



# CRICKHOWELL TOWN COUNCIL MOBILE PHONE POLICY

(Adopted 15 March 2022)

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Council Mobile Phones</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Use of a Mobile Phone Whilst Driving</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1.2 Lost or Stolen Mobiles</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1.3 Support</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1.4 Monitoring of Usage and Costs</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1.5 Mobile Phone Use Abroad</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Anti-Harassment</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Policy Review</b> .....	<b>4</b>

## 1. Council Mobile Phones

Where a mobile phone has been issued by the Council, it is for Council 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 the Council. The user will also be responsible for any cost of repair or replacement other than fair wear and tear. If a 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 Council informed at the earliest opportunity of matters which it needs to know about and to be similarly contactable by the Council. Therefore, it is the user's responsibility to ensure that the mobile phone is kept charged, switched on and on their person within normal working hours.

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. Smartphone users should only use the internet to access their Council emails and for other essential Council use.

3<sup>rd</sup> party applications or 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 an emergency, e.g. an accident where photographic evidence may be required.

The Council recognises that users may, on occasion, have to make personal calls or send personal text messages during working hours, or outside normal working hours. Where it is



# CRICKHOWELL TOWN COUNCIL MOBILE PHONE POLICY

(Adopted 15 March 2022)

deemed personal calls/text messages have been made using the mobile phone, the Council reserves the right to deduct those costs, either through deduction from pay, or otherwise.

The Council may, after formal investigation, take action under the Disciplinary Procedure if such use is excessive or unauthorised.

If it is found, following investigation, that there has been excessive personal data use, then the user will be asked to reimburse the Council 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, or should the mobile phone be returned in an unsatisfactory condition, the cost of replacement, or a proportional amount of this as decided by the Council, will be deducted from any final monies owing, or the user will otherwise reimburse the Council.

## **1.1 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 line management 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.

## **1.2 Lost or Stolen Mobiles**



# CRICKHOWELL TOWN COUNCIL MOBILE PHONE POLICY

(Adopted 15 March 2022)

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 on the mobile to enable voicemails to be picked up. If unsure how to do this, please contact your supervisor for instructions.

If the phone is lost or stolen, this must be reported to the Clerk or Mayor immediately (if during working hours), or if out of hours phone call the network provide 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 council).

The Council reserves the right to claim reimbursement for the cost of the phone, or excess usage charges should the correct procedures not be followed, a user reports repeated loss of their mobile, it is deemed that the user has not taken appropriate measures to safeguard the equipment, or reported the loss thereof (which will be investigated by the Council and judged at its absolute discretion).

## **1.3 Support**

Should there be any queries on the use of the Council mobile, please contact the Clerk or Mayor to arrange contact with the appropriate person.

## **1.4 Monitoring of Usage and Costs**

The Council receives itemised billing for all Council mobile phones 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. personal usage will be reported to line management or Mayor for investigation.

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.

## **1.5 Mobile Phone Use Abroad**

All Council mobile phones are barred from being used abroad

## **2. Anti-Harassment**

Staff must be aware that certain operations that may be performed on mobile phones may breach Council rules and procedures. The sending of text messages or digital images that are or could be deemed offensive is strictly prohibited.



# CRICKHOWELL TOWN COUNCIL MOBILE PHONE POLICY

(Adopted 15 March 2022)

The photographing or filming of fellow employees, residents, visitors or any member of the public without their consent may breach an individual's right to privacy and could, in certain circumstances, constitute harassment. This is therefore strictly forbidden.

It is against the principles of this Council for any person to be harassed in such a way, and will not be tolerated. Any instance that comes to the Council's attention will be investigated.

Should a staff member be found to have used a mobile phone in such a way they may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure, which could include dismissal.

If an individual feels they have been a victim of this form of harassment, they should bring this to the attention of line management immediately.

### 3. Policy Review

This policy is owned by Crickhowell Town Council Its effectiveness will be monitored and may be reviewed by the Council at any time. Updates will be notified to all mobile phone users.

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