

Annex A to EDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL Smaller Authorities IT Policy

Data Retention and Disposal Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Edington Parish Council manages, retains, and disposes of its records systematically, efficiently, and in full compliance with all relevant statutory and regulatory obligations. As a public body, the Council recognizes that the proper management of its data is essential to maintaining public trust, supporting administrative transparency, and protecting individual privacy rights.

This policy establishes clear controls over how long specific categories of information must be kept, balancing the legal necessity to preserve historical, financial, and administrative records with the explicit legal requirement to delete personal information once its purpose has been served.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies universally to all information created, received, or maintained by Edington Parish Council in the course of its official business. It covers all data formats, including paper documents, digital records, emails, website content, and mobile communication logs. This policy is strictly binding on all Parish Councillors, the Clerk, any employed staff, volunteers, and any contractors acting on behalf of the Council.

1.3 Legal Framework

This policy is constructed to adhere to standard local government best practices and conforms to the following primary legislation:

- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (specifically the principle of storage limitation)
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Local Government Act 1972 (Section 228 regarding public access to minutes)
- The Limitation Act 1980 (governing legal time limits for claims)
- The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Legal Topic Note 40 (LTN 40)

2. Responsibilities

- **The Council:** Overall accountability for data compliance.
- **The Clerk / Proper Officer:** Day-to-day management, storage, and secure destruction of records.

- **Individual Members:** Responsibility to manage council data on their personal or official devices.

3. Retention Principles

- **Data Minimisation:** Do not hold personal data longer than necessary.
- **Accuracy:** Maintain up-to-date records and delete duplicates.
- **Secure Storage:** Protect digital data with passwords and physical data under lock and key.

4. Retention Schedule

Record Type	Retention Period	Reason / Statutory Requirement
Members' Declarations of Acceptance of Office	Term of Office + archived permanently	Statutory requirement; historical/public record
Register of Members' Interests Forms	18 months post-member leaving office	Good practice per NALC guidelines; removes expired personal data
Signed Council & Committee Minutes	Indefinite / Permanent	Statutory public record; to be archived
Draft Minutes	Until formal approval/signing	No longer needed once confirmed
Agendas and Public Reports	6 years	Audit cycle and legal challenge window
Routine Emails & Correspondence	Retain only as long as useful	UK GDPR; purge when no longer of operational value
Complaint Files	5 years after case closed	Management and risk mitigation
Unsuccessful Job Applications	6 months	Defence against discrimination claims under the Equality Act 2010

5. Disposal and Destruction

- **Paper Records:** Confidential papers must be shredded or disposed of via a secure waste contractor.

- **Electronic Records:** Hard drives, emails, and cloud storage must be permanently deleted (purged from bins).
- **Leaving Office:** Mandatory protocol for departing councillors to delete all council emails and return/shred papers.

6. Policy Review

- **Frequency:** State that the policy is reviewed annually at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.
- **Next Review Date:** 31/03/2027