



DOCUMENT RETENTION & DISPOSAL **POLICY**

www.greathorkesley-pc.gov.uk

This Policy will be reviewed annually by Full Council.

Adopted: Full Council Meeting 6th February 2024 Minute Ref: 23/131 (d)

Reviewed:

INTRODUCTION

Great Horkesley Parish Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with legal and regulatory obligations and to allow for its effective management. The council accumulates a vast amount of information and data during the course of its everyday activities and this information is recorded in various types of documents.

This policy has been created to detail how the records maintained by the parish council are kept and when they should be destroyed and should be read and adhered to in conjunction with the council's FOI Publication Scheme and Data Protection Policy.

DEFINITIONS

"The council" is Great Horkesley Parish Council.

"Documents" and "records" refers to both hard copy and electronic documents and records.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all records, in all formats that are created, received, or maintained by the parish council.

The policy determines which documents are retained (and for how long), and which documents are disposed of (and by what method). 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

Great Horkesley Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records in line with regulatory requirements. The council will review this policy annually.

All employees should be aware of this policy. The person with overall responsibility for this maintenance is the Clerk. The Clerk will undertake a review of documentation on an annual basis to ensure that any unnecessary documents being held are disposed of under the GDPR.

DOCUMENT RETENTION PROTOCOL

Records of each council activity should be complete and accurate enough to allow employees and their successors to undertake appropriate actions in the context of their responsibilities to:

- Facilitate an audit or examination by anyone authorised.
- Protect the legal and other rights of the council, its clients, or anyone else affected by its actions.
- Verify individual consent to record, manage and maintain personal data.

- Provide authenticity of records so that the evidence derived from them is shown to be credible and authoritative.

To facilitate this, records should be created, arranged and maintained in a record-keeping system that will enable quick and easy retrieval of information, and any documents that are no longer required for operational purposes but need retaining permanently should be transferred to the records office.

DISPOSAL OF DOCUMENTS

Some unimportant records of information do not need to be kept at all and can be routinely destroyed in the course of business. These records include, but are not limited to:

- 'With compliments' slips.
- Catalogues and trade journals
- Non-acceptance of invitations.
- Trivial electronic messages and emails that are not related to council business.
- Requests for information such as maps, plans or advertising material.
- Duplicated or superseded material.
- Hard copy documents that have been scanned and saved electronically.

When documents are scheduled for disposal, the method of disposal should be appropriate to the nature and sensitivity of the documents concerned. This may be by the following methods:

- Paper recycling (non-confidential records only)
- Shredding (confidential records or those containing personal information)
- Secure deletion so they are virtually impossible to retrieve (computer records)
- Transmission to an external body such as the County Records Office

RETENTION SCHEDULE

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the parish council is required to maintain a retention schedule which states the length of time each type of record needs to be retained.

Documents and records should only be retained until they are no longer needed. Great Horkesley Parish Council have adopted this policy in line with the National Association of Local Council's legal topic note LTN40 (Local Council Documents and Records).

The length of time for which documents are retained by the council is stated below.

Documents - Meetings	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Signed approved minutes	Indefinite	Archive every 5 years
Draft minutes	Until minutes are approved	Management
Agendas and summons	1 year	Management
Reports	1 year (or earlier if a copy is included in signed minutes)	Management

Documents - Financial	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Scales of fees and charges	6 years	Management
Receipt and payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Annual audited accounts	6 years	Audit
Receipt books	6 years	VAT
Bank statements	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
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980
VAT records	6 years (20 years for VAT on rents)	VAT
Investments	Indefinite	Audit and management
Members' allowances and expenses	6 years	Tax and Limitation Act 1980

Documents - Legal	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Accident/incident reports	10 years	Potential claims
Insurance policies	As long as a claim can be made under it	Management and legal proceedings
Insurance company names and policy numbers	Indefinite	Potential claims
Certificates for insurance against liability for employees	40 years from commencement or renewal	The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998
Title deeds, leases, agreements and contracts	Indefinite	Audit and management

Documents - Councillors	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Councillor documents (co-optation applications, declarations of acceptance of office & register of interests)	At end of term of office	Management and data protection
Information provided by councillors upon election	One year after election	Management and data protection
Records relating to member training and development	4 years	Management and data protection
Councillor responsibilities list	Update when required	Management
Records relating to investigation of complaints about Code of Conduct breaches	1 year after investigation completed	Management and data protection

Documents - Staff	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit (requirement)
Wages books/payroll	12 years	Superannuation
Correspondence relating to staff	If related to audit, see relevant section above. Correspondence should not be kept for longer than is necessary to resolve the purpose for which it was held (recommended 3 years).	Management and data protection
Employee records and personnel files	2 years after employment period	Management and data protection
Recruitment information	1 year	Data protection

Documents - Other	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Register of electors	Until updated	Management and data protection
Byelaws and orders	Indefinitely	Archive
Information and circular emails from other bodies	As long as useful and relevant	Management
Magazines and journals	As long as useful and relevant	Management
General correspondence	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement (General correspondence from members of the public can be kept for up to 3 years, unless still required for ongoing matters)	Management and data protection
Policies and procedures	Update at review and destroy previous copy	Management

Documents – Village Hall	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Village Hall lettings diaries	6 years	VAT
Village Hall invoices	6 years	VAT
Correspondence regarding hiring the Village Hall	2 years	Management and data protection
Terms and conditions and hire information	Update at review and destroy previous copy	Management
CCTV recordings and data	31 days	Management, crime prevention and data protection