

**BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL – WEBSITE DOMAIN AND EMAIL ADDRESSES**

This note concerns three separate, but related, matters:

- (i) whether to change the village website domain;
- (ii) the need to change the Council's email address. This will be necessary whether or not there is a change of Clerk;
- (iii) whether to adopt email addresses for Councillors separate from their personal email addresses.

**(i) Domain Name**

The village website address is currently [www.bishopstone-salisbury.co.uk](http://www.bishopstone-salisbury.co.uk). The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has issued guidance that all parish councils should consider changing their domain name to .gov.uk. It is considered that using a .gov.uk domain for council business, emails, and website is a sign of good practice, promoting trust and professionalism. However, the Bishopstone website is a village website used by a variety of organisations as well as the parish council. There could therefore be an argument for not changing the domain name. However, the Parish Council is, formally, the owner of the website and pays all the costs; so it is the parish council's website. On balance I think that having an email address for the parish council which ends .gov.uk outweighs any slight concern as to whether it is appropriate for other interests.

I have been in touch with TEEC, who host our web site account. They are happy not only to change the domain name but also set up the email account referred to in (ii) below. There would be no cost for the first year, and a charge of £30.00 per year in subsequent years to host the new .gov domain.

The website address would therefore change to [www.bishopstone-salisbury.gov.uk](http://www.bishopstone-salisbury.gov.uk). It will take up to two weeks to procure the new domain name. An automated response can be set up so that anyone using the old address will be informed to switch to the new address.

**(ii) Council Email Address**

At present all email for the Parish Council comes to the Clerk at [bishopstoneclerk@btinternet.com](mailto:bishopstoneclerk@btinternet.com) one of a series of email addresses on my personal account. I had been preparing to replace this address in the event of a new Clerk being appointed. However, this has been overtaken by a recent change in the Annual Governance and Accountability Review Practitioners Guide which means that a new address is anyway necessary.

The AGAR Practitioners Guide supports the preparation of statutory annual accounting and governance statements produced by smaller authorities in England. These statements form much of the content of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return prepared at the end of the financial year.

Councillors may recall that the Annual Governance Statement part of the AGAR sets out a series of assertions such as: "We have put in place arrangements for effective financial

management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements” with a yes/no tick box. The revised Guide, issued in March 2025, introduced a new assertion for the 2025/26 AGAR return on Digital and Data compliance. To warrant a positive response to this assertion, the authority needs to have taken the following action on email management – “every authority must have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned website domain, for example clerk@abcparishcouncil.gov.uk.”

Assuming the domain name is changed ((i) above) meeting the new AGAR requirement would mean that the email address of the Clerk (and thereby the Council) would need to change to [clerk@bishopstone-salisbury.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@bishopstone-salisbury.gov.uk).

### **(iii) Councillor email addresses**

The email service provision that is mentioned in (i) above covers up to ten linked email addresses. It would therefore be possible, in addition to the Clerk, for Councillors to have their own email address for parish council business (eg, ali.thorne@bishopstone-salisbury.gov.uk) separate from their private address. The changeover would fit in with Governance and Good Practice guidance. This might also be desirable from a privacy point of view. If for any reason the Council was subject to a Freedom of Information request and you use your personal email for council business, all your emails would be subject to scrutiny.

### **Recommendation**

- (i) that the domain name for the village website be changed to [www.bishopstone-salisbury.gov.uk](http://www.bishopstone-salisbury.gov.uk);
- (ii) that the email address for the new Clerk should be [clerk@bishopstone-salisbury.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@bishopstone-salisbury.gov.uk);
- (iii) that Councillors consider whether they wish to adopt their own parish council business email address.

If (i) and (ii) are agreed I propose we ask TEEC to do this during September with the change publicised in October’s STaB.

If Councillors wish to proceed with (iii) this can be done alongside the change in Clerk’s address.

M R Ash  
Clerk  
September 2025