

WALL PARISH COUNCIL

DATA RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

Introduction

The Council accumulates a vast amount of information and data during the course of its everyday activities. This includes data generated internally in addition to information obtained from individuals and external organisations. This information is recorded in various different types of documents.

Records created and maintained by the Council are an important asset and as such measures are undertaken to safeguard this information. Properly managed records provide authentic and reliable evidence of the Council's transactions and are necessary to ensure it can demonstrate accountability.

Documents may be retained either in printed paper form referred to as "Hard Copy" or in electronic forms. For the purpose of this policy, "document" and "record" refers to both hard copy and electronic records.

It is imperative that documents are retained for an adequate period of time. If documents are destroyed prematurely, the Council and individual officers concerned could face prosecution for not complying with legislation. This could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the Council.

However, the Council should not retain documents longer than necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

Scope and Objective of the Policy

The aim of this document is to provide a working framework to determine which documents are: retained and for how long; or disposed of and if so by what means.

Document retention protocol

Before disposal of any documents they will be reviewed in accordance with the following:

Is retention required to fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements?

Is retention required to meet the operational needs of the Council?

Is retention likely to be required as evidence in the event of a dispute?

Is retention desirable because the document or record is of historic or intrinsic value?

When documents are scheduled for disposal the method of disposal should be appropriate to the nature and sensitivity of the documents concerned. A record of the disposal will be kept to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations.

Documents can be disposed of by any of the following methods:

- Non confidential records: place in waste bin for disposal
- Confidential records or records giving personal information: shred
- Deletion of computer records by secure means
- Transmission of records to an external body such as the County Records Office.

Wall Parish Council

Data Retention Schedule

1. Introduction

This schedule sets out how long Wall Parish Council retains different categories of information in line with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Local Government Act 1972
- Limitation Act 1980
- NALC/SLCC Retention and Disposal guidance

Retention periods reflect legal requirements and operational needs. When data is no longer required, it will be disposed of securely.

2. Core Retention Table

Record type	Retention period	Justification/notes
minutes	permanent	Must be archived with SCC
Agendas & meeting papers	6 years	Statutory limitation
Clerk's notes (working copies)	Until minutes approved	Then securely destroyed
Declarations of Acceptance of Office	Term of office + 1 year	Best practice
Register of Interests	As long as member in office	Statutory duty
Policies and procedures	Until superseded + 1year	Retain most recent + previous version
Annual Return and AGARs	6 years	Audit and transparency requirements
Bank statements and reconciliations	6 years	Audit requirement
Invoices and receipts	6 years	Limitation Act 1980
VAT records	6 years	HMRC requirement
Payroll records	6 years	HMRC / Pensions
Contracts (Council as purchaser)	6 years after end	Limitation Act 1980
Insurance policies	6 years after expiry	Possible claims window
Insurance certificates (e.g. Employers' Liability)	40 years	Required under H&S and liability regulations
Grant applications (submitted)	6 years	Financial reporting and audit
Grant applications (unsuccessful)	2 years	If consented by applicant
Planning consultation responses	1 year	No long-term requirement
Staff records (employment contracts, appraisals)	6 years after departure	Limitation period for employment Claims
Recruitment records (unsuccessful)	1 year	Unless applicant consents to longer retention
Training records	3 years	Useful for competence tracking
Complaints and enquiries	6 years	From date of closure
Correspondence (general)	2 years	Unless part of formal decision making
Emails (non-record emails)	12 months max	To be reviewed quarterly; delete if not required
Website backups	2 years	operational
CCTV footage (if used)	30 days max	Unless part of an investigation

3. Secure Disposal

When records are no longer required:

- Paper records will be shredded or professionally destroyed
- Electronic records will be permanently deleted from all storage locations
- Data will not be simply "deleted" from user view – it must be unrecoverable

4. Archiving and Historical Records

Permanent records (e.g. signed minutes) will be transferred to Staffordshire Archives or an appropriate local depository on a regular basis.

5. Monitoring and Review

This schedule will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Updated where legislation or operations change
- Monitored by the Clerk, who maintains the Data Asset Register

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Signed