



## Mobile Phone Policy

### 1. Council Mobile Phones

A mobile phone has been issued by the council is intended for business use only and at all times will remain the property of the Council. The user(s) will be responsible for its safekeeping, proper use, condition and eventual return to the Council. The user will also be responsible for any cost of repair or replacement other than fair wear and tear. If a replacement is required, the Council will organise this.

A mobile phone is provided primarily to enable the user to do their job, i.e. to keep the Parish Council Manager informed at the earliest opportunity of matters which he/she needs to know about and to be similarly contactable. It is the user's responsibility to ensure that the mobile phone is kept charged and switched on whilst on duty.

Users should not sign up to text based information services, e.g. RAC traffic alerts, text voting. The use of the internet for personal use on Council mobile phones is strictly prohibited. Smartphone users should only use the internet to access their work emails (if appropriate) and for other essential Council business.

Unless agreed by the Parish Council Manager or Chairman, applications and other programmes may not be downloaded to any Council mobile phone under any circumstance.

The SIM card from a Council mobile phone should not be placed into any other mobile, unless to another Council issued mobile phone. The camera facility should only be used for work related needs, i.e. photographing potholes.

The Council recognises that users may, on occasion, have to make personal calls or send personal text messages during working hours, or outside normal working hours. Where it is deemed that an inordinate amount of personal calls/text messages have been made using the mobile phone, the Council reserves the right to recover these costs, either through deduction from pay, or otherwise. The Council may, after formal investigation, take action under the Disciplinary Procedure if such use is found to be excessive or unauthorised. Users will be expected to make payment for private calls made beyond what the Council deems to be reasonable usage.

If it is found, following investigation by the Council, that there has been excessive personal data use, then the user will be asked to reimburse the council for the cost of usage and action may be taken under the Disciplinary Procedure.

The user agrees that upon termination of employment they will return the allocated mobile phone. Should the mobile phone be returned in an unsatisfactory condition, the cost of replacement, or a proportional amount of this as determined by the Council, will be deducted from any final monies owing, or the user will be required to reimburse the Council.

## **1.1 Use of a Mobile Phone Whilst Driving**

The user must ensure they have full control of any vehicle that they are driving at all times.

It is an offence to use hand held mobile phones whilst driving or whilst the engine is turned on. The user will be liable for prosecution if they are holding a mobile phone, or any other type of hand held device to send or receive any sort of data, voice, text or pictorial images. The user will be considered to be driving if they are in charge of a vehicle with its engine running on a public road, even if the vehicle is stationary. It is therefore strictly forbidden for the user to use a hand held mobile phone whilst driving.

A mobile phone may only be used to receive an in-coming call or an out-going voice activated call through a hands free device that is activated without a need to hold the phone at any time, in which case the call should be kept to the shortest possible time and only to effect essential communications. If the phone needs to be operated to make or respond to a call through the hands free device for anything other than receiving or giving a short communication, before doing so the user must stop and park the vehicle where it is safe and lawful to do so and with the engine switched off. Whilst driving they must not use the text message facility on the mobile phone, or, if available through the phone, an image facility or internet access.

Individuals are personally responsible for the payment of any fine or fixed penalty (including any externally raised admin charges) incurred whilst in charge of the vehicle. Any conviction for driving offences, any driving endorsements and any fines incurred must be reported immediately to line management as this may affect the Council's insurance.

It should be noted carefully that a breach of the Council's rules on the use of a mobile phone whilst driving may render the user liable to action under the Disciplinary Procedure.

## **1.2 Lost or Stolen Mobile Phones**

The user is responsible at all times for the security of the mobile phone and it should never be left unattended.

If the mobile phone is lost or stolen, this must be reported to the Parish Council Manager (if during working hours), or if out of working hours they should phone EE direct to ensure that the account is stopped and there is no unauthorised usage.

In the event of theft of a mobile phone, the incident must also be reported to the police and an incident number obtained (please provide this number to the Parish Council Clerk) when reporting the loss).

The Council reserves the right to claim reimbursement for the cost of the mobile phone, or excess usage charges should the correct procedures (as detailed in this policy) not be followed, a user reports repeated loss of their mobile phone, it is deemed that the user has not taken appropriate measures to safeguard the equipment, or has failed to reported the loss thereof.

## **1.3 Support**

Should there be any queries on the use of the council mobile phone, please contact the Parish Council Manger

#### **1.4 Monitoring of Usage and Costs**

The Council receives itemised billing for all Council mobile phones and this is monitored on a monthly basis. The billing system identifies all calls, texts and data usage (if appropriate) and the costs related to this, by user, destination, duration, frequency, etc. High or clear personal usage will be reported to line management for investigation (high usage is defined as usage that falls outside of the normal usage pattern for the individual or outside of the usage pattern in comparison with other similar users).

Usage monitoring will allow the Council to identify any areas of potential misuse or training that may be required, or to negotiate with suppliers any changes in tariffs to ensure cost efficiency.

If it is found that the mobile phone has been misused, the Council may, after formal investigation, take action under its Disciplinary Procedure.

#### **1.5 Mobile Phone Use Abroad**

All Council mobile phones are barred from being used abroad unless the network provider has been specifically instructed by the Council.

It is particularly important on Smartphones to ensure that “data roaming” is switched off for any times other than checking Council emails. “Data roaming” charges from abroad (which includes the Isle of Man and Channel Islands) can result in very high level charges, and if it is found that these have been incurred due to personal use or negligence on the part of the user, then the charges may be passed on to the user.

### **2. Policy Review**

Updates will be notified to all mobile phone users from time to time.

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