

Information Management Policy



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1 Introduction

This policy sets out how Lydbrook Parish Council manages, protects, and uses information. It ensures compliance with legal obligations, promotes transparency, and safeguards confidentiality, sensitive information, and personal data. All the information is summarised in the Table at Annex A.

2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- Councillors, employees, contractors, and volunteers handling council information.
- All formats of information: paper, electronic, audio, and visual.
- All categories of information: **confidential**, **sensitive**, and **personal data**.

3 Legal Framework

The Council will comply with:

- **Local Government Act 1972** (confidential information in meetings).
- **UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018** (personal data).
- **Freedom of Information Act 2000** (public access to information).
- **Environmental Information Regulations 2004**.
- **Public Records Act 1958** and relevant retention schedules.

4 Definitions

Confidential Information: Information supplied in confidence by government or restricted by law/court order (e.g. “pink papers” in agendas).

Sensitive Information: Information that, if disclosed, could cause harm (e.g. safeguarding cases, staff grievances, tenders).

Personal Data: Any information relating to an identifiable living individual (e.g. names, addresses, emails, tenancy records). Includes **Special Category Data** (health, ethnicity, political opinions, etc.).

5 Roles & Responsibilities

Parish Clerk: Data Protection Officer; responsible for day-to-day compliance, record keeping, and responding to FOI/GDPR requests.

Councillors & Staff: Must follow this policy, complete training, and report breaches.

Council as a Body: Acts as the Data Controller.

6 Information Handling Principles

Confidential Information:

- Restricted to authorised members only.
- Not disclosed without consent or legal duty.

Sensitive Information:

- Access on a strict “need-to-know” basis.
- Stored securely (locked cabinets, encrypted files).

Personal Data:

- Processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently.
- Collected only for specified purposes.
- Retained only as long as necessary.

7 Access to Information

Public has a right to access most council information under FOIA.

Exemptions apply to confidential and sensitive information.

Requests must be logged and responded to within statutory deadlines.

8 Records Management & Retention

Records will be maintained in line with the **Local Government Association retention schedule**.

Examples:

- Minutes: permanent archive.
- Financial records: 6 years.
- Staff records: 6 years after employment ends.

Secure disposal methods (shredding, secure deletion) will be used.

9 Security Measures

- Password-protected systems and encrypted storage.
- Locked filing cabinets for paper records.
- Regular data backups.
- Councillors using personal devices must apply the same security standards.

10 Breach Management

- Any suspected data breach must be reported immediately to the Clerk.
- The Clerk will assess and, if necessary, report to the **ICO within 72 hours**.
- Lessons learned will be documented and acted upon.

11 Training & Awareness

Lydbrook Parish Council will ensure all councillors and staff will receive induction and refresher training on data protection and information handling.

12 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.

Annex A – Information Management Summary

Category	Parish Council Definition	Examples	Legal Basis	Handling
Confidential Information	Defined in LGA 1972: supplied by government in confidence or prohibited by law/court order	Pink papers in agendas, legal advice, disciplinary cases	Local Government Act 1972, Code of Conduct	Restricted access, not disclosed without consent/legal duty
Sensitive Information	Data that could cause harm if disclosed; includes sensitive personal data and commercial matters	Staff grievances, safeguarding cases, tenders	GDPR, Council Data Protection Policy	Need-to-know basis, secure storage, encrypted transfer
Personal Data	Any data identifying a living individual	Names, addresses, emails, tenancy records	UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018	Lawful basis required, subject rights apply, retention limits