



# **EDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL SMALLER AUTHORITIES IT POLICY**

## **Policy Update Timeline**

- **Version:** 1.0
- **Adopted:** 10 August 2026
- **Adopted by:** Full Council
- **Published:** 12 August 2026
- **Review Due:** Feb/March 2027

## **1. Introduction**

Edington Parish Council henceforth known as “The Authority” recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations, and communications.

This policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of IT resources and email by council members, employees, volunteers, and contractors.

Mr Steve Forward acts as the authority’s IT manager. The Clerk acts as the IT Proper Officer.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all individuals who use IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts. The authority does not provide digital devices but acknowledges that the Clerk and members may be using their own personal devices. Everyone must adhere to this policy to maintain digital security.

## **3. Training and awareness**

The Authority will source regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. You should engage in regular training on email security and best practices, including but not limited to:

- the [Parish Council Domain Helper Service’s virtual cybersecurity workshops for councils](#).
- The National Cyber Security Centre [Cyber Security training for small organisations](#) and free [Cyber Action Toolkit](#).

## **4. Acceptable use of council provided IT resources and email**

When using IT resources for the council’s purposes, you must adhere to ethical standards, and respect copyright and intellectual property rights.

Where possible, authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by the Authority for work-related tasks.

You must not install unauthorised software without checking with the clerk, and you must not use equipment or email to access or forward inappropriate or offensive content.

## **5. What you must do if you use your own personal devices**

The Authority will endeavour to provide individuals with devices to use for council business. If you are using your own device, you must make sure you are:

- using strong passwords for all your accounts (preferably using a password manager).
- downloading the latest operating system security updates.
- using anti-virus software.

## **6. Network and internet usage**

You must be careful about which Wi-Fi networks you join. Public Wi-Fi networks in coffee shops or on trains can be targeted by hackers. Always make sure you are using a trusted internet connection, which is password protected when carrying out official business.

## **7. Password and account security**

You are responsible for maintaining the security of your accounts and passwords. Use the National Cyber Security Centre's [advice for choosing a strong password](#). For business continuity, login details and passwords of official accounts need to be stored securely so they can be accessed by trusted individuals in an emergency; the Clerk and Mr Steve Forward retain this list. If you change a password of an official account, then you must inform Mr Steve Forward as soon as practical so that the stored details can be updated. Never share password details with anyone other than the Clerk or Mr Steve Forward.

## **8. Email communication**

The Authority will endeavour to provide you with an official email account for organisation-related communication only. If you are currently using a personal email account, you should aim to move over to an official email account as soon as practically possible. You must make sure that emails are professional and respectful in tone. You must always check you are sending any confidential or sensitive information to the correct recipients.

Always be cautious when downloading attachments and opening links to avoid phishing and malware. Before opening any attachments or clicking on links, verify the source by looking at the email it has come from carefully. Do not download and open anything if you are unsure who has sent it.

## **9. Email access**

The Authority reserves the right to check email communications to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant laws. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR. Clerks may need to access emails so that they respond to FOI or subject-access requests. If you are using a personal email account for council business, this is still subject to data protections laws and FOI requests.

## **10. Data management, data retention and security**

All sensitive and confidential data should be stored and transmitted securely. You must regularly backup any important data to prevent data loss and follow your organisation's data retention policies (see Annex A).

You should retain and archive emails in compliance with your data retention policies. Regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organised inbox.

### **11. Reporting security incidents**

All staff and councillors are responsible for the safety and security of IT and email systems. All suspected security breaches, including email breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to Mr Steve Forward.

### **12. Compliance and consequences**

Breach of this IT and Email Policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges.

### **13. Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed annually at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Updates may be made to address emerging technology trends and security measures.

### **14. Contacts**

For IT-related enquiries or assistance, users can contact Mr Steve Forward.

## **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 the 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 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.

It is recognised that up to date, reliable and accurate information is a vital to support the work that the Council do and the services that it provides to its residents. This policy will help us to ensure:

- the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information that is necessary for the Council to operate and provide services to the public;
- we comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, UK-GDPR and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004;
- efficiency in retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily;
- archival records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

##### **1.2 Scope**

This policy applies universally to all information created, received, or maintained by the 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 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:

- 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).<sup>1</sup>

## 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:** Management of 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 with lock & key.

## 4. Retention Schedule

A detailed list of retention requirements is at Appendix. The following summary provides an overview of key areas:

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

<sup>1</sup> NALC Legal Topic Note 40 (LTN 40) is the definitive guide for local councils on document management and retention. It outlines statutory retention periods for various council records to ensure compliance with the [Limitation Act 1980](#) and to satisfy audit and legal requirements

## 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 (and purged from electronic bins).
- **Leaving Office:** Mandatory protocol for departing councillors is to delete all council emails and files held on personal devices (including archives and backups), and return/shred papers.

## **Appendix to Annex A to EDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL Smaller Authorities IT Policy**

### **Recommended Document Retention Timescales**

The retention period should be the number of complete years specified below plus the current financial period (e.g. Cash books for 6 complete years plus the current incomplete financial year). This list is not exhaustive, and some items do not yet apply to the Council but are included for future reference if required. If you are unsure about any document, contact the Clerk for clarification.

### **Finance**

| <b>Document</b>                                                                | <b>Retention Period</b>  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Financial Published Final Accounts                                             | Indefinitely             |
| Signed Audited Accounts                                                        | Indefinitely             |
| Final Account working papers                                                   | 5 years                  |
| Records of all accounting transactions held by the Financial Management System | At least 5 years         |
| Cash Books (records of monies paid out and received)                           | 6 years                  |
| Purchase Orders                                                                | 6 years                  |
| Cheque Payment Listings (Invoices received)                                    | 6 years                  |
| Payment Vouchers Capital and Revenue (copy invoices)                           | 6 years                  |
| BACS listings                                                                  | 6 years                  |
| Goods received notes, advice notes and delivery notes                          | 3 years                  |
| Copy receipts                                                                  | 6 years                  |
| Petty cash vouchers and reimbursement claims                                   | 6 years                  |
| Debtors and rechargeable works records                                         | 6 years                  |
| Expenses and travel allowance claims                                           | 6 years                  |
| Asset Register for statutory accounting purposes                               | 10 years                 |
| Journal Sheets                                                                 | 5 years                  |
| Ledger / Trial Balance                                                         | 10 years                 |
| Year-end ledger tabulations – ledger details and cost updates                  | 5 years                  |
| Published Budget Books                                                         | Indefinitely Medium Term |
| Financial Plan                                                                 | Indefinitely             |
| Budget Estimates – Detailed Working Papers and summaries                       | 3 years                  |



| <b>Document</b>                                                                                | <b>Retention Period</b>              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Bank Statement (Disk Space) and Instructions to banks                                          | 6 years                              |
| Banking Records including Giro cheques, bills of exchange and other negotiable instruments     | 6 years                              |
| Prime evidence that money has been banked                                                      | 6 years                              |
| Refer to Drawer (RD) cheques                                                                   | 2 years                              |
| Cancelled Expenditure cheques                                                                  | 2 years                              |
| Bank Reconciliation                                                                            | 3 years                              |
| Cheques presented / drawn on the Council bank accounts                                         | 3 years                              |
| Prime records that money has been correctly recorded in the Councils financial systems         | 3 years                              |
| Grant/Funding Applications & Claims                                                            | 5 years                              |
| Precept Forms                                                                                  | Indefinitely                         |
| Internal Audit Plans/ Reports                                                                  | 3 years                              |
| Fees and Charges Schedules                                                                     | 5 years                              |
| Time sheets and overtime claims                                                                | 6 years                              |
| Payroll and tax information relating to employees                                              | 6 years                              |
| Payroll costing analysis                                                                       | 2 years                              |
| Records of payment made to employees for salaries / wages (including intermediate payslips)    | 6 years                              |
| Statutory end of year returns to Inland Revenue and Pensions Section                           | Indefinitely                         |
| Loans and Investment Records; temporary loan receipts and loan tabulations                     | 6 years (after redemption of loan)   |
| VAT, Income Tax and National Insurance Records                                                 | 6 years                              |
| Current and expired insurance contracts and policies indefinitely Insurance records and claims | 6 years                              |
| Capital and contracts register                                                                 | Indefinitely                         |
| Final accounts of contracts executed under hand                                                | 6 years from completion of contract  |
| Final accounts of contracts executed under seal                                                | 12 years from completion of contract |
| All Other reconciliations                                                                      | 3 years                              |

## Personnel

| Document                                                                                                               | Retention Period                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unsuccessful application forms                                                                                         | 6 months                                                       |
| Unsuccessful reference requests                                                                                        | 1 year                                                         |
| Successful applications forms and CVs                                                                                  | For duration of employment + 5 years                           |
| References received                                                                                                    | For duration of employment + 5 years                           |
| Statutory sick records, pay, calculations, certificates etc.                                                           | For duration of employment + 5 years                           |
| Annual leave records                                                                                                   | For duration of employment + 5 years                           |
| Unpaid leave/special leave                                                                                             | For duration of employment + 5 years                           |
| Annual appraisal/assessment records                                                                                    | Current year and previous 2 years                              |
| Time Control Records                                                                                                   | 2 years                                                        |
| Criminal Records Bureau Checks                                                                                         | 6 months                                                       |
| Personnel files and training records                                                                                   | 5 years after employment ceases                                |
| Disciplinary or grievance investigations – proved<br>Verbal<br>Written<br>Final warning<br>Anything involving children | 6 months<br>1 year<br>18 months<br>permanently                 |
| Disciplinary or grievance investigations - unproven                                                                    | Destroy immediately after investigation or appeal              |
| Statutory Maternity/Paternity records, calculations, certificates etc                                                  | 3 years after the tax year in which the maternity period ended |
| Wages/salary records, overtime, bonuses, expenses etc                                                                  | 6 years                                                        |

## Corporate

| Document                                                                                                                                         | Retention Period                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Minutes and reports of Committee meetings                                                                                                        | Indefinitely                                        |
| Minutes and reports for Special Committee meetings                                                                                               | Indefinitely                                        |
| Minutes and reports of sub-committees                                                                                                            | Indefinitely                                        |
| Notes and reports of working groups                                                                                                              | Indefinitely                                        |
| Policies and procedures                                                                                                                          | Until updated or reviewed                           |
| Asset Management records                                                                                                                         | Indefinitely                                        |
| Asset management reports                                                                                                                         | Indefinitely                                        |
| Internal audit records                                                                                                                           | 3 years                                             |
| Internal audit fraud investigation                                                                                                               | 7 years from date of final outcome of investigation |
| Risk register                                                                                                                                    | Indefinitely                                        |
| Risk management reports                                                                                                                          | Indefinitely                                        |
| Performance reports                                                                                                                              | Indefinitely                                        |
| Equalities data                                                                                                                                  | Indefinitely                                        |
| Questionnaire data                                                                                                                               | Indefinitely                                        |
| Details regarding burials                                                                                                                        | Indefinitely                                        |
| Drivers' logbooks and mileage                                                                                                                    | 6 years                                             |
| Vehicle maintenance and registration records (all necessary certificates, MOT certificates, test records and vehicle registration documents etc) | 2 years after vehicle disposed of                   |
| Fuel usage records                                                                                                                               | 3 years                                             |
| Allotment application forms                                                                                                                      | Length of Tenancy + 2 years                         |
| Allotment agreements                                                                                                                             | Length of Tenancy + 2 years                         |
| Show health & safety statements                                                                                                                  | 2 Years                                             |
| Show application including caterers, displays, competition entrants                                                                              | 1 year                                              |
| Services and equipment quotations – shows                                                                                                        | 1 year                                              |
| Contacts for shows                                                                                                                               | 1 year                                              |
| Show stalls database including handcraft and horticulture entrants' details                                                                      | 1 year                                              |
| Trips tenders for coach hire                                                                                                                     | 1 year                                              |
| Trip database of applicants Coach Tours                                                                                                          | 1 year                                              |

| <b>Document</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Retention Period</b>                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Pre-tender qualification document Summary<br>list of expression of interest received Company contacts A<br>summary of any financial or technical evaluation supplied<br>with the expressions of interest Initial application | 1 year                                       |
| Successful tender documentation Life of contract                                                                                                                                                                             | 6 years                                      |
| Unsuccessful tender documentation                                                                                                                                                                                            | Until final payment is made                  |
| Deeds of land and property                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Indefinitely                                 |
| Land and property rental agreements                                                                                                                                                                                          | 6 years after expiry of the<br>agreement     |
| Property evaluation lists                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Indefinitely                                 |
| Lease agreements, variation and valuation queries                                                                                                                                                                            | 6 years after the expiry of the<br>agreement |
| Documentation referring to externally funded projects                                                                                                                                                                        | 6 years                                      |
| Booking diaries                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 3 years                                      |
| Premises License applications                                                                                                                                                                                                | Indefinitely                                 |

## Health & Safety

| <b>Document</b>                                                                                                                                            | <b>Retention Period</b>                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Health and Safety Accident books                                                                                                                           | 3 years after the date of the<br>last entry (unless an accident<br>involving chemicals or<br>asbestos is contained within |
| Medical records containing details of employee exposed<br>to asbestos or as specified by the Control of Substances<br>Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999 | 40 years from the date of the<br>last entry                                                                               |
| Medical examination certificates                                                                                                                           | 4 years from date of issue                                                                                                |
| Records relating to accidents - person over 18 years                                                                                                       | 3 years from date of accident                                                                                             |
| Records relating to accidents - person under 18 years                                                                                                      | Until 21st birthday                                                                                                       |
| Asbestos records for premises/property including survey<br>and removal records                                                                             | 40 years                                                                                                                  |
| Parks and play area inspection reports                                                                                                                     | 5 years                                                                                                                   |

| <b>Document</b>                                                                               | <b>Retention Period</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| All inspection certificates (Gas Safe, FENSA etc)                                             | 2 years                 |
| Repairs job sheets                                                                            | 2 years                 |
| Periodic machinery inspection tests (PAT, equipment calibration etc)                          | 2 years                 |
| Warranties                                                                                    | 10 years                |
| Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of general waste   | 3 years                 |
| Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of hazardous waste | 10 years                |
| Plant and equipment testing                                                                   | 2 years                 |
| Risk Assessment Forms                                                                         | 2 years                 |
| Unusual Incident Forms                                                                        | 3 years                 |
| Manual Handling Assessment Forms                                                              | 3 years                 |

## Additional Items

| <b>Document</b>                            | <b>Retention Period</b>    |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Approved Minutes                           | Indefinite                 |
| Draft Minutes/Rough notes taken at meeting | Until minutes are approved |
| CCTV                                       | 14-day image retention     |