

# Lackford Parish Council

## Email Guidance for Councillors

1. The latest advice is that councillors have a separate email account specifically for their work as a parish councillor.
2. Part of the clerk's role is to act as deal with correspondence. The only person who can author an official email is the clerk who writes on behalf of the Council. All official correspondence should be sent by the clerk in the name of the Parish Council, using Council letter-headed paper or by e-mail.

Sometimes there will be good practical reasons why official emails should be sent or forwarded from a councillor's account. Normally it will be because a councillor has been asked to do so, but if there is any doubt about a councillor's authority to write or send such an email, advice should be sought from the clerk.

Councillors make decisions and act as a corporate body and these decisions will be covered by the Council's liability insurance provided that decisions are made at meetings and minuted. The law does not allow councillors to act independently and councillors should make sure that they do not imply that the content of emails represents the opinion or policy of the Council as a whole. As an individual, councillors can think, say and write what they like, but as a councillor their views can only be the view of the whole council.

3. With the introduction of GDPR in May 2018, consent is required to hold the contact details of a member of the public. The clerk keeps a record of when consent was obtained. If you receive an email from a member of the public, it is Parish Council policy to forward it to the clerk who can obtain the necessary consent. The clerk will then respond to the email in line with the Parish Council's protocol for dealing with correspondence.
4. Be careful of forwarding on emails, especially email threads. Email is not a secure medium, therefore it is better to avoid disclosing anything personal or confidential. Avoid copying in people outside the Council to emails as they may contain personal information. They are also subject to Freedom of Information requests.
5. Emails should not be used to make or influence decisions that should be made at a meeting of the council.