

## SEVERN STOKE AND CROOME D'ABITOT PARISH COUNCIL - WORCESTERSHIRE

### RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS POLICY

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Adopted by Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot Parish Council in 2018. Updated March 2024.

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#### 1. Introduction

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 policy provides a framework through which this effective management and retention of public records can be achieved and properly audited.

It covers:-

- Scope
- Responsibilities
- Retention
- Schedule
- Scope of the policy

#### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Parish Council. Records are defined as all those documents which relate to the business carried out by the Parish Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its communications, transactions and activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically. Some of the Parish Council's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical research.

#### 3. Responsibilities

The Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory requirements. 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. The Clerk must ensure that the records for which she is responsible are accurate and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the Parish Council's records management guidelines.

Individual Councillors may hold records in hard copy format or electronically at home or on their home computers. If a Councillor considers that some of these documents are important in the context of the Parish Council's records, they should ensure that the Clerk retain a copy for the official record.

Individual Councillors are strongly advised to undertake “weeding” and “housekeeping” on a regular basis.

On resigning from the Council Councillors should delete electronic records they hold and destroy hard copy documents. Councillors should be aware that records that they hold may be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998; the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 AND GDPR and legislation updated in 2018.

#### 4. Retention Schedule

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Parish Council is required to maintain a retention schedule listing the types of records which it creates or holds in the course of its business. The retention schedule lays down the length of time which the record needs to be retained for 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. The retention schedule refers to all the Parish Council’s records, irrespective of the media in which they are stored.

Please see the Retention Schedule at Appendix 1.

#### Appendix A

##### Retention Schedule

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason
<b>Minutes &amp; Correspondence</b>		
Minute Books	Indefinite	Archive
Correspondence/Papers on Important Local Issues/Activities	Indefinite	Archive
Routine Correspondence, papers & Emails	1 Year	Management

**Finance & Payroll**

Receipts & Payments Books	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Return & Audited Accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Correspondence relating to Audit	Last Completed Audit	Audit/Management
Cheque Book Stubs	Last Completed Audit	Management
Paying In Books	Last Completed Audit	Management
Budgetary Control Papers	2 Years + Current Year	Audit
Bank Statements	7 Years	Audit/Management
Quotations	7 Years	Audit
Paid Invoices	7 Years	Audit/VAT
VAT Records	7 Years	Audit/VAT
Salary Records	7 Years	Audit
Tax & NI Records	7 Years	Audit

**Insurance Policies**

Insurance Policies	Whilst Valid	Audit
Cert. Employers Liability	40 Years	Audit/Legal
Cert. Public Liability	40 Years	Audit/Legal
Insurance Claim Records	7 Years after Conclusion	Legal
Policy Renewal Records	Whilst Valid	Management

**General Management**

Assets Register	Indefinite	Audit
Deeds; Leases	Indefinite	Audit

**Health & Safety**

Accident Books	25 Years from Closure	Management
Equipment Inspection Records	25 Years	Management
Premises Inspection Records	25 Years	Management
Risk Assessments	3 Years from Last Assessment	Management

**Members**

Register of Members Interests	18 Months after individual ceases to be a member	Management
Declarations of Acceptance	Term of Office + 1 Year	Management

**Personnel/Human Resources**

Application Forms ( <i>unsuccessful</i> )	6 Months	Management
Application Forms ( <i>successful</i> )	Period of Employment + 6 Months	Management
Disciplinary Records	Period of Employment + 6 Months	Management
Personal Files ( <i>appraisals/pay reviews etc.</i> )	Period of Employment + 6 Months	Management

**Miscellaneous**

Complaints	2 Years after Closure	Management
Information Requests	2 Years after Closure	Management
Press Releases	5 Years	Management
Public Consultations	5 Years	Management
Reports, Newsletters	As long as is useful	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 items that have reached their deletion or destruction date being deleted/destroyed and the remainder being considered for archiving.

**Planning Applications**

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

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