

RECORDS MANAGEMENT & RETENTION POLICY

West Dereham 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. Historically these include the Minutes of the Meetings.

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
- Data Protection guidelines

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

These should also be retained.

RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR THE AUDIT OF PARISH COUNCILS

<i>Document</i>	<i>Minimum Retention Period</i>
Minute Books	Indefinite Archive
Scale of Fees & Charges	5 Years
Receipt & Payment a/c	Indefinite Archive
Annual Return	Indefinite Archive
Receipt Book	6 Years
Bank Statements	Last Completed Audit
Bank Paying In Books	Last Completed Audit
Cheque Book Stubs	Last Completed Audit
Quotations & Tenders	12 Years/Indefinite Statue of Limitations
Paid Invoices	6 Years
Paid Cheques	6 Years Statue of Limitations
VAT Records	6 Years
Wages Books	12 Years
Insurance Policies	6 Years
Cert. Employers Liability	50 Years Legal Requirement
Cert. Public Liability	21 Years Legal Requirement
Investments	Indefinite Audit
Title Deeds, Leases, Agreements	Indefinite Audit
Contracts	Indefinite Audit
Member's Allowances	6 Years Statue of Limitations
General Correspondence	6 Years/At Clerk's discretion

There are no firm guidelines for the retention of general correspondence however, an annual review of all documentation should be carried out with ephemeral items marked for destruction and the remainder considered for archiving or transfer to the County Records Office as appropriate.