



Information Security Policy

Policy Aim

The aim of this policy is to establish and maintain the security and confidentiality of information held by Clare Town Council.

Scope

This policy applies to all information held by staff, councillors and to any individual/organisation under contract to the Council.

Responsibilities

All members of the Council including staff and councillors have a legal responsibility to maintain the confidentiality, integrity and security of data held.

Legislation

Clare Town Council recognises its responsibility to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, which regulates the use of personal data.

In accordance with the act the Information Commissioner has been notified that the Council holds personal data about individuals and the following measures are taken to protect an individual's right to privacy:

- **Data is processed fairly and lawfully** - Personal information will only be collected from individuals if staff and councillors have been open and honest about why the information is required.
- **Data is processed for specific purposes only** - The information should only be used for the specific purposes disclosed.
- **Data is relevant to what it is needed for** - The information will be monitored to ensure that only the data needed is held and that it is not too much or too little.
- **Data is accurate and kept up to date** - Every effort will be made to ensure the information held is accurate and if not it will be corrected.
- **Data is not kept longer than it is needed** - Information will be monitored on a regular basis and disposed of in a secure manner as appropriate.
- **Data is processed in accordance with the rights of individuals** - Individuals will be informed, upon request, of all the personal information held about them.
- **Data is held securely** - Only the Town Clerk and Finance Officer can directly access the data. Councillors will be supplied with the relevant data on request. Information cannot be accessed by members of the public.

Storing and Accessing Data

Information is stored in a variety of forms which each have different requirements. These forms include:

- computer hard disk / external storage device
- website
- printed copy
- cloud storage

Council data is initially stored on laptop computers, owned by the Town Council, used by the Clerk and the Finance Officer. These council employees are responsible for the updating of non-specialist software and provision of security. The Clerk is responsible for updating all non-specialist software and security for the laptops and data. Software may be purchased for the purposes of updating or security as appropriate. Relevant Council data on these computers should be backed up onto an external storage media at least once a week; this back-up will not remain in the Clerk's office overnight,

The Policy requires an annual assessment of documents to be made. Documents which are not required to be kept by law or for audit purposes (see Appendix A) will be destroyed unless considered required on an on-going basis (the majority of such documents will be scanned and held in electronic format).

Clare Town Council recognises its responsibility to be open with people when taking personal details from them. Councillors and staff have a legal responsibility to be honest about why a particular piece of personal information is needed and to protect its confidentiality by not disclosing it to anyone else.

All **personal information** held by the Town Council will be kept in a secure location and not available for public access. All such data stored on electronic media will be password protected.

Personal data will be monitored on a regular basis and shredded or deleted once it has served its purpose, is not needed anymore or is out of date. Except in exceptional circumstances and as agreed by the Council personal data will be kept for no longer than three years.

The Town Council is aware that people have the right to access any personal information that is held about them. If a person requests to see any data that is being held about them

- They will be sent all of the personal information that is being held about them
- There will be explanation for why it has been stored
- There will be a list of who has seen it
- It will be sent within 40 days

A fee to cover photocopying and postage charges will be charged to the person requesting the personal information. This fee will be agreed by the Council and amended in line with inflation from time to time. Currently this fee must not exceed £10.

The Town Clerk and the Finance Officer are responsible for the safe storage of personal data. Information will be supplied to a Councillor to help them carry out their duties, upon request. They will only receive as much information as necessary and they will only receive information relating to the area they represent. Data will not be used for political reasons unless the data subjects have consented.

Confidentiality

Clare Town 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.

Appendix A: Retention of documents for Audit and other requirements

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Minute books	Indefinite	Archive
Scales of fee and charges	5 years	Management
Receipt and payment account(s)	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT
Bank statements, including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Quotations and tenders	12 years/indefinite	Statute of Limitations
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Statute of Limitations
VAT records	6 years	VAT
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax, VAT, Statute of Limitations
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit
Wages books	12 years	Superannuation
Insurance policies	While valid	Management
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Members allowances register	6 years	Tax, Statute of Limitations
Cemetery records	Indefinite	Archive
Councillor records	While valid	Management