

WHITEPARISH PARISH COUNCIL

DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

Adopted 29.07.25

Introduction

The Council accumulates a vast amount of information and data during the course of its everyday activities. This includes data generated internally in addition to information obtained from individuals and external organisations. This information is recorded in various different types of documents.

Records created and maintained by the Council are an important asset and as such measures need to be undertaken to safeguard this information. Properly managed records provide authentic and reliable evidence of the Council's transactions and are necessary to ensure it can demonstrate accountability.

Documents may be retained in either 'hard' paper form or in electronic forms. For the purpose of this policy, 'document' and 'record' refers to both hard copy and electronic records.

It is imperative that documents are retained for an adequate period of time. If documents are destroyed prematurely the Council and individual officers concerned could face prosecution for not complying with legislation and it could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the Council.

In contrast to the above the Council should not retain documents longer than is necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations so that personal information is not retained longer than necessary. This will also ensure the most efficient use of limited storage space.

Scope and Objectives of the Policy

The aim of this document is to provide a working framework to determine which documents are:

- Retained – and for how long; or
- Disposed of – and if so by what method.

Records should not be destroyed if the information can be used as evidence to prove that something has happened. If destroyed the disposal needs to be disposed of under the General Data Protection Regulations

Roles and Responsibilities for Document Retention and Disposal

Councils are responsible for determining whether to retain or dispose of documents and should undertake a review of documentation on a regular basis to ensure that any unnecessary documentation being held is disposed of under the General Data Protection Regulations.

Councils should ensure that all employees are aware of the retention/disposal schedule. The person with overall responsibility for this maintenance is the Parish Clerk.

Relationship with existing policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Parish Council's

- Freedom of Information policy
- Data Protection policy

Retention Schedule

It is planned to review, update and where appropriate amend this document on a regular basis.

Whiteparish Parish Council have adopted a policy in line with the National Association of Local Council's legal topic note LTN40 (Local Councils' documents and records).

List of Documents

The full list of the Council's documents and the procedures for retention or disposal can be found in Appendix A: List of Documents for Retention and Disposal. This is updated regularly in accordance with any changes to legal requirements.

Appendix A: List of Documents for Retention and Disposal

Records that are no longer required must be disposed of securely e.g. shredded.

Document	Minimum retention period	Reason
Minute books	Indefinite	Original signed paper copies of Council minutes of meetings must be kept indefinitely in safe storage. At regular intervals of not more than 5 years they must be archived and deposited with County archives - Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre.
Accident/incident reports	20 years	Potential claims. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the GDPR requirements.
Asset register	Indefinite	Management
Scales of fees and charges	6 years	Management
Receipt and payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT
Bank statements including deposit / savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank paying in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Quotations and tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT

Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Audited Accounts	Last 5 years published	Audit
VAT records	6 years	VAT
Insurance policies	While valid	Management and legal proceedings
Certificate for Insurance against liability for employees	Indefinite	The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 section 4
Play equipment inspection reports	Indefinite	Management
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Local Plans and similar documents	Until they are no longer in force	Management
External magazines, journals and the like	1 year or for as long as they are useful	Management
Routine correspondence and emails	Retained for as long as document is needed	Management
Information from other bodies e.g. circulars from county associations, NALC, principal authorities	Retained for as long as it is useful and relevant	Common Practice
Parish Councillors • applications for co-option • declarations of acceptance of office • members register of interests	Term of office + 1 year	Management
Employees' records	Employment period + 6 years	Management