Data Protection Policy

Widdington Parish Council (the Council) recognises its responsibility to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. The Act regulates the use of personal data, this does not have to sensitive data and includes names and addresses. The Council registers annually with The Information Commissioner`s Office and identifies the clerk as the Data Controller.

The Data Protection Act (DPA)

The Act sets high standards for the handling of personal information and protecting individuals` rights for privacy. It also regulates how personal information can be collected, handled and used. The Act applies to anyone holding personal information about people, electronically or on paper.

As a local authority, the Council has a number of procedures in place to ensure that it complies with The Act when holding personal information, the Council has to notify the Information Commissioner that it holds personal data about individuals.

Personal Information is any information that may identify a living individual.

When dealing with personal Information, the council`s officers and Councillors must ensure that:

- **Data is processed fairly and lawfully**
  Personal information should only be collected from individuals if officers and Councillors have been open and honest about why they want the personal information.
- **Data is processed for specified purposes only**
  The information gained must only be held, used and disclosed for the purpose for which it was obtained.
- **Data is relevant to what it is needed for**
  Information will be monitored so that too much or too little is not kept; only information that is needed should be held.
- **Data is accurate and up to date**
  Personal Information should be accurate, if it is not it should be corrected.
- **Data is not kept longer than it is needed**
  Information no longer needed will be shredded or securely disposed of.
- **Data is processed in accordance with the rights of individuals.**
  Individuals must be informed, upon request, of all the personal information held about them.
- **Data is kept securely**

Only officers and Councillors can access the information. It cannot be accessed by members of the public.

Storing and accessing data

Widdington Parish Council may hold information about individual's such as their address. These are kept in a secure location and are not available for the public to access. All data stored on a compute is password protected.

When data is no longer needed, out of date or served its use, it will be destroyed or deleted from the computer.

A councillor legitimately gathering data which is then passed to the Clerk for storage will ensure that it is deleted from their own records. This is to ensure data is not retained unnecessarily.

Widdington Parish Council recognises that people have a right to access any information that is held about them. If a person requests to see any data that is being held about them:

- They must be sent all of the information that is being held about them.
- There must be an explanation for why it has been stored.
- There must be a list of who has seen it.
- It must be sent within one month.
- Requests that are manifestly unfounded or excessive may be refused or a charge made.
- If a request is refused, a reason must be given.

If an individual requests for their data is deleted (right to be forgotten) this will be carried out.

Disclosure of personal information

A Councillor may have access to Personal Information to help carry out their duties. This access will be limited to information which is necessary for the purpose and the information should only be used for that specific purpose, with the consent of the Clerk. Information must not be used for political reasons unless the individual has consented.

Personal Information can be disclosed to third parties if that disclosure is in accordance with the exemptions under the DPA. The Clerk will not disclose personal Information held unless he/she is satisfied that an exemption has been established.

Confidentiality

The Council`s officers and Councillors must be aware that when complaints or queries are made, these must remain confidential unless the individual gives permission otherwise. When handling personal data this must also remain confidential.

If a data breach is identified the ICO must ben informed and an investigation will be conducted.

Data Protection & GDPR guidance notes - June 2018 Data Protection Act 2018

1. Background and relevance

The Act came into force 25th May 2018 and replaces the Data Protection Act 1998. It incorporates the General Data Protection Regulation which was designed to create common privacy requirements across the EU The Act applies to 'personal data' that is data relating to a living person who can be identified from that data. 'Processing data' means any operation performed on that personal data such as collection, recording, use. The Parish Council does have data that relates to living individuals and does process data. This policy has been produced to show compliance with the Act.

2. Information Audit

The type of information the Council holds tends to be limited to name, address, telephone number and email address.

More detailed information is held for employees & councillors, (eg staff employment details & contracts, councillors' election registration forms & Registers of Interests – these Registers are held with the Parish Clerk).

In the normal course of business the Parish Council will receive personal data in connection with the following:

• Administration of employment matters – data shared with HMRC

• Correspondence sent to the Council – email, telephone, letter

• Contact details for local organisations – data shared with webmaster,

• Information supplied for the council website

Data relating to professional or business details in connection with the following:

• Auditing – data shared with external & internal auditors

• Insurance

• Contact details & business information from suppliers & contractors

Services relating to children – the Council does not have any services directly relating to children. It is aware that should that circumstance change, the relevant Data Protection issues will need to be taken into consideration.

3. Sensitive data

The Act requires 'sensitive data' to be treated differently. Categories of sensitive data includes racial or ethnic origins, political opinions, religious beliefs, health issues. The Parish

Council does not collect such data. Where the Council carries out village wide surveys, such as in the Neighbourhood Plan or a Parish Plan, responses are anonymous and questions are not generally asked on a topic that is classified as sensitive.

4. Storage of data

All council paper documents are stored in locked cabinets in the village hall or the Clerk's residence. All computer records are stored on a password protected laptop with anti-virus software. The Parish Council utilises cloud storage.

5. How the data is used

Data is only used for the purpose it has been supplied. Data is not passed onto a third party without the express consent of the data subject. The Council does not routinely share data. It does not sell data.

6. Subject access requests

A request for a copy of information held can be made. There is a prescribed process. Response time will reduce to one month under the new GDPR.

	Date	Minute reference
Adopted	02/04/2020	
Reviewed	05/12/2024	**12.24.11.2**
Updated	07/05/2026	**05.26.13**

Date to be reviewed; November 2029 (Or sooner if required by legislation)