Shawbury Parish Council

Training Policy

1. Introduction

Shawbury Parish Council (SPC) recognises that having a well-trained, knowledgeable team of members and employees is beneficial for organisation and the wider community. It is, therefore, committed to encouraging members and staff to improve their knowledge and understanding through training and development.

SPC values the time given by its members to their community and this policy is aimed at maximising the rewards from that time by ensuring that its members understand and enjoy the role they undertake..

2. Training Needs

A training budget will be provided and SPC will identify training needs in the light of the overall objectives of the Council and the requirements of the individual through and formal and informal discussions. Recommendations regarding training needs are made by the Parish Clerk. Decisions regarding training needs of individual councillors or members of staff are made by the full council.

3. Training for Members of the Council

SPC will:

- encourage its members to attend training meetings relevant to their specific roles and the needs of the Council;
- ensure that the training offered to its members is no less than the minimum Continuous Professional Development required by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).
- ensure that all new members receive appropriate training at the earliest opportunity and are provided with all relevant information about becoming a Shawbury Parish Councillor. For all councillors, in-house training to meet specific needs may be arranged to enable all councillors to attend.
- look for joint training opportunities with adjacent town and parish councils where appropriate. If this is not possible and the Council deems that training is necessary then all approved training costs will be met by the Council.

4. Funding for Training

SPC will ensure that training for members and staff is adequately covered as an item in the annual budget. Also, that membership fees for associated organisations are included in the annual budget.

SPC is committed to networking with other Councils and will look for joint training opportunities with adjacent town and parish councils where appropriate. If this is not possible and SPC deems that training is essential then training costs will be met by SPC.

Adopted	January 2026
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review due	May 2026

Shawbury Parish Council

IT and Email Policy

To report security incidents or for help with IT, contact the Parish Clerk.

1. Introduction

Shawbury Parish Council understands how important it is to use email and IT safely and properly. This policy gives clear rules for how staff, councillors, and others should use council IT and email.

2. Scope

This policy applies to anyone using the Council's IT equipment or email, including computers, networks, software, devices, and accounts.

3. Responsibilities

All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of Shawbury Parish Council's IT and email systems.

4. Acceptable use of IT resources and email

Council IT and email should mainly be used for council work. Small amounts of personal use are allowed if it doesn't affect work. Users must behave ethically and not access anything offensive or illegal.

5. Device and software usage

The Council provides a laptop, hard drive and software to the Clerk. Personal or unapproved software must not be installed on work devices.

6. Data management and security

Sensitive data will be kept safe and secure. Approved tools will be used for storing and sending data. Data will be backed up regularly and old data will be destroyed safely.

7. Network and internet usage

Internet use on Council devices must only be for council work. Copyrighted content must not be downloaded or shared without permission.

8. Email communication

The Council's email addresses must be used for council work only. Emails must be kept professional and respectful. Private information should only be sent in an encrypted form. Links and attachments from unknown sources must not be opened.

9. Password and account security

Passwords must be strong and must be kept private. They should be changed regularly to stay secure. Alternatively a password manager, such as KEEPER should be installed and used. Council email should use 2-step verification.

10. Mobile devices and remote Work

If mobile devices are provided, they must be protected with a passcode or fingerprint. IT safety rules apply to mobile devices and when remote working.

11. Email monitoring

The council may check emails to make sure this policy is being followed. This will be done legally and respectfully and only when required for a specific purpose.

12. Retention and archiving

In line with the Council's data retention policy, important emails must be kept, as required by law. Unnecessary emails will be deleted regularly.

13. Reporting security incidents

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the Clerk or by the Clerk to the Chair of the Council.

14. Training and awareness

The council will provide training and/or advice to help staff and councillors stay safe when using IT and email.

15. Compliance and consequences

Not complying with this policy may result in losing IT access or other consequences.

16. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Between these reviews, updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.

Adopted	
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review due	

Shawbury Parish Council

Equality & Diversity Policy

1. Background

The Public Sector Equality Duty came into force in 2011 and stems from the Equality Act 2010. The Duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It is recognised as supporting good decision making by ensuring that public bodies consider the effect of their decisions and actions on different groups and individuals within the community. Consequently, it helps the Council to deliver policies and services which are accessible to all and meet the needs of a diverse range of people within the community.

2. Policy Statements

1. Overarching Declaration

Shawbury Parish Council will provide representation, information, facilities, services and opportunities for employment to all irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

2. Decision Making

The Council opposes all forms of discrimination and will not discriminate on any of the above grounds. The Council will ensure that all its decisions are made objectively and without discrimination. Where required, the Clerk will provide advice or guidance to members to ensure that their decisions comply with the requirements of the Duty.

3. Policies

When developing or reviewing policies, the Council will ensure that they will impact fairly on all members of the local community.

4. Culture

The Council will strive to create a culture where differences are respected and valued, thereby promoting dignity and equality. It will aim to prevent barriers, bias or discrimination that can prevent individuals or groups from contributing fully to the community.

5. Awareness of Legislation

The Council will challenge discrimination and will aim to treat all in the community with equality and fairness to all in the community. All members and officers are expected to be aware of, and understand, the Equality Act 2010.

3. Equality Commitments

The Council is committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all
- Promoting an environment in which all persons are treated with respect.
- Preventing direct and indirect discrimination and harassment
- Fulfilling its legal obligations under equality legislation and codes of practice.
- Complying with its own equality policy.
- Taking affirmative and positive action, including legal action if appropriate

4. How the Policy will be Implemented:

- Communicate the policy to councillors and staff
- Incorporate the aims of this policy into the Council's general practices
- Ensure that those who deal with the Council also comply with the policy in respect of their work for, or with, the Council.

5. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness this policy will be reviewed annually, and action taken as necessary. Any failures to comply with the policy will be reported to members at the next Full Council meeting.

Approved by Council	January 2026
Reviewed	Annually
Next Review Date	May 2026

Shawbury Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

1. Background
Shawbury Parish Council defines a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service provided by the Council itself or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council'.

Complaints can provide valuable learning points which help to improve service delivery. The Parish Council's Complaints Procedure aims:

- To ensure that customers are treated fairly and assist them in making a complaint by being easy and straightforward to use;
- To ensure complaints will be investigated as quickly and thoroughly as possible, and in a positive, problem-solving manner;
- To ensure that the outcome and resolution of complaints will be used to monitor the Council's performance and improve service delivery;

On the receipt of a complaint in the first instance the Parish Clerk or Chairman will make every attempt to contact the complainant to attempt to resolve the complaint informally. If this is not possible then the formal complaints procedure is outlined below.

2. Types of Complaints

a. Complaints against Councillors
All councillors sign to undertake to observe the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council. A full copy of the Code of Conduct is available on the Parish Council's website at www.Shawbury-pc.gov.uk If after studying the Code of Conduct a complainant feels a Councillor has broken any of the rules in the Code of Conduct, they should refer the complaint directly to the Monitoring Officer, Shropshire Council, The Guildhall, Shrewsbury.

b. Complaints against the Clerk:
Complaints should be in writing to the Chairman, Shawbury Parish Council, c/o Westmead, Tilley Road, Wem, SY4 5HA.

c. Other Complaints
Any other complaints should be in writing to the Parish Clerk at the above address.

3. Receipt of Complaints
All complaints must be submitted in writing.

The Council will not consider anonymous complaints therefore a name and contact address must be included with all correspondence. Complaints should include as much information as possible.

Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged by either the Clerk or Chairman within seven working days and the complainant will be informed who will be investigating the complaint. The Council aims to be able to resolve most non-complex complaints immediately, but for more complex issues an investigation may need to be undertaken.

Shawbury Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

On receipt of a complaint, the Clerk or the Chairman (if the complaint relates to the Clerk), will seek to settle the complaint directly with the complainant. This will not be done without first notifying any person complained about, giving them an opportunity to comment.

4. Complaint Investigation

If it has not been possible to resolve the complaint informally, the Council will form a Complaints Committee which will formally meet to investigate the complaint in more detail.

If deemed necessary at this stage the complainant may be invited to a meeting with the Complaints Committee to discuss the issues raised. If the complainant is submitting documentation or evidence for the meeting they should provide copies to the Complaints Committee at least 7 clear working days before the meeting. Similarly the Clerk will supply the complainant with copies of any Parish Council documents that are requested, provided these are documents available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act.

The complaints committee will present the findings of investigations into complaints to the next Parish Council meeting along with any recommendations for any future service improvements identified as a result of the complaint.

Under Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 the Council or Committee may consider whether the circumstances warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public. In the interests of openness and accountability there must be clear relevant reasons or a request from the Complainant for the matter to be held without the presence of the press or public. The decision of the Council or Committee, however, will be made public at the end of the meeting.

Investigations will be dealt with as quickly as possible and under normal circumstances the complainant should receive a written response within 20 working days however in the case of complex complaints if it is not possible to meet this timescale the complainant will be informed.

It should be noted that currently the Local Government Ombudsman has no jurisdiction over Parish and Parish Councils.

5. Unreasonable and Persistent Complainants

From time to time the Parish Council receives complaints from members of the public.
In the event that a complainant begins to make frequent contact with the Parish Clerk and hinders the normal day to day running of the Parish Council, the Council will implement a policy for dealing with frequent or vexatious complainants, since such complaints can be time consuming and could lead to unnecessary additional cost to the Council tax payer.

The Parish Council's policy for dealing with unreasonable and persistent complainants will become operative if the complainant is deemed to be unreasonably persistent.

6. Policy for dealing with unreasonable and persistent complainants

A vexatious complainant will be notified that the Council's Policy for dealing with unreasonable and persistent complaints is to be enforced, together with the reason why.

The complainant will then be asked to adopt one or all of the following procedures

- To contact the Parish Council in a particular form (for example, letters only);

Shawbury Parish Council

Complaints Procedure

- To only contact Council Staff with a Councillor present;
- To only telephone the Council on specified days and times;.
- To enter into an agreement about future contact with the Parish Council.

The Council will decide how long it will spend on any one complaint and whether it feels the complaint has been sufficiently dealt with. In all cases where a complainant is deemed to be unreasonable and persistent, the Council will write to the complainant to justify its course of action and explain for how long it will be operative.

The complainant may challenge the Council's decision, although proof that the complaint has not been sufficiently dealt with will be required. However, if deemed to be a fair challenge the Council will conduct a review of the complaint and will reconsider whether the complaint should still be treated as unreasonable and/or vexatious.

Adopted	8th January 2026
Review Frequency	Annually
Next Review due	May 2026

Shawbury Parish Council

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. Introduction

The Parish Council recognises that social media and networking websites are a regular part of everyday life. Many people engage with local/community groups and organisations through membership of digital networks such as Facebook and Twitter. This policy sets out the Parish Council's approach to its use of social media. It defines the roles & responsibilities within the Parish council for this area and provides councillors and staff with guidelines on responsibilities for the use of social media.

2. Why is the Parish Council using social media?

The Parish Council aims include informing members of the community and the wider local area about what is happening and sharing important news and information. The Parish Council's social media activity supplements the information published on its website and any newsletters it produces.

Through social media, the Council can:

- provide links to useful and interesting information about the Parish and local area published by other people
- better communicate with those using mobile devices and personal computers
- provide information in a timely manner

3. Official social media/networking accounts

The Parish Council operates a Facebook account for the promotion of activities and events and as a communication tool.

Examples of acceptable content are:

- Parish Council meetings information
- Consultation documents
- News and emergency information
- Key dates
- Short comments on hot topics and relevant news
- Polls and information gathering
- Useful links

4. Roles and Responsibilities:

An official Parish Council account on any social media/networking site may only be set up with approval of the full council. Access to, and use of any account, is restricted and managed by authorised roles in the following way:

Authorised Roles:

The Clerk to the Parish Council will be the official account holder and administrator.

Up to two Councillors will be nominated to manage content and support the administrator of any official account.

The Clerk will manage any interface between the Parish Council Social media account and its Website and will be responsible for liaising with the Parish Council's web site provider.

Only these authorised may use the social media account(s) to post information online and access to the account is strictly limited. The Parish Council's social media account(s) will be managed and monitored daily by the Clerk and supported by the nominated councillors.

All information published on the internet must comply with the Parish Council's confidentiality policy and data protection. The social media account will primarily be used to promote 'good news' and information, supplementing content already published on the Parish Council's website. Any employee, Councillor or member of the public who becomes aware of parish council social networking activity that would be deemed distasteful should make the Clerk and/or nominated Councillors aware as soon as possible.

5. Facebook

The account holder/administrator manages the Council's Facebook page. Facebook pages are used to highlight news, make announcements, engage with the community and share information. The account will not be set up to enable "comments" to be posted on the parish Council Facebook page. Requests for something to be posted on the Parish Council's Facebook page, should be directed to the authorised persons.

6. Use of Photos and Video

Only the Clerk and/or nominated Councillors have permission to upload photos and videos. The appropriate permissions must be obtained for all imagery.

7. Personal Accounts on Social Media

Councillors and staff are likely to have personal social media/network accounts. Personal accounts need to be used in a way that does not conflict with the Council's 'Code of Conduct' or terms of their contract of employment. Where no policy or guidelines exist, councillors or employees should use their professional judgment and take the most prudent action possible. If the Parish Council is referred to in a way that is deemed defamatory or confidential information is disclosed, it reserves the right to report the comment and request that it be removed.

Councillors who use personal social media accounts should ensure they are clearly identified as personal and do not in any way imply that they reflect the Council's view. Councillors should always present a professional image and not disclose anything of a confidential nature. Comments of a derogatory, proprietary, or libellous nature should not be made and care should be taken to avoid guesswork, exaggeration and colourful language.

9. Responding to direct messages posted on social networking sites

If appropriate, the Clerk will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible to all questions received via social networking sites. All formal requests, comments, enquiries or complaints should be emailed to the Parish Council using the contact form on the website.

10. Rules

The Parish Council may monitor forums and blogs to gain indirect feedback. The Parish Council may post replies on forums or blogs to answer queries or address factual corrections, but must generally take a cautious approach before getting involved in contentious issues.

The Parish Council reserves the right to take any necessary steps to protect members of the Parish community and will delete any comments referencing the Parish Council, which are deemed abusive or offensive in anyway.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every 4 years.

Adopted	
Review Frequency	Four-Yearly at Annual PC Meeting
Next Review due	