

# IT Infrastructure – 15 September 2025

## 1. Overview

There are several areas currently under consideration:

- Standardising PC Web Domain
- Standardisation of Email Addresses
- Shared File Facility

## 2. Web Domain

NALC and ALCA have stated that all PCs should utilise a GOV.UK domain.

Government advice as regards the use of a .gov.uk domain name by Parish Councils is:

The benefits for parish councils include having:

- the trusted and professional .gov.uk brand that people will recognise
- increased transparency and security compared to personal email accounts
- the ability to manage email accounts by removing staff when they leave
- easy access to staff email accounts to fulfil FOI obligations
- continuous central government monitoring for potential security vulnerabilities
- better legal protection because it's based in a UK jurisdiction

All permanent staff and councillors must use individual .gov.uk email accounts rather than free personal email accounts to improve professionalism, maintain transparency and to increase security within the parish council sector.

The use of a gov.uk domain also provides better cyber security protection.

Zonkey, who created and host the current Freshford PC website, are able to undertake this.

The naming of gov.uk domains is limited, and the options are:

- freshfordparish.gov.uk
- freshfordparishcouncil.gov.uk
- freshford-pc.gov.uk

**Request** – To agree to use a gov.uk domain, and agree to use [www.freshford-pc.gov.uk](http://www.freshford-pc.gov.uk).

The cost will be c.£130 for a 2-year registration period for this domain name.

Zonkey will be able to put this in place using c.1 hour resource time.

It should be noted that the domain needs to be changed before standardising email addresses.

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## 3. Standardising Email Addresses

One of the key recommendations that came from NALC is that standardised email addresses are used.

Generally there is an increase in FOI requests and managing responding to these requests it is much easier to ensure that records are maintained.

The first step is to switch to a gov.uk domain which the selected supplier will need to support.

The issue of how long to keep emails for is complex and dependent on the subject matter. For quite a number of subject areas the recommendation is 'for as long as needed' – which is not helpful.

The email retention period is a separate issue to standardising email addresses.

What is clear is that PCs need to be able retain some emails after councillors move on for FOI purposes. Therefore the solution selected needs to take this need into account.

It makes sense to use either a Microsoft platform or Google – or a service provided by the company hosting the web site.

Zonkey do not provide an email service. However, ALCA have an association with My Parish Council who provide website and email solutions ([Home - My Parish Council](#)).

This option needs to be explored to understand the costs and benefits. How the email system works also needs to be understood in terms of management. Also, using My Parish Council would require migrating the website from Zonkey. This adds a level of complexity that probably precludes this option, but it should be investigated to ensure that the right decision is made.

B&NES has been approached to see whether they have a volume licence agreement for Microsoft products, and if they do whether the PC could be included in that agreement as the PC is for mapping services.

The B&NES response is needed before going to suppliers to obtain quotes.

In overview:

- 3 viable suppliers have been identified providing multiple email addresses for the same domain:
  - Google
  - Hosting UK
  - Microsoft

Key points are:

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 1 – Google     | - The most expensive email solution, 2tb total file storage  |
| 2 – Hosting UK | - Provide a Microsoft Exchange solution – 1tb file storage per user                                    |
| 3 – Microsoft  | - Provide an email only solution that seems to be the cheapest solution<br>- 1tb file storage per user |

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## 4. Requirements

### 4.1. Email

Email accounts are needed for:

1. Clerk
2. 9 Councillors
3. Communications – News Items, Events, Community emails (Mailchimp)
4. Newsletter

There needs to be the ability to manage email accounts for:

1. Changing councillors
2. Data retention for meeting legal requirements, such as FOI requests

### 4.2. File Sharing

The need for a common file sharing space has been previously raised by several councillors.

The PC needs to decide whether this is an actual requirement as this facility can be provided through using either a Microsoft or Google based email solution.

It is doubtful that the My Parish Council solution provides this facility.

The file storage also needs data retention for meeting legal requirements.

**Request** – That the PC decides to have a central file facility for information sharing.