

HOLCOT PARISH COUNCIL

DATA BREACH POLICY

1. Purpose

Holcot Parish Council takes the security of personal data seriously. This policy outlines the steps to prevent, detect, and respond to personal data breaches in compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

2. Definition of a Personal Data Breach

A personal data breach is defined as:

“A breach of security leading to accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data transmitted, stored, or otherwise processed.”

Examples include:

- Access by an unauthorised third party
- Deliberate or accidental action (or inaction) by a controller or processor
- Sending personal data to an incorrect recipient
- Computing devices containing personal data being lost or stolen
- Alteration of personal data without permission
- Loss of availability of personal data

3. Responsibilities

- All councillors, staff, and volunteers are responsible for reporting any suspected personal data breach without undue delay.
- The Data Protection Officer (DPO) is responsible for assessing the breach, reporting it to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO), and maintaining a breach record.

4. Council Security Measures

Holcot Parish Council employs the following measures to protect personal data:

- Computers are password protected.
- Hard copy files are stored in locked cabinets.
- Encryption and other appropriate technical and organisational measures are applied where required.

5. Consequences of a Personal Data Breach

Depending on the circumstances, a breach may result in:

- Loss of control of personal data
- Discrimination or identity theft
- Financial loss
- Damage to reputation
- Loss of confidentiality
- Social disadvantage

6. Reporting a Personal Data Breach

6.1 Duty to Report to ICO

If a breach is likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, the breach must be reported to the ICO without undue delay, and where feasible, within 72 hours of discovery.

The DPO must be informed immediately to ensure compliance with this timeframe.

If reporting is delayed beyond 72 hours, Holcot Parish Council must document reasons for the delay when reporting to the ICO.

6.2 Reporting Requirements

When notifying the ICO, Holcot Parish Council must provide:

1. Description of the breach, including categories and approximate number of data subjects and records affected
2. Name and contact details of the DPO
3. Likely consequences of the breach
4. Measures taken or proposed to address the breach, including mitigation actions

When notifying individuals affected, Holcot Parish Council must provide items 2–4 above, unless:

- Appropriate technical measures (e.g., encryption) have rendered the data unintelligible to unauthorised persons
- Subsequent measures have reduced the high risk to rights and freedoms
- Notification would require disproportionate effort

In all cases, the ICO must be notified, even if individuals are not.

7. Data Processor Responsibilities

If a data processor (e.g., payroll provider) becomes aware of a personal data breach, it must notify Holcot Parish Council without undue delay. It is then the responsibility of the Parish Council to report the breach to the ICO.

8. Recording Data Breaches

All breaches must be recorded, whether reported to the ICO or not, in order to identify system weaknesses and improve security.

9. Accountability

Regular reviews of IT policies to maintain governance standards.

Data Breach Record Template:

Date of breach	Type of breach	Number of individuals affected	Date reported to ICO/individual	Actions to prevent breach recurring

9. Reporting a Breach

Breaches should be reported via the ICO online system:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/report-a-breach/>

Approved by Holcot Parish Council: <i>Signed Copy Held By Clerk</i>		
Signature of Chair		Date: 16th February 2026
Signature of Clerk		Date: 16th February 2026

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