Ashby Herringfleet & Somerleyton Parish Council

SECURITY OF INFORMATION & DATA POLICY

Introduction

It is important for Councillors and members of the public to receive accurate and current information. It is also important that information and data that falls within the scope of the Data Protection Act (1998) and the General data Protection Regulation is correctly and securely maintained and accords to the Principles of the Act. This policy only relates to the secure control of data and information, other policies focus on a broader understanding and provision of information and data.

Policy

The recording, collecting, management and maintenance of current and accurate Information and Data is the responsibility of the Parish Clerk in order that the Parish Council can effectively conduct its business and represent the interests of the Parish. This extends to paper based or 'physical' information as well as electronic information and data.

This responsibility extends to compliance with the Data Protection Act and with the Freedom of Information Act.

In order that the Parish Council can represent the interests of the Parish and work with other councils (such as East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council and adjoining Parish Councils) it needs to ensure the public have clear access to its proceedings and the facility to represent their views. The Parish Clerk is then responsible for the advertising of meetings both to the public and to Councillors and the posting of reports, draft and approved minutes on the Parish Council web site as well as public notice boards. The Parish Clerk also maintains accurate and current data on Councillors.

Ashby Herringfleet & Somerleyton Parish Council will ensure that its information and data is secure both physically and electronically within the bounds of financial constraints and expertise readily available to it.

Procedures

1 DELEGATION OF MINUTE TAKING

In the event of the Parish Clerk not being able to attend a meeting the Chair will delegate the responsibility to another responsible person but those minutes and reports must be forwarded to the Parish Clerk as soon as possible after the meeting and no more than 2 weeks after the meeting so that minutes and reports can be published no later than 3 weeks after the meeting.

This is to ensure that accurate records are maintained of meetings.

2 MEDIA

To ensure that proceedings can reach the widest possible number of people in the Parish whether they are working within the Parish or not.

- The minutes and notices shall be kept in both paper and electronic versions.
- Councillors and others who table reports at meetings will be encouraged to provide both electronic as well as paper based copies.

3 FORMAT

To ensure that proceedings can reach the widest possible number of people in the Parish and be largely secure from tampering and therefore misrepresentation:-

- Documents for web site downloads will be largely in PDF format or other locked formats to help in the accurate and accessible display of information.
- Electronic versions must be in a format compatible with the 'doc,' format.

4 SECURITY AND FIRE PROTECTION

To ensure the security of information and data: -

- Physical Information will be kept safely locked.
- Electronic Information and data will be kept on computers with password protection.
- Data will also be backed up at the end of each working day and stored either on remote drives or on CD that are physically separate from the computer and if fire protection is provided shall be kept in that place.
- All official email correspondence conducted by the Parish Council and Parish Councillors will use dedicated password protected email accounts.

5 SECURITY FROM VIRUS INFECTION

To ensure the security of information and data: -

- Electronic data and the computer will be kept secure through a regularly updated virus protection system.

6 SECURITY OF PHYSICAL INFORMATION

To ensure the security of information and data: -

- Physical Information will be regularly archived with the County Record Office.

7 TRAINING OF STAFF

- If a Parish Clerk has no working knowledge of using computers especially in regard to normal working practice of keeping data secure through backup and password as well as saving in alternative formats the Parish Council will provide training at the expense of the Parish Council. Computer literacy would be a preferred condition of employment.
- Guidelines will also be issued to Parish Clerks on basic security measures.

8 ACCURACY OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION

- Information uploaded to a web master must be checked within 24 hours on the web site to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information.

9 ACCURACY OF MINUTES & REPORTS

- The Parish Clerk shall forward draft minutes or reports to the Chair for checking and to other Councillors within two weeks of a public meeting to ensure accuracy of information and actions.

10 COLLECTING OF INFORMATION

- All personal information will be achieved fairly so that the data subject is clearly aware of the purposes of such information. This will be achieved by statements on any request for information and model release forms for images.
- Before any personal data is collected or processed the Parish Council will conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment to ensure that the data collection is appropriate and necessary. The Data Information Officer is responsible for overseeing Privacy Impact Assessments.

11 HOLDING OF INFORMATION

- Information posted on any Ashby Herringfleet & Somerleyton Parish Council website is held separately from data and information held for the purposes of conducting the day-to-day business of the Council.
- Access to any Ashby Herringfleet & Somerleyton Parish Web site is password protected.
- Only the Clerk and the 'Webmaster' have access to the web site for uploading information and maintaining the system and design of the web site.
- The webmaster does not have access to the machines holding the day-to-day data of the Council.
- The Parish Clerk is responsible for recovery, transmission or despatch of public documents held by the Parish Council that maybe requested under the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

This policy was adopted by Ashby Herringfleet & Somerleyton Parish Council on 10 May 2018.
Reviewed September 2024
Next review May 2027