

Reedham Parish Council

Data Protection Policy

Reedham Parish Council recognises its responsibility to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

Introduction

This Data Protection Policy applies to all Parish Council employees, Councillors, volunteers, and contractors. The policy explains how personal data is collected, stored, used, and protected by the Council in the course of its duties and responsibilities.

Reedham Parish Council is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Registration reference: ZA561177

The Data Protection Act 2018 governs the handling of personal information that identifies living individuals directly or indirectly and covers both manual and computerised information. It provides a mechanism by which individuals about whom data is held have a certain amount of control over the way in which it is handled. Data related to a child (under 13) will not be processed without the express parental/guardian consent of the child concerned.

Data Protection Principles

Anyone responsible for using personal data must make sure the information is:

- used fairly, lawfully and transparently
- used for specified, explicit purposes
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant and limited to only what is necessary
- accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- kept for no longer than is necessary
- handled in a way that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unlawful or unauthorised processing, access, loss, destruction or damage

There is stronger legal protection for more sensitive information, such as:

- race
- ethnic background
- political opinions
- religious beliefs
- trade union membership
- genetics

- biometrics (where used for identification)
- health
- sex life or orientation

There are separate safeguards for personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences.

Data Subject Rights

Individuals have the right to:

- be informed about how their personal data is being used
- access the personal data the Council holds about them
- have incorrect data updated
- have data erased
- stop or restrict the processing of their data
- data portability (allowing you to get and reuse data for different services)
- object to how their data is processed in certain circumstances

Legal Grounds for using Personal Information

- Consent: where permission is directly given to hold personal information.
- Contract: agreements with contractors, allotment agreements etc
- Legal obligation: for example, submitting payroll details to HMRC
- Vital interests: for example, in an emergency it may be necessary to give contact information to emergency services.
- Public task: when carrying out duties as a public authority Reedham Parish Council may collect details from residents to communicate information directly to them.
- Legitimate interests: where there is a benefit to the community.

Data Security and Access

Reedham Parish Council implements appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect data from loss, misuse, disclosure and unauthorised access

- Paper records containing personal data are stored securely in a locked cabinet and only accessed by authorised personnel.
- Electronic records are stored on password protected devices. Strong passwords, and two-factor authentication is enabled where possible.
- Access to personal data is restricted to councillors, staff, or contractors who need it to carry out council functions.

- Regular backups of digital data are taken to protect against accidental loss; all physical backups are stored securely. Digital data is protected by appropriate anti-virus and firewall software.
- When councillors or staff access council data on personal devices they are expected to follow the same standards of data protection, including password protection, up-to-date antivirus software, and not sharing devices with others.
- Personal data is not shared via email unless necessary. Sensitive information is redacted or password protected where appropriate.

Sharing and Disclosure of Data

Personal data is only shared when necessary for the performance of council duties, and in accordance with data protection law. The Council does not sell or share personal data for marketing purposes.

Data Retention

The Council will retain data only as long as necessary to fulfil its purposes and in line with its Document Retention policy. Personal data will be securely destroyed or deleted once no longer needed.

Data Breach Management

Any actual or suspected data breach must be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk. Serious breaches will be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) within 72 hours, where required.

Responsibilities

Reedham Parish Clerk acts as the Data Protection lead and is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy, responding to data protection queries or requests, and managing any data breaches. All councillors, staff, and volunteers who process personal data are expected to:

- Handle information securely and only for authorised purposes.
- Follow the principles and procedures outlined in this policy.
- Store and dispose of data safely.
- Report any suspected data breaches, losses, or misuse to the Clerk promptly.
- Attend training where necessary to understand their responsibilities under data protection law.

Adopted: 7th July 2025

Review Period: Bi-Annually

Review Date: July 2027