

Rushden and Wallington Parish Council

IT and Data Protection Policy 2026

IT POLICY - PRINCIPLES & PURPOSE

This Policy sets out the Parish Council's commitment to information security within the Parish Council and provides clear direction on responsibilities and procedures.

Rushden and Wallington Parish Council is a Data Controller, as defined under the Data Protection Act 1998, and has registered as such with the Information Commissioner's Office under registration reference number ZA461100.

The Responsible Officer is deemed to be the Data Protection Officer and is responsible for compliance with GDPR.

PROTOCOLS

System Security Processes and Procedures

The Council will provide and maintain security processes and procedures for all key information systems. The procedures will uphold the principles of confidentiality, integrity, availability and suitability and be assessed for their impact upon other systems and services.

The security procedures will provide preventative measures to reduce the risks to the system, the information held within the system and the service it supports.

A Continuity plan will be developed and maintained for each system to ensure the principles are sustained and enable the continuation of services following failure or damage to systems or facilities.

The Clerk will be responsible for the implementation and promotion of the procedures.

Physical Security

Adequate and practical access controls will be provided in all areas in which personal and business data is stored or used.

All documents disclosing identifiable information will be transported in sealed containers e.g. envelopes. Staff will be responsible for minimising the risk of theft or vandalism of the data and equipment through common-sense precautions. In particular high value equipment such as, laptop computers, should not be left unattended or unsecured and paper records should not be left in public view. The physical environment in which data and equipment is stored will be suitable and fit for purpose to ensure the safety of the data and equipment.

Logical Security

All computerised information and systems must be regularly backed up to a secure environment. Regular back-ups to an external hard drive are carried out.

All computerised information systems will be password controlled and all passwords will be treated with the strictest confidence and users will not divulge their password to any unauthorised person. All sensitive data will be password protected.

Copyright and licences

The Clerk is responsible for ensuring all computer software packages and non-electronic media for use within an information environment are used in accordance with the terms and conditions of use as set out in the licence agreement.

Disposal and movement of equipment and media

Any media or IT equipment disposed of by the Council will not contain any data or codes that could allow an individual to be identified from it. The disposal of equipment will be made under a controlled and documented environment satisfying the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. The disposal of media such as disks and memory sticks must ensure that data cannot be recovered. Disposal of such media through the “everyday” waste collection is not permitted. The Council will implement processes to ensure appropriate disposal of such media.

Personal Computers and Parish Council email addresses

Computer users have responsibility for the security of the equipment in their care and shall not commit an act to compromise the data or Information Security Policy.

Computer users will be made aware of their responsibilities through this policy.

All Councillors will be issued with a personal.Gov.uk email address for use on Council business. Councillors will not share their Council email security login details with anyone and should make every effort to ensure that access to their Parish Council email is secure. Any breach of this security should be communicated to the Clerk immediately.

Staff and Councillors’ Responsibilities

The Council will make every reasonable effort to ensure that staff and councillors are aware of their responsibilities for the security of information. However, each councillor or member of staff is responsible for ensuring that Security Policy is adhered to and report any breaches of security.

Parish Councillors must consider any information sent via digital means carefully before sending it and ensure that it does not breach any privacy or data protection laws. If they are in any doubt then they should contact the Clerk before sending it.

Incident Reporting

Incidents affecting security must be reported to the Clerk as quickly as possible.

DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Parish Council complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Act 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DAP) 2018.

The Data Protection Officer is required to keep a list of all data held by the Parish Council and how this data is held and the security of this data.

This data must be securely held and digital backups done regularly and securely stored.

Data must only be shared for Parish Council business and must be securely communicated either via Parish Council email addresses or digital hardware such as memory sticks. This data must be deleted or destroyed once its purpose has been fulfilled by all users except for the Data Protection Officer.

These policies will be reviewed on an annual basis with Councillors being reminded about their responsibilities at this review. At this review Councillors will be given the opportunity to request further information or training should they deem it necessary.

A great deal of information held by the Council can be found at the Parish Council website at :

<https://rushdenwallington-pc.gov.uk/>

The Clerk should ensure that the website is compliant with the latest accessibility requirements.

Information we collect

When you give your personal information by writing or emailing the Parish Council, by phoning the Parish Council Clerk or a Parish Councillor, you are giving us information that we collect.

That information may include:

- name
- physical address
- email address
- phone number

Other details may include:

- gender
- occupation
- other demographic information

By giving us this information, you consent to your information being collected by us.

All personal information that we collect, we will only use to deliver the service you ask for.

Why do we collect information?

- To keep an accurate, up-to-date record of Parish Council correspondence and activities.
- To respond to any feedback, if you have asked us to.
- To answer any questions you have asked us.
- To send you updates about local administrative matters, if you have asked us to.

Changes to our privacy policy

We may change our privacy policy from time to time, but we will always display the updated version on the Parish Council website.

Who does this policy apply to?

The policy covers employees of the Parish Council, whether they are paid employees or volunteers. It also covers Parish Councillors on the occasions when they need to hold or process personal data about individuals during the course of Parish Council business.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 it is the duty of every parish authority, including Parish Councils, to adopt and maintain a publication scheme.

The Council has considered and adopted the New Model Publication Scheme (See Appendix A) prepared by the Information Commissioners Office and the detailed information that is relevant to the Council.

Any request for information must be made in writing to:

The Parish Council Clerk
Rushden and Wallington Parish Council
c/o Derby Arms Cottage
21 The Street
Wallington
Baldock
SG7 6SW

Complaints

Complaints about the Council's response to requests for information should also be directed to the Clerk at the above address.

The opportunity to complain to the Council does not place any limitation on the right of any individual to refer a complaint to the Information Commissioner at the following address:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 524 510
data@dataprotection.gov.uk
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Rushden and Wallington Parish Council Approved:

Review Date: May 2026

Data information

<u>Data held</u>	<u>Where is it held</u>	<u>How is it held</u>	<u>For how long is it held</u>
Electoral Roll	Clerk's Computer	Digitally – password protected	Indefinitely
Parish Councillors personal details	Clerks' files Clerk's computer	Paper Digitally – password protected	Until resignation
Commercial Contacts eg. Banks, Insurers etc.	Clerks' files Clerk's computer	Paper Digitally – password protected	Until commercial relationship ends.
District and County Council details	Clerks' files Clerk's computer	Paper Digitally – password protected	Indefinitely

APPENDIX A

New Model Publication Scheme prepared by the Information Commissioners Office

Freedom of Information Act

This model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This publication scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The scheme commits an authority:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme. To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available. To make this publication scheme available to the public.
- To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act section 19.
- The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The term 'relevant copyright work' is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

Classes of information

Who we are and what we do.

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

What we spend and how we spend it.

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

What our priorities are and how we are doing.

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

How we make decisions.

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists and registers.

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

The services we offer.

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- Photocopying
- Postage and packaging
- The costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

Charges may also be made for making datasets (or parts of datasets) that are relevant copyright works available for re-use. These charges will be in accordance with the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, where they apply, or with regulations made under section 11B of the Freedom of Information Act, or with other statutory powers of the public authority.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Written requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.