

## **DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY**

### **Introduction**

The Freedom of information Act 2000 provides that anyone anywhere including companies, has the right to request information from the Council. The only requirement is that the Council must HOLD the information/record, which is the subject of the request. Hold- does not mean that the Council initiated the information or that the information related to the Council's functions or operations. The information could be information that other organisations have initiated or produced, and forwarded to the Council for 'information purposes'

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.

Pittington Parish Council will ensure that information is not kept for longer than 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 vital to support the work that the Council do. This document will help us to:-

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.

Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Save Employee's 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.

Ensure archival records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

## Confidential Waste

Fundamentally 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.

What constitutes confidential waste?

- ❖ Exempt information contained within committee reports
- ❖ Files containing the personal details of an individual and files that predominately relate to a particular individual
- ❖ Materials given to us as Confidential or on a limited use basis

What does not constitute confidential waste?

- ❖ Documents that are available to the public via our website or by submitting an appropriate search request to ourselves for general information
- ❖ All reports and background papers of matters taken to committee in public sessions unless specifically exempt.

## Disposal of Documentation

Confidential waste will be shredded by the Clerk

All other documents requiring disposal will be disposed of as general paper waste for recycling purposes.

## Retention

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

The attached table shows the minimum requirements for the retention of documents. Officers holding documents should exercise judgment as to whether they can be disposed of at the end of those periods detailed in the table

Items with a retention period of 3 years or less shall be stored by the Clerk and disposed of when retention period reached.

Items with a retention period over 3 years (after 3 years) shall be sent to County Durham Records Office for achieve/storage. County Durham Records Office to dispose of documents when retention period reached.

DOCUMENT	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD
<b>CEMETERIES</b>	
Cemetery Registers	Indefinite Archives Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 SI 204
General Correspondences	3 Years
Papers relating to plot purchases	Indefinite Archives Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 SI 204
<b>FINANCE &amp; PAYROLL</b>	
Bank Statements	Last completed Audit Year + 1 year
Bank Paying in book/ Cheque book Stubs	Last completed Audit Year + 1 year
Internal and External Audit Reports	6 Years + current
Investments	Indefinite
Loan Records	7 Years following repayment of Loan
Paid Invoices	6 Years + current
Payroll Records	12 Years
Pre-tender qualification documents	Initial application 1 Year
Summary list of expression of interest received	}
Company contracts	3 Years of life of contract
Successful tender documentation	Life of contract + 6 Years
Unsuccessful tender documentation	1 Year
Receipt Books	6 Years
Scales of Fees and Charges	6 Years
Timesheets	Last completed audit year + 1 Year
VAT Records	6 Years
Statutory End of Year returns	Indefinitely
Precept Forms	Last completed Audit Year
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	
Equipment Inspection Records	5 Years
Risk Assessments	2 Years last assessment
Play Area inspection reports	5 Years
<b>INSURANCE POLICY</b>	
Certificate	40 Years
Insurance Claim Records	7 Years after all obligations are concluded (allowing for claimant to reach age of 25)
Policy Renewal Records & Correspondences	5 Years after policy has been renewed
<b>MEMBERS</b>	
Register of Members Interests	18 Months after individual ceases to be a Member
<b>MINUTES AND CORRESPONDENCES</b>	
Agendas	Indefinite
Correspondence & Papers on important local issues or activities	Indefinite
Reports & Other Documentation circulated with agenda not attached to signed minutes	Indefinite

# PITTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Routine correspondence, papers, emails	Retain as long as useful
Signed Minutes of Council Meetings	Indefinite
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	
Complaints	5 Years after closure of Case
Deeds/Leases	Indefinite
Event Papers & Documents	3 Years
Press Releases	6 Years
Public Consultation: Surveys and returns	5 Years
Newsletters, Reports etc from other bodies	Retain as long as useful
Policies/Procedures	Until updated or reviewed
Asset Management Reports/Records	Indefinite
Allotment application forms	Length of tenancy + 2 Years
Allotment agreements	Length of tenancy + 2 Years
Allotment Register and plans	Indefinite
<b>PERSONNEL</b>	
Application Forms (interviewed unsuccessful)	6 Months
Disciplinary Records	Retain for period of employment
Disciplinary or Grievance investigations – Proved	Verbal 6 months Written 1 Year Final Warning 18 months
Disciplinary or Grievance investigations – unproven	Destroy immediately after investigation/appeal
Personal Files (not payroll information)	6 Years after ceasing employment
<b>PLANNING</b>	
Applications – All consultative documents including plans	Not retained
Applications upon which Council has commented	12 Months
Correspondences – inform of request	Not retained

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