IT AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all users of the Councils computer system do so in a responsible manner, and that they are aware of the consequences in failing to do so. It is recognised that there are considerable benefits to the Council in providing electronic communications facilities such as internet access, e-mail, facsimile, messaging and telephone, and these are provided primarily as business tools to aid work-related communication.

The rules are designed to protect the Councils computers and must be adhered to.

Any departure from the policy without specific prior authority could be treated as misconduct and disciplinary action may be taken.

Policy Coverage

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Kirkham Town Council computer equipment

- Members when using Kirkham Town Council computer equipment

- Members using social networking media in their capacity as Councillors

General Rules

1. Where individual passwords are used each member of staff is responsible for ensuring that confidentiality is preserved, a master list to be held by the Keyholder.
2. Employee/Members using Town Council equipment must not download files from the internet, email, memory stick, or disc without implementing virus protection software.
3. No item of computer hardware of software maybe removed from the Councils premises without prior authorisation from full council or the Proper Officer.
4. Purchase of computer software and hardware, can only be done following authorisation by full council. In an emergency authorisation can be made by The Proper Officer.
5. No information/data/software retained on the Councils computer system may be downloaded and removed, copied or stored on any other system, except for data backup purposes.
6. No unauthorised software programs (including screen savers) may be loaded onto the system. Users will be liable for repair costs for the malfunction of any of the Councils computer system caused by unauthorised software or hardware that they have installed.
7. Any person downloading or receiving software on to the Councils computer system is responsible for obtaining any licence that may be necessary (including software that is taken in from suppliers).
8. The Council's computers may only be used for the purposes of the Council.

Internet access

9. Access to the internet via the Councils computer system should be gained for Council business use only.
10. If permission is given by full Council to access the internet for private purposes then under no circumstances may programs be downloaded, or material which is or which could be considered offensive or inappropriate be viewed. This will include material which is sexually explicit, racially offensive, contains foul language etc

E-mail

11. All emails sent must contain the Councils standard business 'footer' which includes a privacy notice.
12. No e-mail must be sent containing insulting, threatening, obscene, discriminating or otherwise inappropriate comments.
13. Information which is of a highly sensitive or confidential nature must not be sent by e-mail, as security of documents transmitted by e-mail cannot be guaranteed.
14. No files attached to e-mails must be opened unless they have been checked for viruses and should then only be opened if they are from a recognised source.
15. Members/Employees should be aware of characteristics of spam or phishing emails and should not reply to these emails.

Monitoring

16. The Council reserves the right to monitor all e-mails sent or received, and websites visited using the Councils computer system.
17. Monitoring will be carried out to ensure the effective operation of the system, detect and investigate unauthorised use of the system, to provide evidence of a transaction, for quality control or training purposes, to check messages addressed to an absent member of staff, and to prevent or detect crime.

Social Networking

Social networking media, including Facebook, Twitter and blogs may be used by the Town Council as part of its means of communication with residents and service users. Such media will be used to represent the Council as a corporate body. Where members of the public are able to post to a social media page representing the Town Council, the pages will be monitored by Town Council officers to ensure that any offensive, inappropriate or discriminatory messages will be deleted.

Members who use social networking sites in their capacity as Councillors must make it clear that they are speaking in a personal capacity and not representing the view of the Council. It is the responsibility of Members to ensure that they are adhering to the Council's Code of Conduct when using social networking sites.