

## **IWDG Email Protocol**

**12 December 2010**

Emails are an effective and efficient method of communication. However they are legal documents, which if received by government departments or their agencies, are obtainable by third parties under the Freedom of Information Act. They can be presented as evidence in a Court of Law and thus any information contained within can be admissible and used.

Emails are also a major method of communication with the public and can be easily and widely distributed beyond their intended recipients. Thus great care needs to be exercised in composing and responding to emails.

In order to protect the IWDG, its officers and its members, and to avoid causing offence or distress to them or the public, a protocol is presented. This must be adhered to by all officers or agents of the IWDG, when communicating within and outside of the group. This relates to emails being sent using the IWDG email address (xxxxx@iwdg.ie) or if conducting official IWDG business using personal email addresses.

1. Emails should only be used for professional purposes and in a professional manner.
2. IWDG email accounts (xxxxx@iwdg.ie) must not be used for personal emails or communicating personal opinions (which may not be those of the organisation).
3. The use of vulgar or offensive language is strictly prohibited.
4. The diverse opinions of the IWDG members should be respected and should not be disseminated or passed onto third parties to denigrate or cause offence.
5. On no account should reference be made to individual's health, disability or other personal information. This information can only be forwarded to other officers of the IWDG if relevant with the permission of the individual concerned.
6. Recipients of alleged violations of this protocol are advised to present their case to the Chair of the Board of Directors at Merchants Quay, Kilrush, Co Clare.

The Board of Directors of the IWDG will take very seriously any violation of this protocol. All cases of such protocol violation will be investigated fully and action taken if deemed necessary. This policy is consistent with the Boards expectation that all IWDG officers will deal courteously and respectfully with each other, members and the general public at all times.