



Frodsham Town Council
INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY
2013- 2015

1 Introduction

1.1. Good management of ICT (information and Communications Technology) is the responsibility of the Town Clerk, supervised by the Policy and Process Committee.

2 What ICT Equipment Do We Have?

2.1. As at April 2013, we have:

- 2 x HP laptops,
- 1 x Draytex router,
- 1 x Sony Vaio laptop,
- 2 x Yealink
- 2 x VOIP (Voice over internet provider) telephones,
- 1 x Canda photocopier, and
- Some small pieces of kit, such as wireless slave keyboards & mice and a spare office mobile telephone, not all of which are in constant use.

2.2. Our Cloud is sourced by Medhurst.

3 Principles

3.1. FTC wants to make the most of its spend on ICT, to achieve the following ends:

- Best communication between councillors, residents and other stakeholders,
- Speedy and efficient discharge of its business,
- Value for money,
- Secure storage and easy retrieval of data, and
- A “shop window” via the FTC website that has a positive impact on visitors.

4 Communication

- 4.1. FTC uses electronic communication between councillors as its preferred method. Councillors have dedicated email addresses; and can access the current industry standard files.
- 4.2. Documents sometimes need to be printed in hard copy, but usually only at the request of councillors, for example those without access to electronic means, or where paper documents are needed for the effective conduct of meetings.
- 4.3. Good email etiquette is followed – with carefully worded mails, suitable for public view. Copy lists are kept as short as feasible.
- 4.4. Mail sent out for Information will not necessarily be assumed to have been read by all recipients. Other emails will be so assumed.
- 4.5. Email is the preferred route of communicating with other stakeholders too. Email addresses will be included in letters, and on the website.
- 4.6. The Council intends to develop its councillors only website segment as the preferred repository for all documents.
- 4.7. The Council keeps its ICT products up to date and fit for purpose. This includes telecommunications equipment, where answer machines and mobile phones (including text) are utilised as appropriate.
- 4.8. The Council will continue to keep under review its use of social media.

5 Speedy Discharge of Business

- 5.1. The office seeks to respond to all emails within three days of receipt, and tries to allow for absences from the office, as far as possible.
- 5.2. Mobile working will be enabled to allow maximum flexibility.
- 5.3. Use of Skype, drop box etc. will be considered as appropriate.

6 Value for Money

- 6.1. The Council seeks best value, rather than the cheapest, solutions. It has a strategic partner, Medhurst, with whom it is, during 2013, updating its ICT to include:
 - The Cloud,
 - New telephony,
 - A new website, and
 - Rationalisation of records on systems.
- 6.2. New computer equipment was installed in late 2012. The Council plans at the right time to move to Windows 8, and is ready to do so.
- 6.3. The Council set a budget of £1,500 for 2013-14. The Council owns its equipment, and intends to continue down this road on grounds of best value.
- 6.4. Use of VOIP and other technologies to minimise costs, are policy.

7 Secure Storage

- 7.1. The Council protects its data with suitable security, including password regimes.
- 7.2. Data held by FTC is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 and users ensure that they are complying with the Act's requirements.
- 7.3. Users also exercise vigilance in respect of in-coming Email (particularly those with attachments) from unrecognised sources to avoid infection of data.

8 Easy Retrieval

- 8.1. The file structure of the Council is to be reviewed every two years to ensure that only relevant documents are stored "live", with others being archived. Starting in 2013, all drives other than the "Enter Here" drive – the one where the most recent documents are stored – will be archived. Archived records will be on laptops, with data also securely held in the office in accordance with Council's Data Retention & Security Policy.
- 8.2. The Council adopts a logical and easy naming protocol for files.
- 8.3. Use of the Cloud enables flexible and home working – maximising ease of retrieval.

9 Website

- 9.1. The Council is developing a new website in 2013. It seeks to provide a modern, fresh and efficient image for the Council, easily navigable, user friendly, and with a good mix of content to encourage residents and others to use it.
- 9.2. The Office Manager will step into the role of Website Administrator during 2013.
- 9.3. The Council will consider issues such as blogs and chat rooms over time.

10 Training

- 10.1. FTC seeks to provide training as necessary for its staff on ICT matters. Needs are kept under review as part of the appraisal and development processes. Day to day coaching and assistance is provided by Medhurst when needed.

11 Health & Safety

- 11.1. Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, effective from January 1993, require employers to minimise the risks associated with VDU work
- 11.2. FTC takes its responsibilities seriously, and staff are asked to take care of their health while using ICT – to adopt the correct working practices such as desk layout, and to take regular breaks.
- 11.3. If requested, FTC will provide for an eye & eyesight test. FTC will pay for spectacles only if the normal ones are declared to be unsuitable by an optician and special ones are needed for Council work..

12 Renewal of ICT Equipment

- 12.1. In pursuance of the aims above, FTC expects the Town Clerk to keep an eye on ICT developments in the wider business world, and to report to the Council if he thinks further investment is warranted. This includes looking for new ways that we might extract value from ICT and should not be restricted to review of this strategy.
- 12.2. Where FTC employs external providers, contracts will be awarded, and reviewed periodically, to obtain best value in terms of cost and quality of service (Financial Regulations 13 & 14).

13 Insurance

- 13.1. The Council's assets are insured under a general policy, reviewed each year.

14 Misuse of Council's Assets

- 14.1. Council employees must not misuse assets, including ICT. Minor usage such as occasional personal calls or use of the internet are allowed. Judgement should be used as to what is appropriate.
- 14.2. Employees should be circumspect when referring to Council matters, e.g. in social media.
- 14.3. Misuse will be dealt with under the Council's discipline policy.

15 Councillors' Use of Personal ICT Equipment

- 15.1. Where councillors use personal ICT equipment in pursuance of their duties as councillors, they should note that:
 - FTC will not be liable for any loss of, or damage to, their personal equipment,
 - Councillors will be subject to conditions of security & confidentiality as defined in para 6.2.
 - Any Email messages sent to individuals and/or external organisations on behalf of FTC must include the sender's name, "Frodsham Town Council" and contact details. Personal messages must not be prone to being interpreted as being FTC's views.
- 15.2. Councillors may reclaim reasonable expenses (eg for printer ink cartridges & paper, telephone calls etc) incurred in pursuance of their duties on production of evidence).

16 Compliance (Staff only)

- 16.1. FTC reserves the right to monitor Email & Internet usage to ensure that it complies with this policy. Any monitoring will take place in a strictly controlled manner on the instruction of the Council's Chairman.
- 16.2. FTC reserves the right to withdraw Email and/or Internet access or any access to the ICT equipment if the user is found to have contravened the provisions of this Policy.

17 Compliance (Councillors & Staff)

- 17.1. FTC is legally obliged to co-operate with the Police, HM Revenue & Customs and other law enforcement agencies in the detection and investigation of crime. This may involve giving access to FTC's ICT equipment to one or more of these organisations.