

Farndon Parish Council Email Code of Conduct

(Adopted by Farndon Parish Council on the 3rd March 2026)

1. Professionalism and Integrity

- **Maintain Professionalism:** Parish clerks and councillors must use their gov.uk email addresses solely for official parish council business. All communications should be conducted with the highest level of professionalism and integrity.
- **Respect Confidentiality:** Any sensitive or confidential information received via gov.uk email addresses must be handled with care, ensuring compliance with data protection laws.

2. Appropriate Use

- **Official Correspondence:** gov.uk email addresses should only be used for official correspondence related to parish council activities. Personal use or non-council related activities are strictly prohibited.
- **Avoiding Misrepresentation:** Councillors and clerks should not use their gov.uk email addresses to express personal views that may be misconstrued as official parish council positions.

3. Data Security

- **Password Protection:** Ensure that gov.uk email accounts are secured with strong, unique passwords and that these passwords are not shared. It is highly recommended to use Multi-factor Authentication for logging into your mail account.
- **Software Usage:** It is highly recommended to use the native mail applications for web, desktop, tablet and mobile, rather than connecting to third party mail applications such as Outlook or Apple Mail.
- **Email Security:** Be vigilant against phishing, malware, and other cyber threats. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown or suspicious sources. Emails that are identified as spam should be marked as spam and moved to the Junk/Spam folder.

4. Record Keeping

- **Archiving Communications:** Parish clerks must ensure that all official communications conducted via gov.uk email addresses are appropriately archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. Local copies of emails or backups, should not be held by councillors.
- **Deletion of Email:** Emails, whether sent or received should not be deleted from the mail account.
- **Transparency:** Ensure that all relevant email communications are accessible for public records where appropriate, maintaining transparency in council operations.

5. Conduct During Disputes

- **Maintain Civility:** During any disputes or disagreements, all parties must communicate respectfully and avoid inflammatory language. The use of gov.uk email addresses to harass, bully, or intimidate others is strictly prohibited.

- **Conflict Resolution:** Seek to resolve conflicts through established council procedures rather than through email exchanges.

6. Compliance with Legislation

- **Adherence to Laws:** Parish clerks and councillors must comply with all relevant legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Freedom of Information Act, when using gov.uk email addresses.
- **Non-Discrimination:** All communications must adhere to equality and anti-discrimination laws, ensuring that no one is treated unfairly on the grounds of race, gender, disability, religion, or any other protected characteristic.

7. Reporting Misuse

- **Report Concerns:** Any misuse of gov.uk email addresses should be reported immediately to the relevant authority within the parish council or higher authorities as appropriate.
- **Investigations:** Reported incidents will be investigated promptly and impartially, with appropriate actions taken based on the findings.

8. Review and Amendments

- **Regular Reviews:** This Code of Conduct will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains up-to-date with current laws and best practices.
- **Amendments:** Any amendments to this code must be approved by the parish council and communicated promptly to all parish clerks and councillors.

9. Acceptance of Terms

- **Agreement:** By using a gov.uk email address, parish clerks and councillors agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct.