

RAMSBURY & AXFORD PARISH COUNCIL

DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

Ramsbury & Axford 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 while 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 parish council's archives and for historical research.

Responsibilities

The Parish Council has a responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council, and they are required to manage the Council's records in such a way as to promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and in a timely manner. The Parish Clerk must ensure that the records for which they are responsible are accurate and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the Parish Council's records management guidelines.

Individual Councillors may hold records in hard copy format at home or electronically on their laptop or home computers. If a Councillor considers that some of these documents are important in the context of Parish Council's records, they should ensure the Parish Clerk retains a copy for the official record. Individual Councillors are strongly advised to undertake housekeeping of records on a regular basis.

At the end of their Term of Office, or upon resigning from the Council, Councillors should delete electronic records they hold and destroy hard copy documents, unless they are official records that need to be handed to the Parish Clerk, within the agreed timescale. They will be asked to confirm deletion to the Parish Clerk. Councillors should be aware that records that they hold may be subject to the provision of the General Data Protection Regulations and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Relationship with existing policies

This policy has been drawn up within the context of

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Privacy & Data Protection policy
- Freedom of Information policy

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

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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 during 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. The Parish Clerk is expected to manage the current record keeping systems using the retention schedule and to take account of the different retention periods when creating new record keeping systems.

General correspondence will be retained for as long as it is relevant. An annual review of all documentation will be carried out and items that have reached their deletion or destruction date will be deleted/destroyed and the remainder being considered for archiving.

Items which need to be kept indefinitely should be stored securely within the parish filing system. At regular intervals they must be deposited at the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre (County Records Office - CRO) in Chippenham.

Documents and deeds where regular reference is required will be kept in the parish filing system until there is no longer a requirement for them to be accessed. Prior to being archived title documents, and any other documents deemed to be useful, will be scanned, so that they can be held electronically for ease of reference in the future if required.

This retention schedule refers to record series regardless of the media in which they are stored, unless stated otherwise.

Paper documents containing personal information are securely destroyed using a shredder. Electronic documents containing personal information are permanently deleted from USB or computers as well as any back-up copies. Paper documents which do not hold personal information will be recycled.

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.

Review Period

This policy will be reviewed every three years from the date of the first adoption and thereafter from the date of the last ratified review by the whole Parish Council, or earlier if there are changes in legislation.

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APPENDIX A – LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOR RETENTION AND DISPOSAL

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Action
Accident/Incident Reports	20 years	Potential Claims	Destroy
Agendas & Supporting Papers (Electronic Copies)	5 years	Management	Destroy
Allotment Contracts	6 years after contract ends	Management	Destroy
Annual Audit Return	Indefinite	Archive	Storage
Annual Audited Accounts	Indefinite	Archive	Storage
Assets Register	Indefinite	Audit/Archive	Storage
Bank Statements	6 years	Audit	Destroy
Budgetary Control Papers	6 years	Management	Destroy
Certificate Of Employers' Liability	40 years	Audit/legal	Destroy
Certificate Of Public Liability	21 years	Audit/legal	Destroy
Cheque Book Stubs	Last completed audit	Management	Destroy
Complaints	6 years from the resolution of the complaint	Management	Destroy
Contractor Records	3 years after expiry of warranty period	Audit	Destroy
Co-Option Applications	Until co-option process completed	Management	Destroy
Correspondence & Emails (Routine)	1 year	Management	Destroy
Correspondence Relating to Audit	Indefinite	Management	Destroy
Correspondence/Papers on Important Local/Historical Information	Indefinite	Archive	Storage
Declarations Of Acceptance of Office	Term of office +1 year	Management	Destroy
Declaration Of Interests (Gifts & Hospitality)	Term of office +1 year	Audit/Compliance	Destroy
Employment Contracts & Amendments	6 years after employment ends	Legal	Destroy
Equipment Inspection Records	21 years	Management	Destroy

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Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Action
Freedom Of Information Requests	6 years	Management	Destroy
Grant Applications (Unsuccessful)	1 year	Management	Destroy
Insurance Claim Records	Resolution + 7 years	Legal	Destroy
Insurance Company Names & Policy Numbers	Indefinite	Management	Archive
Insurance Policy	While valid	Audit/legal	Destroy
Minutes (Electronic Copies)	Indefinite	Archive	Storage
Minutes And Attached Reports (Signed Hard Copies)	Indefinite	Archive	Storage
Receipt & Payment Accounts	Indefinite	Archive	Storage
Investments	Indefinite	Audit/management	Storage
Invoices	7 years	Audit/VAT	Destroy
Magazines, Journals & General Information	As long as useful	Management	Destroy
Members Register of Interests	Term of office	Management	Destroy
Paying-In Books	Last completed audit	Management	Destroy
Play Area Inspection Reports	21 years	Audit/Management	Destroy
Policies & Procedures (Adopted)	TBC on policy. If superseded, within 1 year. If not superseded, 7 years	Audit/Management	Destroy
Premises Inspection Records	21 years	Management	Destroy
Press Releases	5 years	Management	Destroy
Public Consultations	5 years	Management	Destroy
Quotations & Tenders	6 years	Limit Act 1980 (as amended)	Destroy
Use of Parish Council Land (Permission/Conditions)	3 years after use has finished	Management	Destroy
Recruitment Records (Unsuccessful Applicants)	6 months	GDPR	Destroy
Risk Assessment/Management	5 years	Management	Destroy

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Salary Records	6 years (from the end of tax year)	Superannuation	Destroy
Scale Of Fees & Charges	6 years	Management	Destroy
Staff Appraisals/Performance Review	6 years (after employment ends)	Management	Destroy
Tax & NI Records	12 years	Superannuation	Destroy
Training Records (Councillors & Staff)	6 years (after leaving office/employment)	Audit/Compliance	Destroy
Title Deeds, Leases, Licences	Indefinite	Audit/archive	Storage
VAT Records	6 years	Audit/VAT	Destroy
Volunteer Details	Whilst active – 12 months inactive	Management	Destroy

Planning applications

- All planning applications and relevant decision notices are available on the Wiltshire Council website. There is no requirement to retain duplicates locally.
- All Parish Council recommendations in connection with these applications are recorded in the Council Planning Committee minutes and are retained indefinitely.
- Correspondence received in connection with applications will be retained for 3 months after the application is approved or declined.
- Correspondence and documents in relation to large scale applications or contentious applications will be retained for as long as is necessary. They may be archived for historical purposes.
- Correspondence and documents in relation to appeals will be retained until the appeal process is completed.

Documents from legal matters, negligence and other torts

Most legal proceedings are governed by the Limitation Act 1980 (as amended). The 1980 Act provides that legal claims may not be commenced after a specified period. Where the limitation periods are longer than other periods specified the documentation should be kept for the longer period specified. Some types of legal proceedings may fall within two or more categories. If in doubt, keep for the longest of the three limitation periods.

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Action
Negligence	6 years	Destroy
Defamation	1 year	Destroy
Contracts	6 years	Destroy

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Leases	12 years	Destroy
Sums recoverable by statute	6 years	Destroy
Personal injury	3 years	Destroy
To recover land	12 years	Destroy
Rent	6 years	Destroy
Breach of trust	None	Destroy