HOLNE PARISH COUNCIL

IT Policy

(Including Bring Your Own Device – BYOD)

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how information technology and electronic data should be used by the Parish Council to ensure:

- Data is kept secure
- Legal responsibilities (including UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018) are met
- The Council complies with **Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance** of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

This policy applies to councillors, the clerk, employees, and anyone else who uses Parish Council IT or accesses Parish Council data.

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2. Scope

This policy covers:

- Council-owned computers, laptops, tablets, phones, and email accounts
- Personally owned devices used for Parish Council business (BYOD)
- Electronic data, emails, documents, and cloud services

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3. General IT Use

- IT equipment and systems must be used primarily for Parish Council business
- Users must not access or distribute inappropriate, offensive, or illegal material
- Passwords must be kept secure and not shared
- Devices should be locked when left unattended
- Software must be kept up to date where possible

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4. Data Protection & Confidentiality

- All users must comply with data protection legislation (UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018)
- Personal and confidential information must only be accessed where necessary for council business
- Data should only be shared with authorised individuals
- Sensitive information must not be stored unnecessarily

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Parish Council's **Data Protection Policy**, which sets out in detail how personal data is handled, stored, retained, and disposed of. Together, these policies form part of the Council's framework for compliance with data protection legislation and **Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance**.

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5. Email and Electronic Communications

- Council email accounts should be used wherever possible for council business
- Emails should be written professionally, as they may be subject to Freedom of Information requests
- Attachments and links from unknown sources should not be opened

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6. Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

Councillors and staff may use their own devices (such as personal laptops, tablets, or smartphones) for Parish Council business, subject to the following conditions.

6.1 Security

- Devices must be protected by a password, PIN, or biometric security
- Devices should be set to lock automatically when not in use
- Operating systems and apps should be kept up to date

6.2 Data Storage

- Parish Council data should be stored securely and, where possible, kept separate from personal data
- Council data must not be shared with unauthorised individuals
- Council data should not be stored permanently on personal devices if avoidable

6.3 Loss or Theft

- Any loss or theft of a personal device containing Parish Council data must be reported to the Clerk immediately
- Users must cooperate with any steps required to protect Council data

6.4 Leaving Office or Role

- On leaving their role, users must delete all Parish Council data from their personal devices
- Any council-related accounts or access must be returned or closed

The BYOD arrangements form part of the Council's controls to meet **Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance**.

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7. Internet and Cloud Services

- Only trusted and approved cloud services should be used for council business
- Free or public services should not be used to store sensitive data unless approved by the Council

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8. Breaches and Incidents

- Any suspected data breach, virus, or security incident must be reported to the Clerk as soon as possible
- Prompt reporting supports compliance with data protection law and **Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance**

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9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective and continues to support compliance with **Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance**.

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10. Acceptance

All users of Parish Council IT systems or data are expected to read, understand, and comply with this policy.
