



## **BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**

# **INTERNET POLICY STATEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This Internet Policy Statement refers to all types of online services accessed through Blyth Town Council's IT facilities. The term 'on-line services' includes Email, World Wide Web (WWW), FTP, TCP/IP and any other means of communication of a similar nature. 'WWW' means all materials which can be accessed through a Uniform Resource Locator address, including but not limited to HTTP and NEWS services.

### **WHY THIS POLICY EXISTS**

Blyth Town Council is committed to defending the principle of the freedom of information and acknowledges that the use of the Internet is a very valuable contribution to the exercise of that principle. Without compromising this, Blyth Town Council also aims to benefit from the Internet by presenting the Council to the locality, region and world. The purpose of this Internet Policy Statement is therefore to guarantee an appropriate use of the Internet which is beneficial to all the Councillors of Blyth Town Council.

The conditions which apply to all usage of Council facilities, including computer hardware, smart phones, software, data, networks and access to the Internet, are clearly set out in the Council IT Policy, a copy of which may be obtained from the Town Clerk.

### **Web version:**

The approved version of this policy will be placed online with a link referenced in this document.

All of those who have access to online services through the Council's network must be aware of the legal consequences attached to the inappropriate use of those services. The criminal penalties which may follow the contravention of current legislation are set out in the Staff Guide for Computer Use (IT Policy), which will be made available on the website.

Compliance with legal requirements for use of IT facilities, including software copyright and licensing, is an important requirement set out in the Council IT Policy. The illegal downloading of software from the Internet is strictly prohibited.

Blyth Town Council is able to monitor messages and materials sent over its network to check that its facilities are not being abused. For this reason access to some sites may from time to time be blocked. Moreover, Blyth Town Council is committed to responding promptly to any potentially damaging publication by withdrawing from its services any unacceptable materials and taking any other necessary action.

This may mean that users responsible for such materials have their access to the Council's IT facilities withdrawn. It is also possible that the publication of such materials may amount to an offence under the Town Council's disciplinary procedures.

Where it is suspected that material displayed or stored on Council IT facilities may risk criminal prosecution or civil legal action, or that material, even if legal, is not considered appropriate for publication by the Council, the Town Clerk may authorise the IT Contractor to isolate the material or the server from the network until the offending material is removed or revised.

## **PEOPLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Policy scope**

This policy applies to:

- ◆ All Councillors, staff and associates of **Blyth Town Council**
- ◆ All contractors, suppliers and other people working on behalf of Blyth Town Council
- ◆ To all who use the internet on council premises.

### **Responsibilities**

The Town Clerk will be responsible for authorising content on the Town Council web pages and for ensuring that the materials presented by the officers adhere to the Town Council standards and the legal provisions specified in the Staff Guide for Computer Use (IT Policy) and are accurate and properly updated.

Those authorised to publish 'pages' are entirely responsible for the content of their pages. They are also responsible for the legality and accuracy of the information contained in the pages accessed through

hyperlinks in their own home pages. They must ensure that both the information accessed through them meet the standards and legal requirements demanded by the Council in the Staff Guide for Computer Use (IT Policy), are accurate and up to date

## **REQUIREMENTS**

### **Web Pages**

In these requirements a distinction has been made between 'live pages' and 'stored pages'. The term 'live pages' refers to the information disseminated on the WWW, which emanates directly from the main Home Page of Blyth Town Council - [www.blythtowncouncil.org.uk](http://www.blythtowncouncil.org.uk). Stored pages are those that have been written but at the time are not actioned as live on the website

- ◆ All live pages indicate that they have been sanctioned by Blyth Town Council and approved by the Town Clerk
- ◆ All live pages must contain a link to the main Home Page of the Council.
- ◆ All live pages must contain a link to sub directory to which they emanate.

### **Equality Issues**

This specific policy has been developed in consideration of other responsibilities, for example equality and diversity.