NORTHAW & CUFFLEY PARISH COUNCIL
7 Maynard Place, Cuffley, Herts, EN6 4JA
01707 875825

LOST PROPERTY POLICY

1. Scope

The following policy and procedures have been designed to manage and handle lost property. The policy applies to all visitors and staff.

1.1. Definition

Lost property means any unattended, misplaced or forgotten item which is the property of a person or persons, and which is found within the boundaries of the Council's open spaces or within its facilities by another person or persons and subsequently handed to Council staff pending the identification of the original owner or appropriate disposal.

1.2. Risk

At no point can the Council be held responsible for any items deemed to be lost property. No items should be left in the Council's facilities and any that are left are left at the owner's risk.

When visiting the Council's facilities you are advised to keep your valuables, including wallets/purses, mobile telephones and computer equipment on your person. Do not leave items in a bag or jacket unattended even for a few minutes..

2. Policy Statement

The Council's staff will endeavour to return property of high value or official hard copy documents containing personal data. If it is not possible to do this within the four week nominated time period, items will be donated to local registered charities, or if not suitable for donation, items will be destroyed. Handling of lost property is not seen as a core Council service and therefore the staff time available to handle lost property is limited.

2.1. Lost Property Procedure

Property lacking or with limited owner identification, will be disposed of in different ways according to the assessed value of the item(s).

Assessments of value or risk of personal data loss are outlined below:

- **High Value Items** will be processed using a Property Register. Details for high value items will include:
    a) Date item discovered
    b) Description of the item found
    c) Location where the property was found, if known

  When searching for identifying information e.g. in a purse, wallet, handbag when possible this will be done in the presence of 2 members of staff.

High value items will be logged and passed to the Parish Clerk to be stored securely for 4 weeks.

- **Items Containing Personal Data** will be logged in the Lost Property Register and where possible the owner will be identified.

- **Low Value Items** Low value items will not be logged. This is due to the sheer volume of such items left in the Council's facilities e.g. diaries, files papers. These items will be available in the lost property containers for 4 weeks and then destroyed. Electrical chargers/cables that have not been retrieved within a 4 weeks period will be disposed of.

- **Food and Drink** will be disposed of immediately using the relevant rubbish bins.

2.2 Claiming Lost Property and Owner Identification

The Council's staff will attempt to contact the owners of any official or valuable found property where ownership can be easily identified. Once contact has been made, the item will follow the normal path of lost property, as above, unless a date for collection has been agreed. Please note that the item will be returned in the condition that it is received it in.

Any person reclaiming property of high value or containing personal data will be asked for detailed information about the item. They must have photographic identification prior to the item being returned. If the item being returned contains photographic ID, staff will check that the image matches the claimant. Additional proof of ID may be requested. When an owner reclaims an item and staff are satisfied of the owner's claim, the property will be handed over once a declaration has been signed to confirm that they have received it.

2.3 Disposal of Unclaimed Items

Lost property high value items and cash will be retained for 4 weeks. The high value items will be donated to local charities and all cash will be donated to the Cuffley Community Library.
All low value unclaimed items, including books will be taken, where possible, to local charity shops approximately every 4 weeks. Electrical chargers/cables will be disposed of.

- Articles of clothing, umbrellas, and sports items with little apparent value will be added to Lost Property container. After 4 weeks items will be recycled or given to charity.
- Papers, notebooks, etc., will be placed in the lost property containers; after 4 weeks items will be recycled.
- Books without owner identification will be held in Reception for 4 weeks and will then be donated to Cuffley Community Library. Any books unsuitable for retention by the Library will be donated to local registered charities, where possible.
- Cash up to £1000 unclaimed after 4 weeks will be donated to the Cuffley Community Library, amounts over this will be referred to the police in the first instance and then a decision will be made by a Council meeting if the funds are to be retained by the Parish Council.

- High value items unclaimed after 4 weeks will be then referred to a Parish Council meeting for a decision on disposal.
- Official items holding personal data. If staff are handed property such as driving licences, passports or bankcards, for security reasons, these are not kept, but are returned to the issuing authority. You should report the loss of these items directly to the issuing authority.
- Any unusual items of lost property will be drawn to the attention of the Clerk who will decide on the most appropriate means of disposal.

Where it is not possible to return an item to its original owner within the nominated period, it will be disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner. This includes donations to Cuffley Community Library and local registered charities.

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Lost Property Enquiry Form

Title:	
First Name:	
Last Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Email:	
Contact Number:	
What item has been lost?	
Where was it lost? Include postcode if known:	
When was the item lost, day/date/time	
Description of the item(s) (information such as colour, make, model, serial number, content and distinguishing marks can be useful	
Declaration: I declare that all the statements I have made are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and that I have not withheld any relevant information	