera Policy
- Social Media and IT Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Employee Handbook

Failure to follow any of the legislative acts and internal policies may be deemed misconduct which may result in summary dismissal. The following key points are of special note:-

- Games, recreational and unsolicited software are not permitted on Council computer systems
- Screensavers should not be altered from the default setting
- Computers must not be moved or have their configuration changed
- Computer logins have the same value as a signature. Logins and passwords are confidential and must not be disclosed under any circumstances. Passwords must not be written down or stored on function keys. If an employee has reason to believe their password is no longer confidential, they must inform the Town Clerk immediately.
- When on breaks at lunch or away from their desk for any length of time, users must log out. At the end of the day, their computers shut down.

### ***Monitoring***

Staff should be aware that Looe Town Council has software and systems in place to monitor and record technology use (including telephones) and it reserves the right to do so at any time. Staff should not expect any privacy to any of their files stored on any computer

provided by Looe Town Council. The Town Council can review employees' e-mail, internet usage and telephone conversations without permission from the employee or worker.

### ***Electronic mail (Email) and Text Message Policy***

Legally, e-mail is now considered to be the same as any other form of written communication and, as such, the same care should be taken when sending an e-mail as sending a letter. Looe Town Council treats text messages in the same way. The following rules must be followed when using e-mail. Staff must not:-

- Use e-mail for any purpose that may be illegal
- Communicate unfair, offensive, or defamatory comments about any person or organisation
- Enter into commitments on behalf of Looe Town Council without receiving prior authorisation
- Send/forward or store e-mails which contain bad language, video clips, racist or pornographic content, or any other material of a similar nature
- Forward any Town Council e-mails which contain confidential information to any external internet mail account.
- Use any email server apart from the looetowncouncil.gov.uk server for Council business

Communicating by text message, including WhatsApp is permitted but it should be considered a more informal method of communication and should ideally be reserved for conversations between officers and officers and councillors. Where possible, all text message conversations should be retained.

### ***Internet use***

Some staff may have access to the Internet to help them perform their role. You may access the Internet for personal use only during your breaks and not during your working time. Unlawful Internet usage may attract adverse publicity for the Town Council and we have therefore introduced tight procedures to ensure compliance:-

- Only information which has been signed off by Looe Town Council may be posted on the internet
- Looe Town Council retains the copyright to any internet material
- Staff must conduct themselves honestly and appropriately on the internet
- Staff must not visit internet sites that contain obscene, hateful or pornographic material.
- Staff must respect the copyrights, software/licensing rules, property rights, privacy and prerogatives of others, exactly as in any other business dealings
- Personal and council data must not be released or transmitted over the internet
- Staff must not download or upload files or software from the internet unless specifically authorised to do so
- Staff are not permitted to access discussion groups, user forums, chat rooms or similar

### ***Social networking***

Looe Town Council recognises that many employees use the internet for personal purposes and that many employees participate in social networking on websites such as Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Instagram and other social media platforms. However, because of the inherent risks to security, the Council does not allow access to social networking websites from its computers at any time for personal use.

The Town Council respects an employee's right to a private life; however it must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected. It therefore requires employees using social networking websites to:-

- Ensure that they do not conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the Council
- Take care not to allow their interaction on these websites to damage working relationships between members of staff and customers.

Please also read the Looe Town Council Social Media Policy for more guidance.

### ***Use of Landlines and Mobile Telephones***

Telephones are provided for essential aspects of our organisation. Personal telephone calls are allowed only in the case of emergency and with the prior permission of your line manager. Where you need to use the Town Council's telephone and you have been given permission to do so, you should keep your call as short as possible.

The use of personal mobile phones is not permitted during working hours except in an emergency. As an added safety precaution, personal mobile phones may be kept available for use by employees when 'lone working.'

Under no circumstances should employees use their mobile whilst driving, operating machinery, whilst working at heights, where there is a danger to you if your hearing is impaired for example if you are near moving vehicles or anywhere else that mobile phone use is prohibited.

### ***Council mobile telephone***

Looe Town Council may provide you with a mobile telephone in order that you may keep in touch with the Town Council at any time during your working day, particularly if you travel away on business. You are expected to keep the telephone fully charged and operational during working hours and to carry it with you at all times.

If you mislay, lose or damage the Town Council mobile phone because of negligence (i.e. leaving the telephone in your vehicle or on another site), you will be required to pay for a replacement handset. The Council reserves the right to make a deduction from your wages/salary to pay the replacement costs. The Council reserves the right to monitor mobile phone usage, and content. Inappropriate use will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

It is illegal to use a mobile phone whilst driving (without a hands free set). It is Town Council policy that you should not use any mobile phones whilst driving. You should pull over to the side of the road in an appropriate place before making or receiving any telephones calls. In

the event of you being unable to pick up a call because you cannot find a safe place to stop, you must return the call as soon as conveniently possible.

If you are provided with a Town Council mobile telephone, you must return it when you leave the Town Council

### **Training**

Training and information will be offered to all officers on information security as part of their induction and then as required if there are any significant changes to policy.