



POLICY FOR THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Policy

This policy sets out how Billingshurst Parish Council will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) responsibly, safely and appropriately in its work.

AI tools can provide useful support to the Council, including helping to draft documents, summarise information, improve accessibility, generate ideas and assist with administrative tasks. However, AI must be used as a support tool and not as a replacement for the judgement, accountability or decision-making of councillors and officers.

The Council recognises that AI technology is developing rapidly and this policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains appropriate.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All parish councillors
- The Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
- Council employees and volunteers
- Any person authorised to use Council systems or information when using AI in connection with Council business.

It applies to publicly available AI services, including generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini and similar services.

Principles

The Council will follow the following principles when using AI:

- A councillor or authorised officer must remain responsible for any work produced with the assistance of AI.
- AI-generated material must not be treated as automatically accurate or authoritative.
- AI can produce incorrect, incomplete or misleading information.
- Any AI-generated material used by the Council must be checked by a suitably competent person before publication, circulation or use in Council business.

Particular care must be taken with:

- Legal information
- Financial information
- Planning matters
- Employment matters
- Personal information
- Information relating to vulnerable people
- Statements concerning individuals or organisations.

Data protection

Councillors and officers must comply with the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and the Council's own data protection policies.

Personal, confidential or sensitive information must not be entered into a public AI system unless the Council has specifically approved the system and appropriate safeguards are in place.

This includes, for example:

- Names linked to personal circumstances
- Addresses and contact details
- Complaints
- Personnel information
- Financial or banking information
- Medical information
- Information relating to children
- Passwords or security information
- Confidential correspondence
- Information subject to legal privilege.

Where there is any doubt, the information must not be entered into an AI system.

Transparency

Where appropriate, the Council should be open about its use of AI.

AI should not be used to create the impression that a communication has been personally written by a named individual when that would be misleading.

Acceptable Use

Subject to the safeguards in this policy, AI may be used to assist with routine Council activities. All such content must be checked before publication. AI should **not** be treated as the sole source of evidence for a Council decision.

Examples include:

Administration

- Drafting agendas and meeting documents
- Producing first drafts of reports
- Summarising lengthy documents
- Creating checklists
- Improving grammar and spelling
- Formatting information.

Communications

- Drafting website content
- Social media posts
- Newsletters
- Press releases
- Public information notices
- Plain-English versions of Council information.

Research

- Generate research questions
- Identify issues for further investigation
- Summarise publicly available information
- Suggest sources for further checking.

Accessibility

AI may assist with:

- Plain-English summaries
- Translation
- Alternative formats
- Improving readability
- Producing accessible versions of Council information.

Translations and important public communications should be checked by a competent person before publication where accuracy is important.

Prohibited Use

AI must not be used to:

1. Make final decisions on behalf of the Council
2. Determine whether a person should receive a Council service, grant or benefit without appropriate human assessment
3. Make employment, disciplinary or recruitment decisions without appropriate human involvement
4. Generate or approve financial transactions
5. Provide legal advice on behalf of the Council without appropriate professional verification
6. Create misleading or deliberately deceptive information
7. Impersonate councillors, officers or members of the public
8. Create fake evidence, correspondence or documents
9. Enter confidential Council information into an unapproved AI system
10. Process personal data in breach of data protection requirements.

Procurement and Suppliers

- Only approved AI systems meeting UK data protection and security standards may be procured/used
- Contracts must define data ownership and liability.

Checking AI-Generated Information

Before using AI-generated material, the user should ask:

1. Is the information accurate?
2. Can the important claims be independently verified?
3. Is the information current?
4. Could the AI have misunderstood the question?
5. Could the content contain bias or discrimination?
6. Does it contain personal or confidential information?
7. Could using it create a legal, financial or reputational risk for the Council?

If the answer to any of these questions raises concerns, the material must not be used until it has been properly checked.

Monitoring and Review

Any councillor, employee or member of the public who believes that AI has been used improperly by the Council should raise the matter with the Parish Clerk.

Potential breaches involving personal data should be reported promptly in accordance with the Council's data breach procedure.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are significant developments in AI technology, legislation or government guidance.

The Council may amend this policy at any time where necessary to protect residents, councillors, employees or Council information.

Policy Statement

Billingshurst Parish Council recognises that Artificial Intelligence can provide valuable assistance in delivering efficient, accessible and effective local government services. The Council will embrace appropriate uses of AI while ensuring that human judgement, democratic accountability, transparency, data protection and public trust remain at the heart of all Council activity.

AI will assist the Council; it will not replace the responsibility of councillors or officers.

Adopted 14 October 2026