

Members are asked to consider recommending that funding to secure .gov.uk email addresses for Councillors from May 2025 elections is included in the 2025-26 budget.

The following information is taken from 'The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners' Guide'. This sets out the standards against which Local Councils are audited.

The importance of using .gov.uk domains for websites and emails

All Parish, Town and Community Councils are eligible to use, and are advised to use, a .gov.uk domain for their websites and email communications. Your community, suppliers and partners will now reasonably expect a local council to have a .gov.uk domain name...

To assist with compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), it is advised that clerks provide official .gov.uk email accounts to their councillors, which must only be used for official council business.

Using a .gov.uk domain for your council website and email accounts gives Parish Councils the following advantages:

1. Increased professionalism and trust from members of your community, partners and suppliers because your email address and website domains are a trusted government brand.
2. Separation of your personal life from your professional life, ensuring members of your community, partners and suppliers understand what capacity you are emailing them in - whether a Councillor or Clerk.
3. Increased control for the Responsible Officer over email accounts and documentation when managing new joiners, leavers, sudden absences or Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests.
4. Peace of mind that your .gov.uk Parish Council domain will never be sold to someone else if it is not renewed on time, which can happen with .co.uk, .org.uk and other commercial domains.
5. Additional security measures, as all .gov.uk domains are checked for any cyber vulnerabilities by the Cabinet Office and reported to the Responsible Owner, or your technical point of contact, so they can be fixed.