

Long Preston Parish Council

Data Protection Policy

Adopted June 2012

Long Preston Parish Council recognises its responsibility to be open with people when taking personal data 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 Long Preston Parish Council, this will only be used for the purpose it has been given and will not be disclosed to anyone else without the person's permission.

Long Preston Parish Council may hold personal information about individuals such as their addresses and phone numbers. These will be securely kept at the Parish Office and are not available for public access. All data stored on Parish Office Computers (i.e. the Clerk's own computer made available for use to the Parish Council) are password protected. Once data is not needed any more, is out of date or has served its use and falls outside the minimum retention time of the Council's document retention policy, it will be shredded or securely deleted from the computer.

The Parish Council is aware that people have the right to access any 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 an 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 will be agreed by the Parish Council and amended in line with inflation from time to time.

Disclosure of information

If an elected member of the Council, for example a Councillor, needs to access information to help carry out their duties, this is acceptable. They are only able to access as much information as necessary and it should only ever be used for that specific purpose. If, for instance, someone has made a complaint about overhanging 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 information about a person, they would need consent to do from the Parish Clerk. Data should never be used for any political reasons unless the data subjects have consented.

Confidentiality

Long Preston Parish Council 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.

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 Data Protection Act applies to anyone holding personal information about people, electronically or on paper. As a local authority, we have a number of procedures in place to ensure that it complies with the Data Protection Act 1998 when holding personal information.

The Parish Council has also notified the Information Commissioner that it holds personal data about individuals. When dealing with personal data, staff and Councillors must ensure that the seven principles contained in the Data Protection Act 1998 are complied with.

These are:

- **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**
- **Data is relevant for what it is needed for:** data should be monitored so that if too much or too little is not kept: only data that is needed should be kept.
- **Data is accurate and kept up to date:** incorrect data should be corrected.
- **Data is not kept longer than it is needed:** data no longer needed will be shredded or securely disposed of.
- **Data is processed in accordance with the rights of individuals:** individuals must be informed, upon request, or all the personal information held about them.
- **Data is kept securely:** only staff and Councillors can access the data (Councillors only when a specific, demonstrable, need for the data arises). It cannot be accessed by members of the public.

Reviewed July 2012