



Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council Parish Council Report Book

9 March, 2026

Annual Governance and Accountability - Assertion 10

Parish Councils must demonstrate robust digital and data governance to demonstrate it complies with the requirements set out in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, Assertion 10 .

This report outlines how the Parish Council is meeting these requirements.

1. Digital Security and Email Management

- **Council-Owned Domains:** Move all official council business to a domain owned and controlled by the authority ✓
- **Official Email Accounts:** Every councillor and staff member must use a dedicated council-owned email address. ✓
- **Ban on Personal Accounts:** Use of private email services (Gmail, Hotmail, etc.) for official council business must be phased out to ensure data remains within a controlled environment. ✓

2. IT Governance and Policies

- **Formal IT Policy:** Adopt a written IT policy that mandates secure email use, software management, and acceptable use of digital systems. ✓
- **Personal Device Security (BYOD):** If personal devices are used for council work, a formal "Bring Your Own Device" policy must be in place to ensure they meet the same security standards as council devices. ✓

3. Data Protection (UK GDPR/DPA 2018)

To ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation UK and the Data Protection Act 2018, a Parish Council must maintain several key documents. These documents outline how the council handles personal data for residents, staff, and councillors.

Under the Act "data" is primarily defined as personal data: any information that relates to an identified or identifiable living individual.

- **Data Protection Policy:** The core internal document setting out the council's code of conduct for handling personal information, including staff records, payroll, and resident contact details. ✓
- **Public Privacy Notice:** Explains to the public what data is collected, why it is held, and how long it is kept. ✓
- **Data Retention and Disposal Policy:** Establishes clear guidelines and a schedule for how long different types of data are kept before being securely destroyed. ✓
- **Information Audit (Data Register):** A record of all personal data held by the council, where it is stored, who has access, and the legal basis for processing it. ✓
- **Consent Forms:** Specific forms used to obtain and record explicit permission from individuals to hold their contact information or use their data for specific purposes. ✓
- **Subject Access Request Form:** s a legal right under the [UK GDPR](#) and Data Protection Act 2018 that allows someone to request a copy of the personal data an organisation holds about them. ✓
- **ICO Registration:** Confirm and maintain active registration with the Information Commissioner's Office. ✓
- **Appointment of Data Protection Officer:** Under Section 7 of the DPA 2018, Parish Councils are exempt from this requirement. ✓
- **Freedom of Information Act – Publication Scheme:** Commits the Parish Council to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. ✓

4. Transparency and Accessibility

- **Website Accessibility:** Ensure the council website meets WCAG 2.2 AA standards. The website is regularly tested on each version release using WCAG2.2 AA compliance tools, including Lighthouse and Axe. ✓
- **Accessibility Statement:** This statement outlines our ongoing efforts to make the website accessible to everyone. It includes a commitment to ensure equal access and opportunity for all individuals, including those with disabilities. ✓

5. Transparency Code Compliance

- This is particularly important to enable local Government electors, council tax payers and ratepayers to scrutinise financial information so that they are able to exercise their rights to question and make objections to the auditor. ✓
- All items of expenditure above £100 ✓
- Copies of all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts should remain available for inspection ✓
- Statement of accounts according to the format included in the Annual Return. ✓
- Annual governance statement according to the format included in the Annual Return. ✓
- Annual internal audit report according to the format included in the Annual Return. ✓
- A list of councillor or member responsibilities. ✓
- Details of all public land and building assets. ✓
- Draft minutes from all formal meetings not later than one month after the meeting has taken place. ✓
- Meeting agendas, which are as full and informative as possible, and associated meeting papers. ✓

6. Actions for 2026

- **Training & Records:** Provide regular data protection and cyber security training for all staff and councillors, maintaining formal records of completion.
- **Prepare Social media policy**
- **Prepare New Councillor Contact Privacy Notice**