

## **WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Councillor Emails**

- 1.1 All Councillors need to have contact details that are circulated to the public, this would ideally include a direct email and a contact number.
- 1.2 Councillors often use their existing personal emails for public contact. Each Parish Council takes a different approach. There are some challenges to note
  - Councillors should observe data protection rules with contacts from the members of the public and not share any personal data with another body without the person's prior permission and not to store or hold the data for longer than is necessary
  - Single email accounts may prove to be difficult to separate 'Council business emails' easily from personal communications
- 1.3 New email accounts could be set up for all Councillors that could be public facing but could be disabled at the end of the term of office. These email accounts can if preferred forward to an existing personal email.
- 1.4 The Parish team have investigated options for uniform emails for Parish Councils. There are three main options:
  1. Councillors set up their own email accounts or use existing emails. This allows established Councillors to continue to use emails that are already in the public domain.
  2. The Parish office can set up email addresses through outlook that follow an address pattern. There is some flexibility on the construction e.g. [cllrXX@westswindonpc.org.uk](mailto:cllrXX@westswindonpc.org.uk) [cllrXX@westswindonparish.org.uk](mailto:cllrXX@westswindonparish.org.uk) [cllrXXwestswindon-pc@gmail.com](mailto:cllrXXwestswindon-pc@gmail.com). These could be set up quickly and at no cost.
  3. The Parish office can create new Microsoft accounts that have access to the westswindon-pc.gov.uk. There is a cost per account. Microsoft 365 Business Basic costs £4.90 per month or £58.80 per annum. If all Councillors were set up this way it would be an annual cost of £882.00. It may be possible to add emails to the westswindon-pc.gov.uk domain without the cost of a Microsoft account however the team have not been able to set this up.

## **2. Financial Considerations**

- 2.1 There is no budget set aside specifically for Councillor emails. Budgets such as 4380-Professional Fees (£10,000) could be used for this expenditure.

## **3. Recommendation:**

- 3.1 That Council confirms the approach/policy on Councillor email contacts.

Author: Paula Harrison Parish Manager