

Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council

Document Retention Policy

Adopted: May 2021

The Parish Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, the General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 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
- 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 may be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical research.

Responsibilities

S227(1) Local Government Act 1972 requires the Parish Council to provide a proper repository for its records. The person with overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council, who is required to manage the Council's records so that they are:

- Created accurately
- Stored effectively – electronic files should be backed up periodically on a portable hard drive and also in a cloud-based programme
- Kept securely – in a lockable cabinet
- Traced efficiently
- Retained in their original form if required for the purpose of legal proceedings (where deemed applicable)
- Retained only for as long as necessary and disposed of in accordance with the Parish Council's records management guidelines.

Individual Councillors may hold records in hard copy format or electronically at home or on their home computers. If a Councillor considers that some of these documents are important in the context of the Parish Council's records, they should ensure that the Clerk retains a copy for the official record. On resigning from the Council, Councillors must delete electronic records they hold and destroy hard copy documents.

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.

The 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. This retention schedule refers to record series regardless of the media in which they are stored.

Review

This Policy will:

- Be publicised to members and staff and made available for reference
- Apply to all the Council's records regardless of how they are held
- Be reviewed every two years, amended and reissued as necessary and members and staff notified accordingly
- Operate in conjunction with Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council's existing policies on Data Protection and Freedom of Information and in accordance with GDPR.

	Document	Minimum Retention period	Reason	Disposal
	COUNCIL OPERATIONS			
1	Minutes	Indefinite	Archive	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 the KCC County Archivist
2	Agendas	5 years	Management	Confidential waste
3	Policies, procedures and standing orders	Keep whilst relevant – annual review	Management	Confidential waste
4	Members' allowances register	6 years	Tax Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste
5	Information from other bodies e.g. circulars from county associations, NALC, principal authorities.	Retained for as long as relevant and useful		Waste disposal
6	Magazines and journals	Council may wish to keep its own publications. For others retain for as long as they are useful and relevant.	The Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 (the 2003 Act) requires a local council which after 1st February 2004 has published works in print (this includes a pamphlet, magazine or newspaper, a map, plan, chart or table) to	Waste disposal

			deliver, at its own expense, a copy of them to the British Library Board (which manages and controls the British Library). Printed works as defined by the 2003 Act published by a local council therefore constitute materials which the British Library holds.	
7	Local/historical information	Indefinite – to be securely kept for benefit of the parish	Councils may acquire records of local interest and accept gifts or records of general and local interest in order to promote the use for such records (defined as materials in written or other form setting out facts or events or otherwise recording information).	Local/historical information
8	Photographs/digital prints, except those illustrating council assets for register and councillors (whilst in office)	31 days	Data Protection	Confidential waste
STAFFING				
9	Salary records/payroll	12 years	Tax, NI and pensions	Confidential waste
10	Correspondence relating to staff, including references, (both received and issued) and sickness records	If related to audit, see relevant sections above. Should be kept securely and personal data in relation to staff should not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it was held. Likely time limits for tribunal claims between 3–6 months. Recommended: Retain for 3 years.	After an employment relationship has ended, a council may need to retain and access staff records for former staff, for the purpose of giving references, payment of tax, national insurance contributions and pensions, and in respect of any related legal claims made against the council.	Confidential waste
11	Accident/incident reports	20 years	Potential claims	Confidential waste
12	Certificates for insurance against liability for employees	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed (to be adopted forward of the date of this policy)	The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI 2753) Management	Waste disposal
13	Personal injury matters	3 years		Confidential waste
FINANCE AND PAYMENTS				
14	Receipts and payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive	N/A

15	Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT	Waste Disposal
16	Bank statements including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste
17	Bank paying in books	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste
18	Paid cheques and Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste
19	Invoices, both issued and paid	6 years	VAT	Confidential waste
20	VAT records	6 years generally but 20 years for VAT on rents	VAT	Confidential waste
GENERAL OPERATIONS				
21	General correspondence	Unless it relates to specific categories outlined in this policy, correspondence, both paper and electronic, should be retained for as long as they are needed for reference or accountability purposes, to comply with regulatory requirements or to protect legal and other rights and interests. Recommended: 2 years	Management	Waste disposal (shred confidential waste).
22	Quotations and tenders	6 years	Limitation Act (1980) as amended	Confidential waste
23	Insurance policies	Whilst valid	Management	Waste disposal
24	Insurance company names and policy numbers	Indefinite	Management	N/A
25	Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts, other legal papers	Indefinite	Audit Management	N/A
26	Neighbourhood and Parish Plans	Whilst in force, plus 2 years	Historical purposes	N/A
PLANNING APPLICATIONS				
27	Planning application correspondence received from residents.	1 year after grant/refusal or appeal	Management	Waste disposal
28	Planning applications	All planning applications and relevant documents and decision notices are retained by and available from Swale Borough Council	Management	Waste disposal