

Tharston and Hapton Parish Council AI Policy

Introduction

Tharston and Hapton Parish Council recognizes the growing importance of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing decision-making processes, improving public services, and fostering greater transparency. As a small parish council, our objective is to adopt AI technologies responsibly and ethically to benefit the community, while ensuring privacy, fairness, and accountability.

This policy outlines the principles and guidelines for the use of AI in the operations of Tivetshall Parish Council.

1. Purpose of AI Adoption

The Parish Council may utilize AI technologies to:

- Improve service delivery, such as managing local resources, responding to public queries, or automating administrative tasks.
- Support decision-making by analysing data and trends.
- Enhance communication with residents, ensuring easier access to information and services.

2. Guiding Principles

Tharston and Hapton Parish Council is committed to the following principles when using AI:

1. **Transparency:** The Council will ensure that AI systems are used transparently. Residents will be informed about the purpose, scope, and implications of AI applications.
2. **Accountability:** The Council will retain full responsibility for decisions made with the assistance of AI, ensuring human oversight at all times. AI should support, not replace, human decision-making.
3. **Fairness and Inclusivity:** AI systems will be designed and implemented to treat all individuals fairly, without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, disability or any other protected characteristic in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
4. **Data Privacy and Security:** Any AI system will comply with data protection regulations (such as the UK General Data Protection Regulation) to ensure that personal data is handled with care. Data collection, processing, and retention will be minimized, and robust cybersecurity measures will be in place.
5. **Ethics:** The Parish Council will ensure that AI technologies align with ethical standards, avoiding the use of AI for purposes that could harm individuals or the community.

3. Implementation of AI Systems

When considering the implementation of AI systems, the following steps will be taken:

- **Assessment:** A detailed impact assessment will be conducted to evaluate the risks and benefits of AI adoption in any council-related activity.
- **Consultation:** The Council will consult with residents and relevant stakeholders before introducing significant AI technologies, ensuring that public opinion is considered.

- **Monitoring and Review:** AI systems will be regularly monitored to ensure they function as intended and remain compliant with legal and ethical guidelines. Regular reviews will be conducted to identify areas for improvement.

4. Use Cases

Examples of potential AI applications include:

- **Automating repetitive tasks**, such as scheduling and document management.
- **Chatbots** for assisting residents with frequently asked questions or providing information on council services.
- **Data analysis tools** for improving infrastructure planning or monitoring environmental data.

5. Training and Capacity Building

Tharston and Hapton Parish Council will ensure that council members and staff receive appropriate training on AI technologies, including how to use them responsibly and understand the ethical implications of their use.

6. Resident Engagement

Tharston and Hapton Parish Council values the input of residents in shaping the use of AI. A feedback mechanism will be established to gather residents' views on AI systems used by the Council. This feedback will be considered in future updates to the AI policy.

7. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it reflects the evolving nature of AI technologies, changes in legislation, and the needs of the community.

Adopted by Tharston and Hapton Parish Council

Date: 4th February 2025

Review by Tharston and Hapton Parish Council

Date: 4th February 2025

For any queries related to this policy, residents are encouraged to contact the Parish Clerk at clerk@tivetshall-pc.gov.uk

This policy ensures that AI usage by Tivetshall Parish Council is responsible, ethical, and aligned with the best interests of the community.