

Gressenhall Parish Council E-mail policy

1. Official e-mail addresses

1. The Parish Clerk shall be given the official address 'clerk@gressenhall-pc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk'. E-mail sent to this address shall be accessed only by webmail or using an e-mail client on the computer provided by the Parish Council for official use.
2. When a Parish Clerk leaves, the password for the clerk@gressenhall-pc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk shall be changed to prevent their future access. They shall then delete the account, including any local copies of e-mails, from all clients that they use.
3. Parish Councillors shall be given an official e-mail account with address 'cldr.firstname.secondname@gressenhall-pc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk' specifically for their work as Parish Councillors. E-mail sent to this address should be accessed only by webmail or using an e-mail client on a single computer that meets the requirements of the Data Security Policy.
4. When someone ceases to be a Parish Councillor, the password on their account shall be changed. The councillor shall then delete the account, including any local copies of e-mails or e-mail addresses, from all clients that they use. The Parish Clerk shall set an auto-reply to say the account is no longer active and giving the Parish Clerk as an alternative point of contact. After one month, or once any outstanding data subject or Freedom of Information Act requests are processed, the e-mail account and its e-mails shall be deleted.
5. The password provided when an e-mail account is created shall be changed by its user. The Data Security Policy provides advice on choosing and managing passwords.
6. Councillors' official e-mail addresses should not be published. However, the Parish Clerk may provide them to parishioners who want to make contact with a Parish Councillor by e-mail.

2. Use of official e-mail addresses

7. No employee or councillor shall send an e-mail that contains illegal, offensive, obscene, racist, abusive, defamatory or discriminatory material, or that may bring the Parish Council into disrepute.
8. When sending e-mails, employees and councillors shall comply with the relevant parts of the Data Management Policy. In particular, e-mails sent to addresses outside the Parish Council shall not also be sent to Parish Council addresses. Where there is more than one addressee outside the Parish Council, the message shall be addressed to the sender, with blind carbon copies (BCC) to the external recipients.
9. Official e-mail addresses shall only be used to send e-mails related to Parish Council business.

10. The Parish Clerk shall use their official e-mail address to send all e-mails related to Parish Council business. Parish Councillors shall use their official e-mail addresses to send all e-mails related to Parish Council business, unless the e-mail is addressed solely to other councillors or the Clerk.
11. E-mails related to Parish Council business should be sent to official Parish Council addresses. The Parish Clerk and councillors should maintain an address list with the current list of councillors and the Parish Clerk, to avoid errors when circulating e-mails.
12. The Parish Clerk shall send Summons and Notices of Meetings to the allocated official addresses. A councillor may receive notification by other means on request.
13. All councillors shall include the signature block in Appendix A in e-mails from their official address. They shall not use any wording (such as "on behalf of Gressenhall Parish Council") that implies that an e-mail represents the official position of the Parish Council, except as provided for in ¶14.
14. E-mails that represent an official position of Gressenhall Parish Council shall be sent by the Parish Clerk, unless they do not have a lawful basis to use the recipient's e-mail address¹. In that case only, the Parish Clerk should write the reply and send it to a councillor who does have a lawful basis to respond, for forwarding unedited except for a statement that it represents the official position of the council.
15. The new Microsoft Outlook offered free as an advertisement-supported service shall not be used as an e-mail client for official addresses, as it is not compliant with our Data Protection Act obligations. The version included with Microsoft Office can be used.
16. If councillors or the Parish Clerk receive e-mail relating to Parish Council business at an address that is not their official address, they shall forward it to their official address, permanently delete the original and, where appropriate, notify the sender of the correct address.
17. Councillors shall not use that title or otherwise represent themselves as councillors on e-mails that are not sent from their official address.

3. Predisposition

18. Standing Orders require Parish Council decisions to be taken at a public meeting of the Council or a delegated subcommittee. They shall not be taken by e-mail voting. This does not prevent the circulation of documents relevant to a decision or even an expression of opinion by a councillor. However, there must not be any suggestion of predisposition (that is, one or more councillors reaching a decision before hearing evidence at the meeting) as this could lead to the Council's decision being challenged. In particular, there shall be no prior polling of councillors.

¹ For example, if a councillor has raised an issue at a Parish Council meeting on behalf of a parishioner who has remained anonymous.

19. Where powers have been delegated to the Parish Clerk, they may request advice and receive opinions from individual councillors by e-mail. They shall not be given instruction on how to act, and there shall be no polling of councillors.

4. Good practice

20. An e-mail has not necessarily come from the person who appears to have sent it. You should consider whether the content is something you would expect from that sender in an official e-mail. You should not open any unusual or unexpected attachments. If in doubt, do not reply, but check independently with the sender.
21. You should not follow hyperlinks in e-mails without checking that they lead where you would expect. If you are asked to log in or provide other sensitive information, you should instead contact the organisation concerned using a link from a trusted source or by other means.
22. If you determine that an e-mail is fraudulent, permanently delete it and let the Parish Clerk know brief details. Do not forward it. You may also record it as spam in your e-mail client, or inform the organisation being impersonated.
23. You should consider whether an e-mail is the best method of communication before sending one. Conversations and telephone calls are interactive and convey tone as well as words, which can reduce misunderstandings.
24. You should not send or forward any chain e-mails from your official mail account.
25. When sending or replying to an e-mail, you should consider who needs to see your message. To acknowledge receipt of a document, you only need to reply to the sender, whereas a contribution to a discussion should usually be shared.
26. Replies to e-mails should be replies to the topic. If you want to open a new topic, you should send a new e-mail with a relevant subject line.
27. All Parish Council recipients of a message should know who the other recipients of a message are. You should not use BCC addresses except as set out in ¶8.
28. You should set aside time at least monthly to review the e-mails you have sent and received (and their attachments), and permanently delete those that are no longer needed. Note that deleting e-mails on one device will delete them everywhere in your e-mail account.
29. If you have any concerns over the way official e-mails are being used, you should contact the Parish Clerk or the Chair.

Appendix A Signature blocks

30. All official e-mails sent by Parish Councillors shall include the following in the signature block:

"Councillor <first name> <last name>

[Gressenhall Parish Council](#)

This e-mail may contain privileged or confidential information. It is intended solely for the intended addressee. If you are not the addressee, please e-mail it back to the sender and then immediately, permanently delete it.

Any views or opinions expressed are those of the author and may not represent those of Gressenhall Parish Council unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Gressenhall Parish Council is committed to safeguarding your personal data and complying with the rights of individuals under the Data Protection Act, as set out in the [Gressenhall PC Privacy Notice](#)."

31. All official e-mails sent by the Parish Clerk shall include the following in the signature block:

"<name>

Parish Clerk, Gressenhall Parish Council

This e-mail may contain privileged or confidential information. It is intended solely for the intended addressee. If you are not the addressee, please e-mail it back to the sender and then immediately, permanently delete it.

Gressenhall Parish Council is committed to safeguarding your personal data and complying with the rights of individuals under the Data Protection Act, as set out in the Gressenhall PC Privacy Notice."