**Graveney with Goodnestone Parish Council**

**Document Retention Policy**

Adopted: May 2024

The Parish Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations, including the Limitation Act 1980, Freedom of Information Act 2000, 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.

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|  | **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  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. | Waste disposal |
| 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, assets register, contracts, other legal papers | Indefinite | Audit  Management | N/A |
| 26 | Neighbourhood and Parish Plans | Whilst in force, plus 2 years | Historical purposes | Waste disposal |
|  | **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 |