



Internet and Email Policy

Date of adoption	
Reviewed	7 th September 2022, 12 th February 2025, 11 th February 2026
Next Review Date	February 2027.
To be reviewed by	Policy & Resources Committee



Internet and E-mail policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy contains important rules covering e-mail, access to the Internet and use of our network. It is intended to explain how these facilities should be used. As circumstances change and these facilities develop, the policy will be amended. All users will be advised accordingly.
- 1.2 It is important that these facilities are used in such a way as to maintain the clarity, consistency and integrity of the Council's image. Consequently, special care must be taken to prevent intentional or accidental misuse and ensure that security remains a key concern for everyone as the use of the Internet and e-mail develops. Therefore, it is essential that all users are fully aware of their responsibilities and the restrictions that are placed upon its use.
- 1.3 Everyone authorised to use these facilities will be provided with a copy of this policy. A signed copy must be returned to the Town Clerk in order to demonstrate acceptance and understanding of its content and the statement in section 3.
- 1.4 Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy and the Council's Password policy, and Social Media policy may lead to disciplinary action. In instances of serious non-compliance, this could lead to dismissal.
- 1.5 References to e-mail apply equally to both its uses on the Internet and internally within the Council's network.
- 1.6 If there is anything you do not understand, please ask for clarification.

2. Conditions of Use

- 2.1 All usage of the Internet and e-mail may be monitored, recorded and maintained. This includes, for each workstation, details of web sites visited (or attempted to be visited), pages accessed, files downloaded, graphic images examined and the content of all e-mail correspondence.
- 2.2 Internet and e-mail facilities will normally only be provided by the approved Internet Service Provider via the e-mail/Internet server. This facilitates firewall and virus checking. Other types of connection and the use of non-standard e-mail addresses (any not ending with newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk) will require special authorisation.
- 2.3 Internet access will be generally controlled through filtering software. This prevents access to specific categories of sites (e.g. gambling sites). Other types of sites (e.g. social networking) may not be accessible during working hours. Where necessary access to other sites may be allowed or disallowed, via white and black lists respectively.

- 2.4 Internet and e-mail facilities are provided for the Council's use only. However, the Council may allow the Internet to be used for private use, subject to the limitations detailed in 2.3, during lunch times and other periods outside of normal working hours. The receipt or transmission of e-mail for personal use is prohibited, except with the express permission of the Town Clerk.
- 2.5 Whilst special control software is used for network connections, due to the ever changing threat from the internet, it is not always possible to prevent access to every type of malicious, undesirable, offensive or illegal site. Therefore, if unsuitable material is accidentally accessed, users must immediately disconnect from that site and inform the Town Clerk of the site details
- 2.6 and the approximate time it was accessed. No action will be taken for genuine accidental access of such material and all practicable measures will be taken to prevent further occurrences.
- 2.7 No user may install additional Internet, e-mail or any other type of software or file without the permission of the Town Clerk.
- 2.8 The Town Clerk must authorise the downloading of any form of software from the Internet. Such software must only be used for direct business use and must be registered, where required. There must be no copyright infringement. Only requests to download items from the sites of reputable organisations will be considered. Users must not upload any software licensed to NATC or any data owned or licensed to the Council without the permission of the Town Clerk.
- 2.9 A NATC email address must never be used to create any online account for personal use. Users must consult with the Town Clerk before creating any online account for business use.
- 2.10 Any user undertaking work for the Council on a home PC / laptop must ensure that approved virus protection software is installed. Unless agreed to the contrary by the Town Clerk.
- 2.11 All e-mail correspondence must be sent using the standard template which contains appropriate disclaimers and other relevant information. Messages must not be personalised with background colours or any additional images.
- 2.12 Great care must be taken when handling emails. Links and attachments within an email may be unsafe or malicious. You must not click links or open attachments unless you were expecting to receive the email and you can be sure of its content. If you are unsure contact the sender by another means before taking further action. All links in emails must be 'hovered' over first to establish where the link will take you.
- 2.13 Never enter usernames and passwords after opening an email or attachment. Go to the website manually in your browser and login from there.



2.14 The Council's Internet and e-mail facilities must not be used for any of the following:

- a) the retrieval, creation, storage or transmission of any offensive, obscene or indecent images, text, data or any other material; or any data capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images or material,
- b) the retrieval, creation, storage or transmission of material which is designed or likely to cause annoyance, offence, inconvenience, needless anxiety or that could be used for any form of harassment,
- c) the retrieval, creation, storage or transmission of defamatory, discriminatory, abusive, sexist or racist material,
- d) the deliberate propagation of any virus, worm, Trojan horse or trapdoor program code,
- e) the transmission of any material in violation of any UK or other national laws: this includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material or material protected by other laws,
- f) the creation or forwarding of chain letters or any material for private profit,
- g) the playing of games or the use of entertainment software,
- h) the undertaking of activities with the following characteristics:
 - i) wasting staff effort or networked resources
 - ii) corrupting or destroying other users' data
 - iii) violating the privacy of other users' data
 - iv) disrupting the work of other users
 - v) sending trivial or unnecessary personal messages

3. Acceptance

3.1 *I have received and read a copy of the NATC Internet and E-mail Policy and fully understand the terms and conditions of the policy and agree to abide by them. I understand the conditions governing the use of these facilities for private use. I am aware that the Council's monitoring and security software may record all Internet activity undertaken by me. This will include the address of any web site I visit, or attempt to visit, e-mail messages and graphics and also a record of any network activity in which I transmit or receive any kind of file. I understand that non-compliance with this policy may lead to disciplinary action.*

Signed

Name Date