

STAVERTON PARISH COUNCIL

POLICY: USE OF “PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL” IN EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE STANDING ORDERS

Policy 025

Adopted: 5th May 2026

Review Date: Annually

1. PURPOSE

This policy provides guidance to councillors of Staverton Parish Council on when to mark emails as “Private and Confidential”. It ensures that sensitive information is handled appropriately while maintaining the Council’s commitment to transparency and legal compliance.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all parish councillors when using council-related email communications for council business. Any email marked private and confidential should not be forwarded beyond the recipient without permission nor discussed in a public setting beyond the recipients to the email.

3. PRINCIPLES

Councillors must balance:

- Openness and accountability as public office holders
- The need to protect personal, sensitive, and confidential information

Marking an email “Private and Confidential” does not guarantee exemption from disclosure under legislation.

4. WHEN TO USE “PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL”

Councillors should apply this marking where emails contain:

4.1 Personal Data

- Personal information (beyond that which is publicly available) relating to identifiable individuals (residents, staff, contractors)
- Personal contact details or personal circumstances

4.2 Sensitive (Special Category) Data

- Health or medical information
- Safeguarding concerns
- Financial or highly personal information

4.3 Staffing and Employment Matters

- Recruitment processes
- Disciplinary or grievance matters
- Staff performance or contractual issues

4.4 Legal Matters

- Legal advice from solicitors
- Ongoing or potential disputes
- Complaints or enforcement matters

5. WHEN NOT TO USE “PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL”

This designation should not be used:

- For routine council business
- For information already publicly available
- To avoid transparency or scrutiny
- For matters that should be discussed in open council meetings

6. HANDLING CONFIDENTIAL EMAILS

Councillors must:

- Send confidential emails only to intended recipients
- Double-check recipient addresses before sending
- Avoid unnecessary forwarding
- Use secure systems where available
- Delete or securely store emails when no longer needed

9. BREACHES

Any breach or suspected breach involving confidential information should be reported to the Parish Clerk who may take appropriate action in line with data protection requirements.

10. RESPONSIBILITIES

All councillors are responsible for complying with this policy. The Parish Clerk will provide advice and support where needed.

11. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or council procedures.

Signed: _____

Chair of Staverton Parish Council

Date: _____