



DATA PROTECTION POLICY

CRANBROOK & SISSINGHURST PARISH COUNCIL SUPPORTS THE OBJECTIVES OF THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998 (THE DPA).

The Data Protection Act 1998 came into effect on the 1st March 2000. The Act regulates the use of personal data and gives effect in UK law to the European Directive on Data Protection.

The Information Commissioner is responsible for administering and enforcing the Data Protection Act. The Information Commissioner has the responsibility to see that the DPA is complied with and is a Government Department currently based in Wilmslow in Cheshire. They can give advice on data protection issues and can enforce measures against individuals or organisations that do not comply with the DPA.

The Data Protection Act is concerned with “personal data” and gives individuals certain rights. It requires those who record and use personal information to be open about their use of that information and to follow sound and proper practices.

Data must be obtained fairly and lawfully and be held only for specific and lawful purposes and not processed in any matter incompatible with those purposes. Data must be accurate and where necessary kept up to date and should not be kept for longer than necessary.

All necessary precautions should be taken to ensure that the data is safely secured and that only authorised staff should gain access to personal data and if stored electronically passwords should be set and changed at regular intervals.

There is certain data that is classified as sensitive and if data falls within these eight specified category then it is likely that the explicit consent of the individual would need to be sought. These categories are set out in the Act.

Any individual can request any information held about them. Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council’s Policy is to deal with any requests promptly and in any case within 40 days from the date of the receipt of the request. A fee for this can be requested which currently is not more than £10 and the 40 days does not commence until the fee is received.

There are a number of purposes which are exempt from certain provisions of the DPA. These are set out in the Act.

Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council has a model publication scheme which has been approved by the Information Commissioner. The Model Publication Scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities.

It is up to each individual whether staff, members or contractors to ensure that they comply at all times with the Data Protection Act and if they fail to comply then this could result in disciplinary action being taken with regard to employees, a breach in an agreement with contractors, or it may constitute a breach of the Member's Code of Conduct.