

Elsing Parish Council Data Protection Policy – adopted May 2021

Parish Councillors and Clerks should use this policy as guidance to help them protect and store the data they hold as a function of their role on Elsing Parish Council.

The seven principles of data protection are:

- Lawfulness, fairness and transparency
- Purpose limitation
- Data minimisation
- Accuracy
- Storage limitation
- Integrity and confidentiality
- Accountability

We are a small parish council and hold very little data. The data we do hold is almost exclusively limited to the names and contact details of parishioners who get in touch with the council about matters we are dealing with, and the same details of the people who rent allotments from the parish.

Directions for Parish Councillors with responsibility for the allotments:

- Electronically-held data should be password-protected
- Data held on paper should be kept in a safe place
- At the end of a tenancy, all personal data should be deleted
- Data held on paper should be burnt or shredded when it needs to be destroyed
- The names and other personal details of the allotment holders must only be shared with other councillors with responsibility for the allotments, and then only when this is necessary for reasons relating to the tenancy
- If the names, addresses or contact details of allotment holders are inadvertently shared, the subject of the data breach should be informed immediately, as should the chair of the council and the Clerk

Meetings and minutes: if a member of the public speaks at a meeting, their name should only be added to the minutes if their permission has been obtained. If they have not been asked, or have refused, they should be referred to as “a resident” or “a parishioner” or “a member of the public” or some other non-specific term.

Using email: it is permissible to share the email addresses of other elected councillors from this parish, but it is good practice not to do this with the email addresses of councillors from other parishes.

Councillors and Clerks should not forward emails received from members of the public without their permission. This does not apply to emails from members of district or county councils, or emails from businesses or voluntary organisations.

Councillors and Clerks should use the “bcc” option when sending or forwarding emails to more than one member of the public, or to a member of the public and a parish councillor – this prevents the email address of the member of the public being seen by other recipients of the message.

If a councillor receives an email from another councillor, sent only to them, it is not permissible to copy other councillors, or the Clerk, into the reply.

Children: if children are mentioned in matters that come before the council, councillors will not share or publish online the names and details of these children, nor any photographs of them. If children are mentioned in council meetings, the names of these children shall not be recorded in the minutes of that meeting.

Points to remember:

- Do not store data about parishioners unless there is a reason to do so
- Delete that data as soon as the matter is dealt with
- Review the data you hold regularly

Another important document:

Councillors should also refer to the Elsing Parish Council Data Protection Audit, which is a list of the type of information that the council may hold.