



# St Stephen in Brannel Parish Council

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## Mobile Phone Policy<sup>1</sup>

### General

Where a mobile phone has been issued by St Stephen in Brannel Parish Council, it is 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 Council. If any repair or 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 Clerk or Members informed at the earliest opportunity of matters which they need to know about and to be similarly contactable by the Clerk or Members, when working away from the office. Therefore, 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 on Council mobile phones is strictly prohibited, except in the case where specific authorisation has been given by Full Council to designated Smartphone users. Smartphone users should only use the internet to access emails and for other essential company use.

Unless agreed by the Clerk, applications and other programmes may not be downloaded to any mobile phone under any circumstance.

The SIM card from Council mobiles should not be placed into any other mobile, unless to another Council issued mobile phone. Neither should the camera facility be used for anything other than work purposes.

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

The user agrees that upon termination of employment, should they not return the allocated mobile phone, the cost of replacement, or a proportional amount of this as decided by Council, will be deducted from any final monies owing.

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted by Full Council at the meeting held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 under minute FPC182/18. For review in August 2021.

### 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, be it voice, text or pictorial images. The user will be regarded 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 where there is 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. When the phone needs to be operated to make or deal with a call through the hands free device for longer 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 such a 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 the Clerk 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.

### Lost or Stolen Mobiles

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

If the phone is lost or stolen, this must be reported to the Clerk immediately 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 when reporting the loss to the Clerk).

### Monitoring of Usage and Costs

The Council receives itemised billing for all mobile Smartphones 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 Council for investigation (high usage is defined as usage which falls outside of the normal usage

pattern for the individual, or outside of the usage pattern in comparison to other similar users).

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

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

#### Mobile Phone Use Abroad

All Council mobile phones should not be used abroad unless specifically instructed by the Chairman.

#### Personal Mobile Phones

Excessive, general, non-urgent personal mobile phone usage is distracting and is not permitted during paid working time. This includes phone calls, texting, emails, surfing the internet and any other function of the phone (for example, Facebook, Twitter, games, etc).

Therefore, except in the event of an emergency, employees should restrict their personal calls during work time by only using their mobile phones during scheduled breaks or lunch periods.

St Stephen in Brannel Parish Council will not be liable for the loss of, or damage to personal mobile phones brought into or used in the workplace by employees.

Council reserves the right to monitor an employee's mobile phone usage within the workplace at any time. Disciplinary action may be initiated if it is deemed that an employee's usage of personal mobile phones is inappropriate or impacting on an employee's performance in the workplace.