Data Protection Policy

Tongham Parish Council is committed to compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 which came into force on 25th May 2018.

The Council will therefore follow procedures which ensure that all employees, elected members, contractors and any other partners who have access to any personal data held by, or on behalf of, the Council are aware of and comply with their duties and responsibilities under the Act and any subsequent amendments.

The Act sets out high standards for the handling of personal information, either on paper or electronically, and for protection of the individual's right to privacy. It also regulates how information can be collected, stored and used.

Tongham Parish Council, in the course of its duties, has to collect and use information, both to carry out these duties and to comply with central Government requirements. The following procedures are in place to ensure that:

1. Data is processed fairly and lawfully.

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

2. Data is processed for specified and lawful purposes only.

Only data which is needed and relevant will be kept, and will be monitored to avoid excessive retention.

3. Data must be accurate and up to date.

Where personal data is not accurate, or has changed, it must be corrected or updated.

4. Data must not be kept for longer than necessary.

Data will not be kept longer than needed for its original purpose or anticipated needs.

5. Data must be processed in accordance with the rights of Data subjects under the Act.

This means that individuals must be informed, upon request, of all the personal information held about them.

6. Data is kept securely.

This means that only staff and Councillors, where necessary, can access the data. Data will be stored securely so it cannot be accessed by members of the public.

7. Storing and accessing data.

Data, where held electronically, must be password protected, for example laptops must not be left running when the user is absent, but always locked when not in use. All data held in paper form must be stored in a fire proof cabinet which must be locked when the office is not in use.

8. Data will not be transferred to a country outside the UK.

9. Handling of personal/sensitive data.

Sensitive data is defined as personal data consisting of information about:

Racial or ethnic origin
Political opinion
Religious or other belief
Trade Union membership
Physical or Mental health and condition
Sexual life or orientation
Criminal proceedings or convictions

10. Personal Data and Freedom of Information

Tongham Parish Council is aware that people have the right to know what personal information is held about them. If a person requests to see any data held about them:

They must be sent all information which is held about them
There must be an explanation of why it was stored
There must be a list of who has seen the information
It must be sent to them within 40 days.

There will be a fee to provide this information, currently £10.00.

Exceptions – There are circumstances in which a data controller is not obliged to supply certain information to the requester, for example:

Crime prevention and detection
Confidential references given BY the Council – not TO the Council
Information covered by legal professional privilege

11. 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 instance, someone has made a complaint about overhanging bushes in a garden, a Councillor can access an address and telephone number of the person who has made the complaint so they can help with the enquiry. They can only do this providing they represent the area the subject lives in.

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 unless the data subjects have consented.

Tongham Parish Council – 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.

Records Held	**Storage**
Parish Councillors contact details	Dropbox – Cloud based storage
Allotment holders contact details	Dropbox – Cloud based storage
Email addresses of meeting attendees	Mailer Lite – Cloud based mailing programme

Adopted: October 20th 2025

Review: October 2026