Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council

Electronic Communications Policy

Appleby Town Council values the use of electronic communication to enable the Council and councillors to interact internally, and with local residents and businesses. This policy helps to ensure that all electronic discussions are productive and in line with Appleby Town Council's Code of Conduct, and the GDPR policies (Data Protection Policy, Document Retention Policy and Privacy Policy).

Email Communications

The Council email accounts (clerk@applebytown.gov.uk and admin@applebytown.gov.uk) are monitored during office hours. The Council aims to reply to all enquiries as soon as possible, and within five working days. During periods of annual leave, an 'out of office' message is used, with appropriate alternative contact details in case of an urgent enquiry.

All external communications on behalf of Appleby Town Council will be sent directly from the Town Clerk or the Chair of the Council.

All individual Councillors have a Town Council email, cllr[NAME]@applebytown.gov.uk, which is monitored by them personally when they are available. Councillors can communicate with residents regarding concerns on local matters, ensuring all viewpoints given are that of an individual Councillor, and not Appleby Town Council as a whole. The Clerk should be copied into all correspondence where actions have been taken by a Councillor.

Councillors should at all times abide by the Code of Conduct. Confidentiality of all residents should be maintained in line with Appleby Town Council's GDPR Policies. Councillors should be aware that any emails from their official Town Council email, or from a personal email relating to any form of council business, will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act.

Suspicious Emails

The purpose of a scam email is often to get you to click a link. This will take you to a website which might download a virus to your computer or steal passwords or other personal information. This is sometimes known as 'phishing'.

As Councillors' emails are in the public domain, suspicious emails can be frequent, with some even posing to be from a fellow Councillor. The easiest way to check whether an email is genuine is to check the email address the message has been sent from and if you are not completely sure that an email is genuine, then do not respond to the email and do not click on any links or attachments. Emails from fellow Councillors should always come from their official 'applebytown.gov.uk' email addresses.

Any suspicious emails should be forwarded to admin@applebytown.gov.uk marked SUSPICIOUS EMAIL. If it is confirmed that it is a scam, then the email address will be blocked from sending emails to the applebytown.gov.uk domain.

Never give out private information (such as bank details or passwords).

If you feel the need to report it further, forward the email to report@phishing.gov.uk. By reporting phishing attempts you can:

- reduce the amount of scam emails you receive
- make yourself a harder target for scammers
- protect others from cyber-crime online

Mobile Phone communications

Appleby Town Council's GDPR policies are applicable to all other forms of communication, such as telephone calls, SMS messaging, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp.

Town Council Website

For online information from Appleby Town Council and its Tourist Information Centre the websites are: http://www.applebytown.gov.uk/ and www.visitappleby.com.

Appleby Town Council uploads media to its website (http://www.applebytown.gov.uk/) in line with the Model Publication scheme. All information is correct at the time of publishing, and the website is updated as frequently as possible.

The Town Council also manages three Facebook pages, Appleby Town Council, Appleby Tourist Information Centre and Appleby Public Hall. These pages are updated regularly with the most up to date information. When any details change, we endeavour to alter posts as quickly as possible.

Other authorities contact details are held on Appleby Town Council's website and these are updated when required. Contact details for local groups are updated when new information is provided, however this is the responsibility of the local group, and not the Council.

Policy Review

This Procedure will be reviewed bi-annually by Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council at a Full Council Meeting.

This policy has been agreed and approved by Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council.

Cllr Pamela Davidson

Cllr Pamela Davidson
Chair of Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council

Adopted by Appleby-in Westmorland Council on 17th September 2025

Review Date: September 2027