

# DAVENTRY TOWN COUNCIL

## POLICY ON EMAIL COMMUNICATION



Emails are the primary method to promote effective communication on matters relating to Council business.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) allows members of the public to request information in accordance with GDPR. Town Council information is predominantly managed by officers of the Town Council, but some is held by Town Councillors, and is subject to the FOI Act and must be made available, in accordance with the FOI Act and GDPR Regulations. Subsequently Town Councillors are 'Data Controllers' for the data they receive and store and as a data controller, councillors must ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of all personal data, including data being processed through personal email accounts or stored on a privately-owned device.

Email is a non-secure medium and due care should be taken when composing, sending and storing messages, complying with current data protection policies and legislation. Deleting or concealing information with the intention or preventing its disclosure following receipt of a FOI request is a criminal offence under section 77 of the FOI Act and the person concealing the information is liable to prosecution.

Employees must use official council email addresses for all council business.

Councillors have been provided with a dedicated Town Council email account, which is published on the Town Council website and must only be used by the Town Councillor for Town Council business and must not be used by anyone other than the Town Councillor to whom the email has been assigned.

Councillors will receive Minutes and Agendas by electronic means hard copies of documents, will be provided on request.

External emails received by individual councillors must be forwarded to the Chief Officer to action, circulate or respond to, as appropriate.

Councillors or Employees must not:

- Forward confidential emails or attachments to third parties
- Publicise the content of emails that contain confidential information.
- Discuss matters relating to employees or individual councillors, at any time.
- Use emails to discuss council business.
- Use the blind copy option when responding to or sending emails.
- Discuss council business via round-robin emails, decisions must be made at Council or Committee meetings and decisions made by resolutions.
- Post the content of emails on any social media sites or forward to the press.

Misuse of emails in the following categories can lead to action being taken in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure or the Code of Conduct:

- Defamation of character
- Inappropriate, obscene, or offensive content
- Untrue or malicious content
- Any discrimination in line with the council's Equality Policy