

# **CROWBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL**

## **EMAIL and INTERNET POLICY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Internet and email are important information and communication systems which are used during the course of council business. This Email and Internet Policy provides guidelines and procedures to protect users and the Council.

### **2. INTERNET**

- 2.1 Where appropriate, staff are encouraged to use the internet as part of their official and professional activities.
- 2.2 Information published in the name of the Council must be relevant and professional. A disclaimer must be stated where personal views are expressed.
- 2.3 The use of the Internet to access and/or distribute any kind of offensive material will not be tolerated and staff may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **3. EMAIL**

- 3.1 Emails should be regarded as written paper documents for the purposes of production, use, retention and disclosure and can be called upon under the Freedom of Information Act. Personal Information should be kept in accordance with data protection legislation.
- 3.2 The Council reserves the right to open any email file stored on the Council's computer system.
- 3.3 The use of email is encouraged as it provides an efficient system of communication.
- 3.4 The following guidelines for email use should be observed:
  - Use appropriate language; misunderstandings can arise unintentionally.
  - If offended by the content or tone of an incoming message, obtain a second opinion from another staff member and make sure the response is objective.
  - Respect the confidentiality of information encountered inadvertently.
  - Check with the sender if there is any doubt about the authenticity of a message.
  - Only copy emails to others where appropriate and necessary.
  - Emails which create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the Council must be sent out under the name of an officer and not a member.
  - Emails must comply with common codes of courtesy, decency and privacy.

3.5 Use of emails for unofficial or inappropriate purposes, for example, harassment, bullying or gambling, will not be tolerated and staff may be subject to disciplinary action.

#### **4. PERSONAL USE**

4.1 Personal use of the internet and email facility is permitted during staff lunch breaks, subject to the guidelines in this policy. This concession may be withdrawn at any time.

4.2 Staff are not permitted to use the Council's computer system to access 'Chat Room' facilities or social networking sites, other than those operated by the Council.

#### **5. SECURITY AND LICENCES**

5.1 Staff are responsible for security of the Council's computer system. Password entry will be used as appropriate.

5.2 Only software purchased by the Council shall be installed on the Council's computer system. Software licences shall be retained.