

# Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council

## Home Working Policy

### Introduction

Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council recognises the benefits that home working can offer to its employees. Therefore under S.101 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council delegates to the Proper Officer (the Clerk) to make suitable home-working arrangements for employees including themselves. The Clerk is unrestricted in the amount of home-working they can arrange, other than ensuring the parish council office is manned by a minimum of one member of staff between the public opening hours of 9am-12 noon Monday-Thursday.

This policy sets out working arrangements and expectations that apply to employees when they work from home. This policy does not apply to Ash Green Sports Centre employees.

### Safe Working Environment

Health and safety for employees working from home applies in the same way as it would being based in the Parish Council office, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that employees work in a safe manner and that they follow all health and safety instructions issued by the Council. Employees (including the Clerk) must complete and submit a 'Home Based Workers Risk Assessment' to be retained by the Clerk. This is a checklist for employees to identify any possible hazards in the home working area. Following completion of the checklist, measures may need to be taken to control any risks identified. This checklist should be completed annually or more frequently if there are any changes to arrangements such as new equipment or changes to home-office space.

Employees must complete and submit a workstation risk assessment and ensure that this remains up-to-date. Some of the most important considerations include:

- If possible, an area should be set aside from the rest of an employee's living space to ensure that they are able to work from home without distractions
- An employee's home office should have adequate space for them to work safely and comfortably
- Their desk should be large enough to accommodate equipment and paperwork
- They should have sufficient storage and their workspace should be organised so equipment is close to hand
- The work area should be well lit, with natural lighting if possible
- Equipment and sockets should be situated to avoid potential trip hazards
- Employees must also ensure that they visually check the cables of any electronic equipment supplied regularly (and at least every 6 months) and report any defects.

The Council reserves the right to visit employees at home at agreed times for work-related purposes, including health and safety matters and to inspect, service or repair equipment (e.g. for PAT testing).

### Facilities and Equipment

The council will provide employees with suitable equipment for employees to work from home and we will maintain and replace these items when necessary.

It is the duty of employees to ensure that proper care is taken of the equipment provided and to let the Clerk know of any need to maintain or replace the equipment. Should the risk assessment identify any further equipment that is necessary, this will need to be discussed with the Clerk.

All equipment provided by the council is for employees to work safely and effectively at home and cannot be used for personal use by employees or their family. All equipment will belong to the council and employees will be required to return it to us promptly upon leaving the Council's employment.

### **Potential Conflicts of Interest**

During hours of work, the council expects that an employee's work environment will enable them to work effectively and that they are not distracted by domestic matters.

If there is an emergency and an employee need to attend to a non-work matter whilst home-working, then they should notify the Clerk.

### **Data Protection**

Whilst home-working, employees are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with the council secure at all times.

Specifically, homeworkers are under a duty to:

- Store all documentation belonging to the council in a private place, inaccessible by family members.
- Set up and use a unique password for the laptop
- Ensure the laptop and other equipment provided by the Council is only used for work-related purposes and must not be used by any other member of the family at any time or for any purpose.
- If employees have a telephone conversation where they are discussing confidential work matters, they should ensure that such calls take place in privacy to avoid inadvertent breach of confidentiality.

### **Insurance Implications**

The Council's Employer's Liability Insurance extends to employees working from home, and any council-owned equipment in their home will also be covered. It is the duty of employees to ensure that any agreement with their landlord or mortgage lender allows them to work from home, and that their house buildings and contents insurance will not be invalidated by working from home.

<b>Date of Policy Adoption</b>	<b>Review Cycle</b>	<b>Date of Next Review</b>
April 2023	Biennial	April 2027