

Wylam Parish Council



Policy for the Retention of Records

1. Purpose and scope.

Wylam 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 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.

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.

2. Responsibilities.

The Parish Council has a corporate 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. S/he 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.

3. Destruction of records.

- a. Wherever there is the possibility of litigation, the records and information that are likely to be relevant should not be amended or disposed of until the threat of litigation has been removed. For instance, if a child is injured at a Council-run function or in an accident at a play area, s/he can bring an action against the Parish Council at any time until s/he reaches adulthood. Similarly, an employee can make a claim against the Council for a work-related injury many years after the event. For this reason, certificates of Employer's Liability insurance should be retained for a period of 40 years.
- b. All paper records should be securely disposed of and treated as confidential waste. When records are destroyed, a register should be kept, giving sufficient information to identify which records have been disposed of.
- c. In deciding whether or not to destroy a record, the following questions should always be asked:
 - In the case of a financial document: has the audit of that year's accounts been closed by the external auditors? If the answer is no, then the document should be retained;
 - Is the document unique in the "audit trail"? If the answer is yes, the document should be retained;

- Is there a statutory reason for retention? If the answer is yes, the document should be retained.

4. Relevant legislation.

In all matters relating to the retention of records, the Parish Council must comply with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including the Environmental Information Regulations and the Statute of Limitations (see the Information Commissioner’s Office website at www.ico.org.uk). Other relevant legislation is noted in the Retention Schedule.

5. 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:

TYPE OF RECORD	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD	REASON
GENERAL		
Approved Council Minutes	Indefinite	Archive
Handwritten Minutes & meeting notes for transcription to typed documents	Destroy once typed documents are formally approved	Only typed and approved version retained
Draft documents	Destroy once final version produced	Management
Correspondence & general files	6 months. If associated with any other area then retain as per this schedule, otherwise review annually.	Management
Emails	6 months. To be dealt with in the same way as correspondence.	Management
Register of Members Interests	Term of Office + 1 year	Management
Declarations of acceptance	Term of Office + 1 year	Management
Scales of Fees and Charges	6 years	Management
FOI Information log	5 years after record is opened	Management
Details of requests made under the Data Protection or FOI Acts	5 years after the request is received	Management
Complaints	1 year unless legal or insurance	Management

	claim pending	
Information from other bodies i.e. NALC, SLCC	As long as useful and relevant	Management
Magazines and journals	Any Council-published work to be delivered to the British Public Library Board. Copies also delivered to NCC County Archive at Woodhorn. Otherwise retain as long as useful and relevant.	Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 Management Archive
Personal Data	Kept no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it is held	Data Protection Act 1998
Allowances and expenses records	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980
Policies and Procedures	Indefinite. Superseded to be marked as such.	Management/ Reference
FINANCE		
Receipts and payments spreadsheets	Indefinitely	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT
Paid Invoices	6 years	VAT
Bank statements, including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Quotations and tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
VAT records	6 years	VAT
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit
Insurance Policies	While valid	Management
Certificates of Employers' and Public Liability Insurance	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI 2753), Management
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Members Allowances register	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 as amended
Safety Inspections & Maintenance	12 years	Limitation Act 1980

ALLOTMENTS		
Register and plans	Indefinite	Audit, Management
BURIAL GROUNDS		
Register of fees collected	Indefinite	Archives, Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI 204)
Register of Burials		
Register of purchased graves		
Register/plan of grave spaces		
Register of memorials		
Applications for interment		
Applications for right to erect memorials		
Disposal certificates		
Copy certificates of grant of exclusive right of burial		

PLANNING

All planning applications and relevant decision notices are available at NCC:

<http://publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk/online-applications> . There is no requirement to retain duplicates locally, but for ease of reference, paper copies received will be retained according to the schedule below:

Planning applications granted: non-contentious	Until completion	Reference
Planning Applications refused/appealed, contentious granted and/or ongoing	2 years minimum but as long as may be required	Reference
Planning application lists	Minutes – indefinite	Reference

All Parish Council recommendations in connection with these applications are recorded in the Council Minutes which are retained indefinitely. Correspondence received in connection with applications will be retained as per correspondence and emails (see above).

Approved by Wylam Parish Council at its meeting on

Date: 13 June 2016

Review date: June 2020