

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION GUIDELINES FOR TILSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL RECORDS

Reviewed May 2024

The 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 and Retention.

SCOPE: 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 will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical research.

Any documents that are considered Important, informative or are of historical interest will be kept as a source of information for future Clerks and Councillors. Personal information will be redacted where and if necessary.

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 she is 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.

RETENTION: 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.

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Retention Schedule

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason	Action
Minutes	Indefinite		Archive
Annual Audited Accounts	Indefinite		Archive
Annual Return	Indefinite		Archive
Bank statements	6 years	Audit	Destroy
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit	Management	Destroy
Paying in books	Last completed audit	Management	Destroy
Quotations	6 years	Audit	Destroy
Paid invoices	6 years	Audit/VAT	Destroy
VAT records	6 years	VAT	Destroy
Salary records	6 years	Audit	Destroy
Tax & NI records	12 years	Audit	Destroy
Insurance policies	Whilst valid	Audit	Destroy
Cert of Employers Liability	Permanently	Audit/legal	Destroy
Cert of public liability	Permanently	Audit/legal	Destroy
Assets register	Indefinite	Audit	Preserve
Deeds, leases	Indefinite		Archive
Register of Electors	Once updated	Management	Destroy
Cllrs Declaration of Office	4 years	Management	Destroy
Risk Assessments	Once superseded	Management	Destroy
Members interests	Term of office	Management	Destroy
General Information	12 months	Management	Destroy

Planning Applications

All planning applications and relevant decision notices are available at Central Bedfordshire Council website. There is no requirement to retain duplicates locally. All Parish Council recommendations in connection with these applications are recorded in the Council minutes and are retained indefinitely. Correspondence received in connection with applications will be retained as stated below.

Complaints	1 year	Management	Destroy
General information	3 months	Management	Destroy
Routine correspondence & e-mails	6 months	Management	Destroy

Disposal procedures: all documents that are no longer required for administrative reasons should be shredded and disposed of.

If further clarification is required on documents listed above or other documentation, please contact the Parish Clerk clerk@tilsworth-pc.gov.uk or Bedfordshire Archives.