



Parish Council Data Protection Complaints Procedure

Introduction

This procedure explains how Ringmer Parish Council will deal with complaints relating to the processing of personal data. It is designed to comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

This procedure applies only to complaints concerning the Council's handling of personal data. It does not replace the Council's general complaints procedure or statutory rights of appeal.

What is a Data Protection Complaint?

A data protection complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about how the Council has collected, used, stored, disclosed, retained or otherwise processed personal data.

Examples include complaints that:

- personal information has been used unlawfully;
- information has been disclosed to the wrong person;
- excessive personal information has been collected;
- personal data is inaccurate and has not been corrected;
- information has been retained longer than necessary;
- the Council has failed to respond appropriately to a data protection rights request;
- or
- appropriate security measures have not been applied.

Complaints may be made:

- by email - clerk@ringmerparishcouncil.gov.uk
- in writing - Parish Rooms, Old School Close, Ringmer, BN8 5JT
- by telephone - 01273 813242
- in person.

Complaints should be addressed to the Clerk to the Parish Council

The Council will accept complaints submitted through any reasonable communication channel.

Where necessary, the Council may request sufficient information to identify the complainant or confirm authority where someone is acting on another person's behalf.

Acknowledgement

The Council will acknowledge receipt of a data protection complaint **within 30 calendar days** of receiving it.

The acknowledgement will normally:

- confirm the complaint has been received
- explain the investigation process
- identify the officer handling the complaint
- request any additional information required
- provide an estimated timescale for a response where possible.

Investigation

The Clerk (or another appropriate officer if the Clerk is the subject of the complaint) will investigate the complaint promptly.

The investigation may include:

- reviewing relevant records
- speaking with staff or councillors
- considering applicable data protection legislation and guidance
- consulting the Council's Data Protection Officer
- taking any other reasonable enquiries necessary.

Where appropriate, steps may be taken immediately to reduce any continuing impact while the investigation is underway.

Keeping the Complainant Informed

If the investigation cannot be completed quickly, the Council will provide updates as appropriate.

The Council will respond **without undue delay** and will keep the complainant informed of significant progress.

Outcome

When the investigation is complete, the Council will provide a written outcome explaining:

- the findings
- whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld
- any action the Council has taken or intends to take
- any explanation of the relevant legal position
- the complainant's right to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if they remain dissatisfied.

Where appropriate, the Council may:

- apologise
- correct or delete inaccurate data
- restrict or cease particular processing
- improve procedures
- provide staff training
- take any other remedial action considered appropriate.

Referral to the Information Commissioner's Office

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after the Council has completed its investigation, they may complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.

The Council will provide the ICO's contact details when issuing its final response.

Recording Complaints

The Clerk will maintain a confidential register of data protection complaints including:

- date received
- complainant's name (where appropriate)
- nature of the complaint
- actions taken
- date acknowledged
- date concluded
- outcome

Complaint records will be retained in accordance with the Council's Retention Policy.

Confidentiality

Complaints will be handled confidentially, and information will only be shared with those who need it to investigate and resolve the complaint.

Personal information collected during the complaints process will itself be processed in accordance with the Council's Privacy Notice.

Review

This procedure will be reviewed periodically, or sooner if required by changes to legislation, guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office, or operational experience.

Next Review Due:	August 2030
Adopted:	11th August 2026