

Leigh Parish Council

Data Protection Policy

Data Protection Policy

Leigh Parish Council (the “Council”) recognises the responsibility to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. The Act regulates the use of personal data. This does not have to be sensitive data, it can be as little as a name and address.

In this policy, references to Councillors and/or staff, include any party who is co-opted on to any committee, sub-committee or working party of the council.

A copy of this policy shall be provided to all Councillors and staff.

Leigh Parish Council is registered with the the Information Commissioners Office (IOC), which is the UK's independent body set up to uphold information rights.

The Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act 1998 sets out 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.

Data Protection Principles

When dealing with personal data, Council staff and Councillors must ensure that:

- **Data is processed fairly and lawfully**

Personal information should only be collected from individuals if staff and Councillors have been open and honest about why they want the personal information.

- **Data is processed for specified purposes only**
Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
- **Data is relevant to what it is needed for**
Data will be monitored so that too much or too little is not kept; only data that is needed should be held.
- **Data is accurate and kept up to date**
Personal data should be accurate, if it is not it should be corrected.
- **Data is not kept longer than it is needed**
Personal data is retained no longer than is necessary for the purpose you obtained it for.
- **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 staff and Councillors can access the data. It should be stored securely so it cannot be accessed by members of the public.

Storing and accessing data

The Council recognises its responsibility to be open with people when obtaining personal details from them. This means that councillors and staff must be honest about why they want a particular piece of personal information. If, for example, a member of the public gives their phone number to staff or a member of the Council, this will only be used for the purpose it has been given and will not be disclosed to anyone else.

The Council may hold personal information about individuals such as their addresses and telephone numbers. These will be kept in a secure location at the office of the Parish Clerk and are not available for public access. All data stored on the Parish computer is password protected. Once data is not needed anymore, if it is out of date or has served its use, it will be shredded or deleted from the computer.

The Council is aware that people have the right to access any personal 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 personal information that is being held about them
- There must be explanation for why it has been stored
- There must be a list of who has seen it
- It must be sent within 40 days

A fee to cover photocopying and postage charges will be charged to the person requesting the personal information. This fee shall be in line with current legislation.

Disclosure of personal information

If a Councillor needs to access personal information to help carry out their duties, this is acceptable. They are only able to access as much personal information as is necessary and it should only be used for that specific purpose.

If, for example, someone has made a complaint about over hanging bushes in a garden, a Councillor may access an address and telephone number of the person who has made the complaint so they can help with the enquiry. However, before they access any sensitive personal information about a person, they would need consent to do this from the Parish Clerk.

Data should never be used for political reasons.

Confidentiality

Councillors and staff must be aware that when complaints or queries are made, they must remain confidential unless the subject gives permission otherwise. When handling personal data, this must also remain confidential.