

WALTON PARISH COUNCIL

DOCUMENTS RETENTION POLICY

Reviewed at the Council meeting held on 16th May 2023.

Walton 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. 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 Schedule

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 and employees 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/Publication Scheme
- Data Protection policy

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

Retention Schedule

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Parish Council is required to maintain a retention schedule listing the record series which it creates in the course of its business. 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.

PLANNING PAPERS • Permission Granted

All papers retained until the development has been completed to allow the Council to check that the development proceeds in accordance with the terms of the permission.

- **Appeal decisions**

These should be retained indefinitely as it may be required should there be longer term implications e.g. the decision creates a precedent for other developments in the locality.

- **Permission Refused**

All papers should be retained until the period in which an appeal can be made has expired. If a resulting appeal is dismissed the documentation should be retained in case further applications relating to the same site result.

- Structure Plans and Local Plans should also be retained.

RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR THE AUDIT OF PARISH COUNCIL

Document	Min Retention Period	Reason
Minutes & Correspondence		
Signed Minutes of Council Meetings	Indefinite	Archive
Agendas	Electronically indefinite	Archive
Correspondence & papers on important local issues & activities	Indefinite	Archive
Routine correspondence, papers & emails	Retain as long as useful	Management
Finance & Payroll		
Receipt and Payment accounts	6 years	Archive
Accounts/Financial Annual Return	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 Books Stubs	Last completed Audit year	Audit
Quotations and Tenders	12 years/Indefinite	Statute of Limitations
Paid Invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	VAT
VAT records	6 years	VAT
Payroll records	12 years	Superannuation
Insurance Policies		
Cert of Employers Liability	No longer required as linked to Employer Tax Records	Management
Cert of Public Liability	21 years	Legal requirement
Insurance Claim Records	7 Years after all obligations are concluded (allowing for claimant to reach age of 25)	Legal requirement
Policy renewal records & correspondence	While Valid	Management
General Management		

Investments	Indefinite	Audit/ Management
Title Deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit/ Management
Members allowances	6 years	Tax, Statute of Limitations
Health & Safety		
Equipment Inspection Records	25 Years	Management
Risk Assessments	3 Years from last assessment	Management
Members		
Register of Members Interests	1 year after individual ceases to be a Member	Management
Miscellaneous		
Complaints	1 Year after closure of case	Management
Deeds/Leases	Indefinite	Archive
Press Releases	6 months	Management
Public consultation: surveys & returns	1 Year	Management
Register of Officers Interests	Indefinite	Management
Reports, newsletters etc from other bodies	Retain as long as useful	Management
Personnel/Human Resources		
Disciplinary records	Retain for period of employment	Management
Personal files (not payroll information)	6 years after ceasing employment	Management
Planning		
Applications - All consultative documents including plans	Not retained	Held by Planning Authority
Applications upon which Council has commented - All consultative documents including plans	Not retained	Held by Planning Authority

There are no firm guidelines for the retention of general correspondence. However, a six-monthly review of all documentation may be carried out with items marked for destruction and the remainder being considered for archiving. This includes email correspondence.