

Record Retention & Disposal Policy

Introduction

The parish council, during the course of its business, routinely creates, collects and retains a wide range of recorded information in both paper and electronic formats. Records need to be properly maintained to enable the council to meet its business needs, comply with legislation, and to ensure that legal documents, and other records of local historic importance are preserved.

The untimely destruction of records and inappropriate methods of destruction could adversely affect the parish council's business including its ability to comply with statutory duties and its reputation. Conversely, the permanent retention of all records is undesirable and disposal is necessary to free up storage space, reduce administrative burden and to ensure that the council does not unlawfully retain records for longer than necessary, in particular any records containing personal data.

Purpose

This policy demonstrates public accountability through the proper retention of records and ensuring that disposal decisions are taken with proper authority and in accordance with legal requirements. This policy sets out the length of time that records should be retained and the processes for disposing of records at the end of the retention period.

The policy covers the records listed in the attached schedule and includes paper and electronic files (including databases, Word documents, spreadsheets and e-mails), photographs and scanned images.

Scope

The schedule aims to include all types of records which the council creates or holds. They include:

- minutes of meetings;
- letters and documents received from third parties;
- contracts and invoices;
- burial registers;
- financial accounts;
- employee information;
- parish council reports and publications
- legal documents

Minimum Retention Period

A recommended minimum retention period is provided for each category of record in the schedule attached. The retention period applies to all records within that category. The recommended minimum retention is based on the following:

- on-going business and accountability needs (including audit);

- current applicable legislation;
- whether the record has any long-term historical or research value.

Records should be reviewed annually to check whether their retention period has expired. Once the period has expired, and after taking into account current legislation, best practice recommendations and business needs, the record will either be

- retained for a further period;
- transferred to the county records office;
- destroyed.

Destruction

No destruction of a record should take place without assurance that:

- the record is no longer required by any part of the business;
- no work is outstanding by any part of the business;
- no legal matters current or pending which affect the record;
- there are no current or pending FOI or DPA access requests which affect the record.

Paper Records

Destruction should be carried out in a way that preserves the confidentiality of the record. Non-confidential records i.e. records that are clearly in the 'public domain' can be placed in ordinary paper recycling bins. Confidential records should be shredded in-house or placed in paper rubbish sacks for collection and shredding by an approved disposal firm. A certificate of disposal should be obtained from the relevant firm.

Electronic Records

All electronic records, including emails, should be permanently deleted.

Transfer to The County Records Office

The record may be transferred to the county records office if it is decided that the record has no further administrative value but should be permanently preserved for historical or research purposes (for example, parish council minutes, burial registers)

Schedule A

Document	Retention Period	Why Retain	Location
Council official records:			
Signed minutes	Indefinite	Legal	Parish office/county records office
Acceptance of office	4 years	Legal	Parish office
Declarations of interest	Indefinite	Legal	Parish office
Members Register of Interest	For duration of office	Legal	Parish office
Members' Allowances Register	6 years	Audit	Parish office
Scale of fees and charges	6 years	Audit	Parish office
Quotations and Tenders	6 years	Audit	Parish office
Asset Register	Indefinite	Audit	Parish office
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit/Legal	Parish office/solicitors
Employee Records:			
Accident reports	Indefinite	Legal/Insurance	Parish office
Payment changes	6 years	Legal	Parish office
Tax code notice	6 years	Legal	Parish office
Contribution records	Permanently	Legal	Parish office
Actuarial valuation reports	Permanently	Legal	Parish office
Records of ex-pensioners	6 years after benefit ends	Legal	Parish office
Pension investment policies	12 years after benefit ends	Legal	Parish office
HMRC approvals	Permanently	Legal	Parish office
Staff personal records	7 yrs after employment ends	Reference	Parish office
Expenses accounts	7 years	Legal	Parish office
Staff overtime	3 years	Audit	Parish office
Redundancy/long service awards	7 years	Legal	Parish office
Wages			
P45, P58, P48, P6, P60	6 years	Legal	Parish office
Income tax/pay details	6 years	Legal	Parish office
Returned tax	6 years	Legal	Parish office
Schedule of deductions	6 years	Audit	Parish office
Pay advice	Current plus 1 year	Legal	Parish office
Payroll	Current plus 6 years	Audit	Parish office
Annual earnings summary	Current plus 12 years	Legal	Parish office
Wages book	12 years	Legal	Parish office
Contractors			
Insurance & spraying certificates	Current plus 1 year	Legal	Parish office
Time sheets	Current plus 1 year	Legal	Parish office
Insurance			
Public and product liability policies	While valid	Legal	Parish office
Certificate for insurance against liability for employees	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	Legal	Parish office

Finance Records:			
Bank paying-in counterfoils	Last completed audit year	Audit	Parish office
Bank/GIRO account statements	Last completed audit year	Audit	Parish office
Daily cash book	6 years	Legal	Parish office
Banking returns	6 years	Legal	Parish office
Unrepresented cheque list	6 years	Legal	Parish office
Bank reconciliations	6 years	Legal	Parish office
Investments	Indefinite	Audit	Parish office
Petty cash, postage, phone records	Current plus 6 years	Audit	Parish office
Main cash book (Receipts & Payments)	Permanently	Legal	Parish office
Cash received/cheque payment sheets	Current plus 6 years	Legal	Parish office
Pension fund details	Permanently	Legal	Parish office
Cheques stubs/remittance advice	Last completed audit year	Audit	Parish office
Invoice	6 years (revenue)	Legal	Parish office
Purchase requisitions	2 years	Audit	Parish office
Purchase orders	2 years (revenue) 3 yrs after expiry (capital)	Audit	Parish office
VAT records	6 years	VAT	Parish office
Property Records:			
Leases	12 years after lease end	Legal	Parish office
Architect builder agreements	6 years after contract ends	Legal	Parish office
Planning permission (PC property)	12 years after interest ends	Legal	Parish office
Planning:			
Permission granted (all papers)	Until development completed	To check compliance	These records are held by the LPA
Permission granted on appeal	Until development completed		
Permission granted on appeal (decision)	Permanently	May set a precedent	
Permission refused on appeal (decision)	Permanently		
Permission refused	Until end of appeal period		
Structure, local plans etc	Until superseded	Management	
Halls, Centres, Recreation Grounds			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications to hire, • Lettings diaries, • Copies of bills to hirers, • Records of tickets issued 	6 years	VAT	n/a
Allotments:			
Register and plans	Indefinite	Audit, archive	Parish office
Burial Grounds:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of fees collected, • Register of burials, • Register of purchased graves • Register of grave spaces • Register of memorials • Applications for interment, • Applications for right to erect memorials • Disposal certificates, 	Indefinite	Archive, legal	Parish office/county records office

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy certification of grant of exclusive right of burial 			
Other documents:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Orders • Financial Regulations • Policies 	Indefinite until superseded		Parish office
Register of Electors	1 year		Parish office
NALC, CALC, etc information	As long as relevant		Parish office
Emails	For as long as relevant		Parish office
Magazines and journals	For as long as relevant / pertinent		Parish office
Correspondence relating to the above	See relevant sections above – review annually		Parish office
Correspondence from the public on general issues	For as long as relevant / pertinent		Parish office

This document was adopted by BIPC in March 2018