

DOCUMENT RETENTION & RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Weston-in-Gordano Parish Council recognises that the efficient and effective management of its records is essential to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations (General Data Protection Regulations 2018, Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 & Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and their subsequent amendments) and to assist in the satisfactory management of public business by the Parish Council.

This policy provides a framework through which this effective management and retention of public records can be achieved and properly audited.

1. Scope

This policy applies to all records created, received, or maintained by the Parish Council. Records are defined as all those documents which relate to the business carried out by the Parish Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its communications, transactions and activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically. Some of the Parish Council's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical research.

2. Responsibilities

The Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory requirements. The person with overall responsibility for maintaining this policy is the Clerk and Proper Officer 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 stored and retrieved easily, appropriately and timely. The Clerk and Proper Officer 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.

Councillors may occasionally hold parish-related records, either in hard copy or electronically on personal devices. Councillors should ensure that any documents of ongoing value are passed to the Clerk for secure retention and that any remaining copies are deleted or destroyed once no longer required. On leaving office, councillors must delete or securely destroy any council-related records they hold.

Councillors should be aware that any information they hold relating to council business may fall within the scope of the Data Protection Act 2018, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004, Localism Act 2011, and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

3. Relationship with existing policies

This policy should be read alongside the Parish Council's other information governance and data protection documents, including the Data Protection Policy, Data Breach Policy, and Data Subject Access Request (DSAR) Procedure.

Records shall be managed in accordance with the Limitation Act 1980, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Localism Act 2011, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, and the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records, together with any subsequent amendments or replacement legislation.

4. Retention Schedule

The Parish Council is required to maintain a retention schedule listing types of records which it creates or holds 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 will be expected to manage the current record keeping systems using the retention schedule and to take account of the different retention periods when he/she is creating new record keeping systems. The retention schedule refers to all Parish Council records irrespective of the media in which they are stored.

5. Planning Papers

- **Permission Granted**

All emails / electronic information should be retained until after 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**

All emails / electronic information should be retained for 5 years as it may be required should there be longer term implications e.g. the decision creates a precedent for other developments in the parish.

- **Permission Refused**

All emails / electronic information should be retained until after the period in which an appeal can be made has expired. If a resulting appeal is dismissed the documentation should be retained for 5 years in case further applications relating to the same site are submitted.

- **Local Development Framework and other planning policies produced by North Somerset**

These policies shall be retained for the period the policies are in force. This is necessary so that the Council.

- Can, in making comments on planning issues refer to the relevant policies.
- Can, should it so wish, become involved in neighbourhood planning.

6. Minimum Retention Periods

Document or Record	Min Retention Period	Reason
Minutes & Correspondence		
Signed Minutes of Council Meetings	Indefinite	Archive
Correspondence / emails & papers on important local issues & activities	Indefinite	Archive
Routine correspondence, papers & emails	1 year	Management
Personnel/Human Resources		
Staff employment contracts	6 years after ceasing employment	Management
Staff payroll information	3 years	Management
Staff references	6 years after ceasing employment	Management
Application forms (interviewed - unsuccessful)	6 Months	Management
Application forms (interviewed – successful)	6 years after ceasing employment	Management
Disciplinary records	Retain for employment	Management
Personal files (not payroll information)	6 years after ceasing	Management
Finance & Payroll		
Receipt and Payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Return & Audited accounts	Indefinite	Archive
All Bank Statements	6 years	Audit
Bank Paying-in Books	Last completed Audit year	Audit
Cheque Books Stubs	Last completed Audit year	Audit

Correspondence relating to audit matters	6 years	Audit
Budgetary Control Papers	2 years + current year	Audit
Quotations and Tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid Invoices	6 years	VAT
VAT records	6 years	VAT
Payroll records	12 Years	Superannuation
Timesheets	Last completed Audit year	Audit
Insurance Policies		
Cert of Employers Liability	40 years	Legal requirement
Cert of Public Liability	21 years	Legal requirement
Other insurance policies	while valid / claim can be made	Management
Insurance Claim Records	7 Years after all obligations are concluded	Legal requirement
Policy renewal records & correspondence	While valid	Management
General Management		
Title Deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit/ Management
Members allowances	6 years	Tax
Councillors contact details	Duration of membership and until next full election.	Management
Register of Members Interests	18 months after individual ceases to be a member	Management
Email messages	At end of useful life	Management
Consent forms	5 years	Management
GDPR Security Compliance form	Duration of membership	Management
Health & Safety		
Accident Reports (injuries to Adults)	3 years from date of incident	Management
Accident Reports (injuries to Children)	25 years from incident (allows for 3 years after they turn 21)	Management
Equipment Inspection Records	6 years (unless involved in accident)	Management
Premises Inspection Records	6 years (unless there was an accident)	Management
Risk Assessments	3 Years from last assessment	Management
Miscellaneous		
Complaints	2 Years after closure of case	Management
Information requests	2 Years after closure of case	Management
Press Releases	5 Years	Management
Public consultation: surveys & returns	5 Years	Management
Register of Officers Interests	Indefinite	Management
Reports, newsletters etc from other bodies	Retain as long as useful	Management

General correspondence will be retained if relevant, the minimum period is 1 year. An annual review of all documentation should be carried out and items that have reached their deletion or destruction date being deleted/destroyed and the remainder being considered for archiving.