



INFORMATION AND DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Re-Adopted: 5th May 2026

Review Date: May 2027

1. Introduction

Woodham Ferrers & Bicknacre Parish Council processes a wide range of information in order to carry out its duties, functions and services.

This policy sets out how the Council manages and protects personal data and other information in accordance with the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**.

The Council is committed to ensuring that all personal data is handled lawfully, fairly, transparently and securely.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Councillors
- Employees and volunteers
- Contractors and service providers acting on behalf of the Council
- All personal data held in any format (electronic, paper, audio, visual)

3. Data Protection Principles

The Council will ensure that personal data is:

- Processed lawfully, fairly and transparently
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary
- Accurate and kept up to date
- Retained only as long as necessary
- Processed securely, with appropriate technical and organisational measures

4. Types of Information

The Council may process:

- Personal data (e.g. names, contact details)
- Special category data (e.g. health, safeguarding information)
- Confidential information (e.g. commercially sensitive data)
- Public information (e.g. minutes, agendas, reports)

5. Lawful Basis for Processing

The Council will process personal data using one or more of the following lawful bases:

- **Public task (Article 6(1)(e))** – for the performance of the Council's functions
- **Legal obligation (Article 6(1)(c))** – to comply with statutory requirements
- **Contract (Article 6(1)(b))** – where processing is necessary for a contract
- **Consent (Article 6(1)(a))** – where appropriate and explicitly obtained

Where special category data is processed, this will be in accordance with Article 9 UK GDPR.

The Council will not rely on consent where another lawful basis is more appropriate.

6. Responsibilities

The Council, as a corporate body, is the **data controller**.

The Council has determined that it is not required to appoint a formal Data Protection Officer. The **Parish Clerk acts as the Council's Data Protection lead** and is responsible for:

- Day-to-day data protection compliance
- Maintaining policies and procedures
- Managing data breaches
- Responding to subject access requests
- Providing advice to Councillors and staff

All Councillors and staff are responsible for:

- Handling personal data appropriately
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Following this policy and related procedures

7. Data Security

The Council will take appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect personal data, including:

- Secure storage of paper and electronic records
- Use of password protection and access controls
- Regular updating of software and security systems
- Limiting access to those who need it
- Secure disposal of data when no longer required

These measures will be implemented in accordance with the Council's **IT and Communications Policy**.

8. Data Sharing

Personal data will only be shared where necessary and lawful, including with:

- Other local authorities and public bodies
- Contractors and service providers
- Community organisations and partners
- Law enforcement or regulatory bodies

All third parties must process data securely and in accordance with the law.

9. Data Retention

Personal data will only be retained for as long as necessary.

Retention periods are set out in the Council's **Document Retention Policy**, and all data will be securely deleted when no longer required.

10. Data Breaches

A personal data breach is any incident that results in the loss, destruction, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data.

All data breaches must be reported immediately to the Parish Clerk.

The Council will:

- Assess the nature and risk of the breach
- Notify the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) within 72 hours where required
- Inform affected individuals where there is a high risk to their rights and freedoms
- Record all breaches and actions taken

11. Individual Rights

Individuals have the following rights under UK GDPR:

- Right of access
- Right to rectification
- Right to erasure
- Right to restrict processing
- Right to object
- Right to data portability (where applicable)

Requests will be responded to within one month.

12. Information Requests

The Council will comply with:

- UK GDPR (Subject Access Requests)
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004

Requests will be handled in accordance with statutory timescales.

13. Transparency and Publication

The Council will make information available in accordance with its:

- Publication Scheme
- Transparency Code obligations
- Standing Orders and relevant legislation

The Council supports openness and accountability while protecting personal data.

14. International Transfers

Personal data will not normally be transferred outside the UK.

Where such transfers are necessary, appropriate safeguards will be in place in accordance with UK GDPR.

15. Training and Awareness

The Council will ensure that Councillors and staff are aware of their responsibilities under data protection legislation and receive appropriate guidance where necessary.

16. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as required to reflect changes in legislation or Council practices.