



Records Management and Retention Policy

Document Purpose

This document describes the Parish Council's policy for records management and retention and will be reviewed every three years.

The Parish Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the Parish Council. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Parish Councils are required to maintain a retention schedule listing the record series which the Parish Council creates in the course of its business.

This document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited. It covers:

- Scope
- Responsibilities
- Relationships with existing policies
- Retention of documents

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Parish Council in the course of carrying out its functions.

Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the Parish Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.

A small percentage of the Parish Council's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical research.

Responsibilities

The Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with overall responsibility for this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council.

The person responsible for records management will give guidance for good records management practice and will promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and timely.

Individual Staff, Employees & Councillors must ensure that records for which they are responsible are accurate, and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the Parish Council's records management guidelines.

Relationship with existing policies

This policy has been drawn up within the context of:

- Freedom of Information Policy



- Data Protection policy

And with other legislation or regulations (including audit and Statute of Limitations) affecting the Parish Council.

Retention of Documents Required for the Audit of Parish Councils

The retention schedule lays down the length of time which the record needs to be retained and the action which should be taken when it is of no further administrative use.

Members of staff are expected to manage their current record keeping systems using the retention schedule and to take account of the different kinds of retention periods when they are creating new record keeping systems.

The retention schedule refers to record series regardless of the media in which they are stored.

Document or Record	Min Retention Period	Reason
Administrative		
Signed Minutes of Council and committee Meetings	Indefinite	Archive
Recorded minutes purely for the intention of having accurate minutes	Retain until minutes approved and the delete	Management
Draft Minutes	Until the date of confirmation of minutes	Operational
Agendas	Until no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Reports and other documents circulated with agendas	Until no longer an administrative requirement	Common Practice
Councillors' declaration of office	4 years or until they vacate office	Operational
Register of electors	Until no longer an administrative requirement	
Byelaws and orders	Indefinite	Common Practice
Policy Documents	Until no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Property registers and terriers	Indefinite	Common Practice
Maps plans and surveys of property owned by the council or meetings	Indefinite	Common Practice
General Correspondence and emails	Retain as long as useful - 6 months minimum	Management
Correspondence on important local issues and activities	Indefinite	Archive
Finance & Payroll		
Receipt and Payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Audited accounts	Indefinite	Archive
All Bank Statements	Last completed Audit yr	Audit
Bank Paying-in Books	Last completed Audit yr	Audit
Cheque Books Stubs	Last completed Audit yr	Audit



Correspondence relating to audit matters	Last completed Audit yr	Audit
Budgetary Control Papers	6 years	Audit
Quotations and Tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980
Paid Invoices	6 years	VAT Act 1994
VAT records	6 years	VAT Act 1994
Payroll records	12 years	Superannuation
Postage and telephone books	6 years	Audit
Receipt Books	6 years	VAT
Wage Books	12 years	Superannuation & Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Insurance Policies		
Cert of Employers Liability	40 years	Legal requirement
Cert of Public Liability	21 years	Legal requirement
Insurance claim records	while valid or a claim can be made	
Management Insurance Claim Records	7 Years after all obligations are concluded	Legal requirement
Policy renewal records & Management correspondence	While Valid	
General Management		
Members allowances	6 years	Tax
Investments	Indefinite	Management
Quotations/tenders	Successful - 6 years	Statute of limitations
	Unsuccessful – 2 years	
Title deeds, leases, agreements	Indefinite	Management
Health & Safety		
Accident Books (injuries to Adults)	25 Years from closure	Management Accident
Books (injuries to Children)	25 Years from closure	Management
Equipment Inspection Records	25 Years	Management
Premises Inspection Records	25 Years	Management
Risk Assessments	3 Years from last Assessment	Operational
Members Register of Members Interests	18 months after individual ceases to be a Member	Management
Miscellaneous		
Complaints	6 Years after closure of case	Management
Information requests	6 Years after closure of case	Management
Press Releases	5 Years	Management
Public consultation: surveys & returns	5 Years	Management
Register of Officers Interests	Indefinite	
Management Reports, newsletters etc from other	Retain as long as useful	Management bodies
Newsletters	One copy – indefinite	



Newsletter Mailing lists	Retain until consent withdrawn or following regular review consent no longer provided	
Personnel/Human Resources		
Application forms (Interview unsuccessful)	6 months	Management
Disciplinary records	Retain for period of employment	Management
Personal files (not payroll information)	6 years after ceasing	Management employment
Timesheets	Last completed audit years	Audit
Planning		
Applications	12 months	Management
All consultative documents including plans Not retained Held by Planning Authority Applications upon which Council has commented - All consultative documents including plans		

There are no firm guidelines for the retention of general correspondence. However, an annual review of all documentation should become regular practice with ephemeral items marked for destruction and the remainder being considered for archiving or transfer to the County Record Office as appropriate.