BREDGAR PARISH COUNCIL (BPC)

Information Security and Information Technology (IT) Policy

This Policy was reviewed by the Full Council at its meeting held on 6th May 2026

1. **Scope**
   Staff and Councillors using BPC or their own IT equipment are required to read this policy.

2. **Objective**
   The objective of information security is to ensure the business continuity of Bredgar Parish Council and to minimise the risk of damage preventing security incidents and reducing potential impacts. The objective of this IT Policy is to protect the organisations informational assets, to define the computing infrastructure used by BPC, its protection and the responsibilities of members and staff of the Council.

3. **Policy**
   The Parish Council has approved the information technology and security policy.

4. **Security**
   The security policy ensures that:

   a) Information will be protected against any unauthorized access.
   b) Confidentiality of information will be assured.
   c) Integrity of information will be maintained.
   d) Availability of information for business processes will be maintained.
   e) Legislative and regulatory requirements will be met.
   f) Information security training will be available for all staff and councillors.
   g) All actual or suspected information security breaches will be reported to the council and will be thoroughly investigated.

   Procedures exist to support the policy.

   All staff and councillors are directly responsible for implementing the policy.

   Compliance with the Information Security and Information Technology Policy and is Mandatory.

5. **Appropriate Usage**

BPC staff and councillors are expected to use technology in a courteous, reasonable and responsible manner.

6. **Computer Equipment**

Any computer equipment owned by BPC must be appropriately maintained and operated to protect any data held. This includes timely application of Security Updates, anti-virus software, firewall and password protection. Council data must be regularly backed up to an external device that is stored in a different location (to the computer).

All Council data stored on any BPC computer must be encrypted.

BPC does not supply network or Internet services to any staff or councillors.
For all other staff and councillors BPC has a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy and does not supply computer equipment. Councillors and staff may provide their own computers and connectivity. BPC strongly recommend that councillors and staff maintain their computers and network connectivity with timely application of Security Updates, anti-virus software, firewall and password protection.

Council data (particularly if it contains any personal data) held on BYOD equipment should be encrypted.

7. Hardware Asset Disposition

Disposition procedures for all BPC IT assets and equipment will be agreed by the full council at the time of disposal. Backup and data wiping of all IT assets, slated for disposition, is required, as well as removing any tags and/or identifying labels.

8. **Email**

BPC provides the Clerk with an email mailbox from a secure online provider for conducting council business.

Other BPC staff and councillors should set up and operate separate email accounts for council business. The council may request extracts from these accounts if needed to respond to a Freedom of Information or Subject Access Request. These accounts must be deleted when staff or councillors leave the council and formal confirmation of deletion will be requested.

9. **Social Media**

Social media is a generic term for the sharing options, gossip, discussions, stories, video, pictures and even information electronically. The key feature of such systems is that they can be accessed in different ways – via computers, tablets and phones. Examples of popular social media tools include: Twitter, Facebook, Wikipedia, YouTube, LinkedIN and Google Plus. Groupings of interest are a natural feature of the development of such systems with people with similar interests being attracted to share information.

When staff and Councillors are using Social Media sites they should always follow these guidelines:

a. No Parish Council content should be published unless it is already on the Council's website.
b. Information should be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.
c. It should be noted that what is published will be in the public domain indefinitely.

d. Compliance with data protection, intellectual property and copyright laws should be ensured.
e. Discussion from Council meetings should not be published or reported on. Details about customers, partners, or suppliers should not be referred to without their prior written approval (ensuring no advertisement of the services or goods of third parties)
f. Staff and Councillors must refrain from promoting themselves as working for the Council in a way which has, or may have, the effect of bringing the Council into disrepute.
g. Staff and Councillors must not disclose personal data or information about the Council or its service users, employees or Councillors that could breach the Data Protection Act 1998 (e.g. Photographs, images) or General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
h. Staff and Councillors must not make any defamatory remarks about the Council, its service users, employees, Councillors, or conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the Council.

10. **Website**

BPC operate a website hosted by a 3rd party provider, having no other connection with BPC. The present host is one of many companies who provide website hosting services to local authorities. The hosting company provides the general structure of the website, but the Council have direct control of the content.

Subject only to the requirements of the law, Council has the right to determine what should or should not be included on the Website.

The Website shall contain material that arises from Council business such as agendas and minutes, policies, factual information about the Council and Councillors. It may also include any material that has been commissioned by the Council, such as reports or surveys or material that is directly derived from these.

The Website may also contain other material, such as history and geography of the Parish, news of local events, or any other material of a non-controversial nature which is appropriate for the Website on a “custom and practice” basis. The Website may also possess interactive functionality, customary for such local authority websites,(such as questionnaires, visitor response facilities, links to other sites etc.)
The footprint of the Website may change from time to time according to requirements and circumstances, subject to approval by Council for significant changes.

The Website shall in principle not contain material of a deliberately contentious, offensive or disputatious nature, or material that criticises or implies criticism of one or more members of the public, individual Councillors, groups of Councillors or the Council as a whole. However, Council meetings can be disputatious, and this is recorded in the Minutes and, once passed, this material may appear on the Website in the minutes or otherwise. Additionally it can happen that Council may approve material for inclusion on the Website that not everybody necessarily agrees with.

Regardless of what has been voted on by Council, the Website shall not contain any material that is libellous or defamatory or in any way against the law or which could expose the Council to legal challenge.

The website will be operated with full regard for the General Data Protection Regulations.