

Oulton Parish Council

Retention of Documents and Records Management Policy

Document Control		
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Introduction

Oulton 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
- Relationships with existing policies
- Retention Schedule

Legal position

Most legal proceedings are governed by the Limitation Act 1980 (as amended). The 1980 Act provides that legal claims may not be commenced after a specific period. Where the limitation periods are longer than other periods specified the documentation should be kept for the longer period specified. Some types of legal proceedings may fall within two or more categories. If in doubt, keep for the longest of the three limitation periods.

Scope of the policy

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.

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, who is required to manage the Council's records in such a way as to promote compliance with this policy so that information can be retrieved easily, appropriately and in a timely manner.

Parish Councillors are required to pass all documents and records whether received electronically or in a hard copy to the Parish Clerk for retention in accordance with this policy

and in the event of a Parish Councillor resigning or failing to retain their post as a result of an election, it is the Parish Councillor's responsibility to ensure anything that remains within their possession but is related to the business of the Parish Council is passed to the Parish Clerk within 10 working days of ceasing to hold the position of a Parish Councillor.

Documents and records are retained by the Parish Clerk in secure conditions.

Relationship with existing policies

This policy has been drawn up within the context of:

- Freedom of Information/Publication Scheme Policy
- Data Protection Policy

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.

Not all the areas listed below are relevant in Oulton.

Document/File	Minimum retention period	Reason
Allotments		
Register and plans	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Burial Grounds		
Register of burials	Indefinite	Archives, Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI. 204)
Register of fees collected		
Register of purchased graves		
Applications for internment		
Applications for right to erect memorials		
Register of reserved plots		
Register of memorials		
Register/plan of grave spaces		
Disposal certificates		
Copy certification of grant of exclusive right of burial		
Contractors		
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit, Legal
Councillor Information		
Declaration of Acceptance of Office	Term of Office + 1 year	Legal
Declarations of Interest	Indefinite	Legal
Register of Members interests	Duration of Office + 1 year	Legal
Contact details	Duration of Office	Management
Members allowances register	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended), Audit
Finance and Payroll		
Annual Accounts	Indefinite	Archives
Annual Return (Audit)	Indefinite	Archives
Asset register	Indefinite	Archives
Bank statements	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit

Quotation and tenders	6 years	Audit, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid invoices	6 years	Audit, VAT
Sent invoices	6 years	Audit, VAT
Bank paying in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Purchase Orders	6 years	Audit/VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended), Audit
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Receipt & Payment Accounts (or Income & Expenditure)	Indefinite	Archives
Payroll, wages books, Tax and NI Records	12 years	Audit, HMRC, Superannuation
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Scale of fees and charges	6 years	Management
VAT Records	6 years generally but 20 years for VAT on rents	Audit, VAT
Halls, Centres and Recreation Grounds		
Application to hire	6 years	VAT
Lettings diaries		
Copies of bills to hirers		
Record of tickets issued		
Health and Safety		
Accident/incident reports	20 years	Potential claims, Legal, Management
Risk Assessment	3 years from last assessment	Management
Playground Inspections	21 years	Legal, insurance
Premises inspection records	25 years	Management
Insurance		
Certificate for insurance against liability for employees	40 years	The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI.2753), Management
Insurance policies/schedules	While valid	Management
Insurance company names and policy numbers	Indefinite	Management
Insurance Claim Records	7 years after closure (allowing for claimant to reach age of 25)	Legal, Management
Legal		
Deeds, conveyances, leases, agreements and contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Documents for legal purposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breach of Trust • Contract • Defamation • Leases • Negligence • Personal injury • Rent • Sums recoverable by statute • To recover land 	Category Limitation period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None • 6 years • 1 year • 12 years • 6 years • 3 years • 6 years • 6 years • 12 years 	Legal
Trust documents	Indefinite	Audit, VAT

Minutes and Correspondence		
Minute Books	Indefinite	Archives
Draft/rough/notes of minutes taken at meetings	Until minutes are approved	Management
Agendas	5 years	Management
Emails/general correspondence and information (those not covered within the retention policy)	6 months or for as long as relevant/useful	Management
Other Information		
Complaints	2 years after conclusion	Management
FOI requests	2 years after conclusion	Management
Documents, plans, maps or articles having local or historic interest	For as long as relevant/useful	Archives
Magazines, journals, advertising material published by or on behalf of the Parish Council	For as long as relevant/useful	Management
Reports and Newsletters	For as long as relevant/useful	Management
Press Releases	6 years	Management
Public Consultation: surveys/questionnaires	5 years	Management
Personnel		
Application Forms (unsuccessful)	6 months	Management, Discrimination Acts
Application Forms (successful)	6 years after ceasing employment	Management, Discrimination Acts
Personnel Records, Contracts	6 years after ceasing employment	Management
Training Records	Term of Office or period of employment plus 6 months	Management
Staff appraisals	6 years after ceasing employment	Management
Pension investment policies	12 years after benefit ends	Management, Legal
Records of ex-pensioners	6 years after benefit ends	Management, Legal
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit
Planning		
Planning application correspondence received from residents	1 year	Management
Planning applications	All planning applications and relevant documents and decision notices are retained by and available from (depending on application authority) either East Suffolk Council or Broads Authority	
Parish and Neighbourhood Plans and similar documents	For as long as they are in force plus 2 years	Management

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

Disposal Procedures

All documents that are no longer required for administration purposes will be shredded and disposed of.