

DOCUMENT

RETENTION AND DISPOSAL

POLICY

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| AGREED: |  |
| REVIEW by: | Dec 2025 |

**Introduction**

The guidelines set out in this document supports the Parish Council’s Data Protection Policy and assists us in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and other associated legislation.

It is important that the Council has in place arrangements for the retention and disposal of documents necessary for the adequate management of services in undertaking its responsibilities. This policy sets out the minimum requirements for the retention of documents and sets out the requirements for the disposal of documents. However, it is important to note that this is a live document and will be updated on a regular basis.

Cornforth Parish Council will ensure that information is not kept for longer than is necessary, and will retain the minimum amount of information that it requires to carry out its functions and the provision of services, whilst adhering to any legal or statutory requirements.

**Aims and Objectives**

It is recognised that up to date, reliable and accurate information is a vital to support the work that the Council do and the services that we provide to our residents. This document will help us to: -

1. Ensure the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information that is necessary for the Council to operate and provide services to the public.
2. Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
3. Save employees’ time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily. This will assist them as they carry out their daily duties, or if searching for information requested under the Freedom of Information Act.
4. Ensure archival records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

**Scope**

For the purpose of this policy, ‘documents’ includes paper and electronic records, including those which appear on the website.

Where storage is by means of paper records, originals rather than photocopies should be retained where possible.

**Standards**

The Council will make every effort to ensure that it meets the following standards of good practice:

1. Adhere to legal requirements for the retention of information as specified in the Retention Schedule. This document provides a framework for good practice requirements for retaining information.
2. Personal information will be retained in a locked filing cabinet within the rear office of the room used in Cornforth House and access to these documents will only be by the Parish Clerk.
3. Appropriately dispose of information that is no longer required.
4. Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that confidential and sensitive information is securely destroyed.
5. Information about unidentifiable individuals is permitted to be held indefinitely for historical, statistical or research purposes e.g., Equalities data.

**Breach of Policy and Standards**

Any employee who knowingly or recklessly contravenes any instruction contained in, or following from, this Policy and Standards may, depending on the circumstances of the case, have disciplinary action, which could include dismissal, taken against them.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The Parish Clerk has overall responsibility for the policy and is responsible for the maintenance and operation of this policy including ad-hoc checks to ensure compliance.

**Confidential Waste**

Any information that is required to be produced under the Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations, is available on the website or is open to public inspection, should not be treated as confidential waste.

However, any information that is protected by the Data Protection Act or as Confidential under the Councils Constitution should be treated as confidential waste for disposal purposes.

Examples of what constitutes confidential waste:

1. Exempt information contained within committee reports.
2. Files containing the personal details of an individual and files that predominantly relate to a particular individual or their circumstances. For example, completed application forms and letters.
3. Materials given to the Council on a ‘confidential’ or on a limited use basis e.g., material provided by contractors or the police.

Examples of what does not constitute confidential waste:

1. Documents that are available to the public via the Council’s website or by submitting an appropriate search request to the Council for general information.
2. All reports and background papers of matters taken to Committee in public session unless specifically exempt.

**Disposal of Documentation**

Confidential waste which clearly shows any personal information or information which can be identified using the parameters set out in this document will be shredded by the Parish Clerk.

All other documents requiring disposal are to be placed in the recycling bin in the front office of Cornforth House and will be disposed of as general paper waste for recycling purposes.

**Retention & Storage**

Timeframes for retention of documents have been set using legislative requirements and guidelines.

Throughout retention the conditions regarding safe storage and controlled access will remain in place.

The attached Retention Schedule shows the minimum requirements for the retention of documents as determined by those officers responsible for the management of these particular documentation types. Officers holding documents should exercise judgement as to whether they can be disposed of at the end of those periods detailed in the Schedule.

**RETENTION SCHEDULE**

The recommended retention period should be the number of years specified below **plus** the current financial year (i.e., six years plus the current period, therefore at least six years documentation will always be retained)

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| **DOCUMENT / (OWNERSHIP)** | **MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD** |
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| **Allotments** | |
| Allotment Application Forms/ Agreements | Length of Tenancy plus 2 Years |
| Register & Plans | Indefinitely |
| **Corporate** | |
| Asset acquisition & disposal – legal documents relating to purchase/sale | 6 Years if under £50,000  12 Years if over £50,000 |
| Contracts Documentation – executed under hand | Life of contract plus 6 Years |
| Copy of Register of Electors | Until updated |
| Gifts & Hospitality Register | 6 Years after last entry |
| Land & Property Rental Agreements | 12 Years after expiry of the agreement |
| Lease Agreements | 12 Years after expiry of the agreement |
| Members Declaration of Office Register | Indefinitely |
| Policies & Procedures | Until updated & reviewed |
| Press Releases | 6 Years |
| Property Evaluation Lists | Indefinitely |
| Property Plans | Indefinitely |
| Register of Officers Interests | Indefinitely |
| Register of Members Interests | 18mths after individual ceases to be a member |
| Risk Management Reports | Indefinitely |
| Risk Register | Indefinitely |
| Title Deeds for Land & Property | Indefinitely |
| Tender documentation–Successful executed under hand | Life of contract plus 6 Years |
| Tender documentation -- Unsuccessful | Until final payment is made |
| **Events** | |
| Events Papers & Documents including Road  Closure Applications | 3 Years |
| **Finance** | |
| Asset Register for statutory accounting purposes | 10 Years |
| BACS Listings | 6 Years |
| Bank Reconciliation | 3 Years |
| Bank Statements | 6 Years |
| Bank Paying in Books | 6 Years |
| Budget Working Papers & Summaries | 3 Years |
| Budgetary Control Papers | 2 Years |
| Cheque Books Stubs/Cancelled Cheques | 3 Years |
| Copy Invoices issued | 6 Years |
| Copy Receipt Books | 6 Years |
| Donations Application Forms | 6 Years |
| Fees & Charges Schedules | 6 Years |
| Final Accounts/Financial Return | Indefinitely |
| Final Accounts Working Papers | 6 Years |
| Internal & External Audit Reports | 6 Years |
| Investments | Indefinitely |
| Ledgers - Purchases & Sales | 10 Years |
| Loans & Investment Records | 10 Years following repayment of loan |
| Medium Term Financial Plan | Indefinitely |
| Paid Invoices/Purchase Orders/Advice Notes | 6 Years |
| Postage/Petty Cash Books | 6 Years |
| Published Budget Books | Indefinitely |
| Quotations / Tenders & Quotes Register | 12 Years |
| Scale of Fees & Charges | 6 Years |
| VAT Records | 10 Years |
| **Grants & Funding** | |
| Public Consultation: |  |
| Actual completed surveys & returns | 5 Years |
| Summaries of completed surveys | Indefinite |
| Successful Applications – all paperwork | 6 Years |
| Unsuccessful Applications – all paperwork | 6 years |
| **Health & Safety** | |
| Accident Books (injuries to adults) | 3 Years from closure (unless an accident involving chemicals or asbestos is contained within, then must be kept for 40 years) |
| Accident Books (injuries to Children) | 25 Years from closure |
| Asbestos Records for premises/property including survey/accidents & removal | 40 Years |
| COSHH Assessments | 5 Years after substance removed from use |
| COSHH Training Records | 5 Years from date of training |
| Electrical Test Certificates - Premises | 10 Years |
| Fire Alarm Certificates | 10 Years |
| Fire Alarm Log Book | 3 Years |
| Gas Test Certificates - Boilers | 3 Years |
| Ladder/Stepladder Inspection Forms | 3 Years |
| Legionella Inspection Records | 5 Years |
| PAT / Equipment Calibration Certificates | 3 Years |
| Parks & Play Area Inspection Records | 25 Years |
| PPE Records | 3 Years |
| Premises Inspection Records | 25 Years |
| Records relating to accidents – person over 18 yrs. | 3 Years from date of accident |
| Records relating to accidents – person under 18 yrs. | Until 21st birthday |
| Risk Assessments | 3 Years from last assessment |
| Street Furniture Inspection Records | 25 Years |
| Tree Survey Reports | 5 Years |
| Warranties | 10 Years |
| **Insurance Policy** | |
| Certificates | Indefinitely |
| Insurance Claim Records | 10 Years after all obligations are concluded (allowing for claimant to reach age of 25) |
| Policy renewal records & correspondence | 5 Years after policy has been renewed |

Note:

The only property owned by the Parish Council is 66 High Street and this is currently leased to Cornforth House. The items from COSHH Assessments to PAT equipment calibration certificates are the responsibility of the lease holder, Cornforth Partnership but these items have been included in the event of the building coming back into the responsibility of the Parish Council.

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| **Minutes & Correspondence** | |
| Agenda | Indefinitely |
| Complaints | 5 Years after closure of case |
| Correspondence & papers on important local issues or activities | Indefinitely |
| Minutes of Committees, Sub Committees & Working Groups | Indefinitely |
| Reports, minutes, newsletters etc from other bodies | Retain as long as useful |
| Reports & other documents circulated with agendas not attached to signed Minutes | Indefinitely |
| Routine correspondence, papers & e-mails | Retain as long as useful |
| Signed Minutes of Council Meetings | Indefinitely |
| **Payroll** | |
| Inland Revenue/HMRC/Pension Annual Returns | Indefinitely |
| Mileage & Expenses Claims | 6 Years |
| Payroll Records including Pension, Tax & National Insurance | 12 Years |
| **Personnel** | |
| Application forms (interviewed - unsuccessful) | 1 Year |
| Disciplinary or Grievance Investigations – proved | Verbal – 6 months  Written – 1 Year  Final Warning – 18 months  Anything involving children - permanently |
| Disciplinary or Grievance Investigations – unproven | Destroy immediately after investigation or appeal |
| Personal files (not payroll information) including  annual/unpaid leave, pensions, training records | 6 years after ceasing employment |
| Statutory Sick Pay/ Maternity/Paternity Records | 6 Years after ceasing employment |
| Termination–voluntary redundancy, dismissal,  retirement | 6 Years after termination. If pension paid then 6 Years after last payment of pension |
| **Planning** | |
| Applications - All consultative documents including plans | Not retained |
| Applications upon which Council has commented | 12 Months |
| Maps and Plans | Indefinitely |