St Ives Town Council

Use of IT, Electronic Devices and Social Media Policy

Policy / File Status

Version	0.2	**Approving Body**	Full Council
Date	13-05-2026	**Date of Approval**	20-05-2026
Responsible Officer	Town Clerk	**Minute Reference**	C.23.3
Oversight Committee	Staffing Committee	**Review Date**	2026, or as a result of changes to legislation or guidance

Version History

Date	Version	Author/Editor	Comments
06.03.25	0.1	Town Clerk	Policy adopted from SW Councils' Issue
04.12.25	0.2	Town Clerk	Amendment to include the changes to the Corporate CCTV policy stated objectives
13-05-26	0.2	Deputy Town Clerk	Re adopted pending full review to comply with changes in legislation.

Review Record

Date	Type of Review Conducted	Summary of Actions Taken or Decisions Made	Completed By

Contents

Council Owned IT resources

Monitoring Council Devices and Infrastructure

The Council reserves the right to access and monitor the use of all Council owned digital devices, including monitoring internet, telephone and email use.

The Council also monitors access to its networks via private devices.

You must take the appropriate steps to guard against unauthorised access to, alteration, accidental loss, disclosure or destruction of data.

Under no circumstances should you divulge your password to anyone else nor should you gain access or attempt to gain access to information stored electronically which is beyond the scope of your authorised access level.

You are responsible for any activity which occurs within your accounts.

Failure to comply with any aspect of this procedure may result in a disciplinary warning or dismissal, depending on the circumstances.

Personal use of Council systems

Reasonable personal use of computer and telephone systems is permitted provided it does not impact on your performance. However, storage of personal files, images, software, or Apps is not permitted.

You must not use the Council internet connections or devices to access content that is illegal, pornographic, or supports hate and/or discrimination.

You must not send communications via any Council or personal device that could be deemed to be offensive.

The use of any device to photograph or film fellow employees, customers, members of the public, visitors, or any member of the public without their consent may breach an individual's right to privacy and could in certain circumstances constitute harassment.

Use of Email

As with other written communication, email is a legally binding method of communication. Other forms of communication via the internet may also be legally binding. All forms of communication whether verbal or written represent the Council and should therefore meet the standard and style expected of all communications.

Because of potential virus infection and consequent damage to the business, you must not download or load any software into any computer via any source, including memory sticks, flash drives, pen drives, any portable memory devices, or mobile phones without the prior approval of management. Approval will only be given after virus checking.

Downloading free software or Apps is also not permitted without permission and approval of the Council's IT company and a Senior Manager. Where there is a valid business reason and the software or App is considered to be from a reputable source, the Council will give consent.
You must not make pirate copies of Council owned software for use by other persons either inside or outside the Council. This not only breaks Council rules, it is an illegal practice.

Council devices may contain tracking facilities. The Council may use these as follows:

- for the prevention and detection of theft of devices
- to protect the health and safety of our employees
- as a method of checking the accuracy of Council records, such as timesheets.
- The Council also maintain dashcam devices on Council vehicles.

You must not tamper with any tracking facility or device. Tampering with tracking may lead to action under the Disciplinary Procedure up to and including summary dismissal.

Personally Issued Computer and Mobile Electronic Devices

The Council will provide you with the necessary items of equipment to ensure you are able to carry out your daily tasks.

Where a device has been issued, it is for business use only, and at all times will remain the property of the Council. A device is provided primarily to enable you to do your job. It is your responsibility therefore to ensure that the device is kept charged and switched on while you are working.

If you have been issued with a mobile phone or other device, you are responsible for the safekeeping and condition of the device at all times. You will be responsible for any cost of repair or replacement other than fair wear and tear.

The Council will arrange for any repair or replacement.

In the event that the device is lost or stolen the Council must be notified immediately in order to cancel the number. You agree that upon termination of your employment should you not return your device, or should your device be returned in an unsatisfactory condition, the cost of replacement or a proportionate amount of this, as decided by the Council, will be deducted from any final monies owing to you, or you will otherwise reimburse the Council.

Where you have been issued with a mobile phone or device with internet access, you should where possible connect to a secure and free Wi-Fi network in order to access the internet.

Lost or Stolen Mobile Phones

You are responsible at all times for the security of the mobile phone and it should never be left unattended. A PIN or pattern lock should be used on the mobile to enable voicemails to be picked up. If unsure how to do this, please contact your Manager.

If the phone is lost or stolen, this must be reported to the Council immediately to ensure that the account is stopped and there is no unauthorised usage.

In the event of loss or theft of a mobile phone, the incident must also be reported to the police within 24 hours and an incident number obtained. Please provide this number when reporting the loss to the Council.
You will be responsible for any insurance excess for loss or damage to phones.

The Council reserves the right to claim reimbursement for the cost of the phone, or excess usage charges should the correct procedures not be followed, a user reports repeated loss of their mobile, it is deemed that you have not taken appropriate measures to safeguard the equipment, or reported the loss thereof, which will be investigated by the Council and judged at its absolute discretion.

Monitoring of Mobile Phone Usage and Costs

The Council receives itemised billing for all Council mobile phones and this is monitored on a monthly basis. The billing system identifies all calls, texts and data usage, if appropriate, and the costs related to this, by user, destination, duration, and frequency. High or clear personal usage will be investigated. High usage is defined as usage which falls outside of the normal usage pattern for the individual, or outside of the usage pattern in comparison to other similar users.

This monitoring will allow the Council to identify any areas of potential misuse or training that may be required, or to negotiate with suppliers any necessary changes in tariffs to ensure cost efficiency.

If it is found the mobile has been misused, the Council may take action under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Making Personal Calls from Council Mobile Phones

The Council recognises that you may have to make personal calls during working hours or outside normal working hours.

The Council permits reasonable use of internet and email communications for personal use.

Where it is deemed that an unreasonable amount of personal calls or text messages have been made, or where data usage is excessive, the Council reserves the right to recover these costs, either through deduction from pay or otherwise as agreed. Downloading Apps is permitted where the App is considered to be from a reputable source. You are responsible for the cost of Apps for personal use.

The Council may, after formal investigation, take action under the Disciplinary Procedure if such use is deemed excessive.

Personal Mobiles

You are permitted reasonable use of your personal mobile phone providing this does not interfere with the performance of your duties or cause any disruption to others.

You must not use mobile phones whilst undertaking any task where safety is a consideration, and the use of the phone might interfere with the level of concentration required to undertake the task safely.

Monitoring of Personal Communications

As stated above, the Council may monitor, intercept or record all communications received or made via the Council's telephone system or any other system including email and internet usage. If you wish to make a call that cannot be monitored you should discuss this with your Manager. Monitoring may be conducted by any member of management but will be for work-related purposes only. This forms part of your contractual terms and conditions.

CCTV

It is brought to your attention that the Council operates CCTV across its sites. The objectives for maintaining CCTV systems are set out in the Council's **CCTV and video surveillance policy**. The legitimate aims include

- To reduce the fear of crime promoting a feeling of safety.
- To deter crime, detect crime and provide evidence of offences
- To deter and assist in the prevention of anti-social behaviour.
- To identify and or monitor risk and vulnerability.
- To assist in providing the safety and security of employees, members of the public, contractors, building and assets.
- To enhance community safety, thereby assisting in developing the economic well-being of St Ives parish and encouraging greater use of public open spaces, facilities and amenities.
- To capture and evaluate vehicle and traffic flow data for the purposes of highway safety and the planning of transport and road network systems
- To detect and prevent environmental issues
- To assist the Council in enforcement and regulatory functions.
- To assist in the management of Council premises.

You should be aware that, on occasion, the Council may view and monitor CCTV footage for work-related purposes, in so far as it meets the legitimate aims. This makes up part of your contractual terms and conditions.

Social Media

The vast majority of employees at the Town Council have personal social media accounts. Such accounts must only be used to express personal views, never those of the Town Council. Care should be exercised in all cases where you are identifiable as someone employed by the Council.

When using your own social media platforms, you are of course free to express yourself and your personal views. However, The Council requires staff to refrain from making any comments or engage in discussions which could adversely affect the Council or the Council's reputation, or that of our customers and suppliers.

This includes breaching the Council's policies or any equalities legislation which apply to a public body. The harassment, intimidation or bullying of an employee, their family or close associates, or any other behaviour which damages or has the potential to damage working relationships between colleagues is expressly forbidden and if proven would result in disciplinary action.

You must not share any confidential or sensitive Council information on social networks nor comment to divulge any information which is only known to you as a result of your direct employment.

You should take care when adding councillors to your friendship groups and followers as either may be party to information or material which is compromising in a professional setting and compromise the officer – councillor working relationship.

You are personally responsible for all content posted on your accounts. All passwords must remain secure, and you must never leave accounts open whilst you are away from your device or computer.

You are reminded that regardless of the social network used, or privacy settings activated, everything posted on the internet has the potential to become public and widespread. All social media posts should therefore be carefully considered to

ensure they fit with the image you and the Council want to share online.

Any information posted on the internet may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal if it breaches this policy or any other expected levels of conduct. This includes posts on a personal account with inappropriate privacy settings, posts made outside of working hours, and those posts made not using the Council computers or equipment. You may also be required to remove content created or shared by you if the Council consider such posts to be a breach of this policy.

All Council rules and policies apply in respect of social media posts. This policy therefore should be read in conjunction with all other policies, in particular your attention is drawn to the Council's policies on equality and diversity policy.

What's App and Group Chat

Such groups can be an effective way to communicate and share information quickly with colleagues. It is also understood that colleagues are also friends and may have non-work related groups. It is important that staff continue to understand that such groups, however informal where they include colleagues have the ability to offend or undermine relationships between co-workers and may still be in conflict with Council policy.