

Fawkham Parish Council

Document Retention and Disposal Policy

Retention of Documents Policy – June 2020.

The retention of documentation is for audit, regulatory, management and operational purposes. These periods are to be considered as minimum retention times

The person with overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council. They are 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. All documents will be made available on request to the Parish Clerk according to the General Data Protection Regulations and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Documents will be securely destroyed if they are no longer considered relevant to the business of the parish council. The same arrangements for keeping electronic records will be applied to any electronic document as for a paper documents.

Retention Schedule

A Retention Schedule is a list of records that need to be kept by Fawkham Parish Council for a specific length of time. Fawkham Parish Council will retain documents for the periods listed in the table below, consistent with advice from NALC – Legal Topic Note 40 – NALC 2016.

This schedule contains recommended retention periods for records created and maintained by the Parish Council and refers to all information regardless of the media in which it is stored, such as manual files, photographs, electronic files, tapes or microfiche.

A Retention Schedule serves the purpose of identifying records that may be worth preserving permanently as a part of a local authority archive as well as preventing the premature destruction of records that need to be retained for a specific legal, financial or statutory period

This Retention Schedule details the function of each record, the type of records that may fall within this function and the length of time the Council should hold the record before taking disposal or archive action.

Retention of Documents Procedure

Under the FOIA, the Parish Council is required to maintain a retention schedule. 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.

| Document | Minimum | Retention Reason |
|--|---|------------------|
| Minute Books | Indefinite | Archive |
| Annual Accounts | Indefinite | Archive |
| Annual Return | Indefinite | Archive |
| Bank statements | 7 years | Audit/management |
| Cheque book stubs | Last completed audit | Management |
| Paying in books | Last completed 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 | Whilst valid | Audit |
| Cert of Employers Liability | 40 years | Audit/legal |
| Cert of public liability | 40 years | Audit/legal |
| Assets register | Indefinite | Audit |
| Deeds, leases | Indefinite | Audit |
| Electoral Register | 1 year (once new one is issued destroy previous) | Management |
| Declarations of acceptance of office | Term of Office + 1 year | Management |
| Members declaration of pecuniary interests | Term of office + 1 | Management |
| Complaints | 1 year | Management |
| General information | 6 months | Management |
| Planning Applications | 6 months (see below) | Management |
| Routine correspondence & e-mails | 6 months | Management |

Planning Applications

All planning applications and relevant decision notices are available at SDC. There is no requirement to retain duplicates locally. However, all plans will be retained until the building work is completed; contentious plans and applications which have been refused will be retained for future information. All Parish Council recommendations in connection with these applications are recorded in the Council Minutes and are retained indefinitely and are held on the SDC Planning Portal. Correspondence received in connection with applications will be retained as stated above.

Disposal procedures

All documents that are no longer required for administrative reasons should be shredded if confidential and disposed of.

This Policy was adopted at the Council meeting on 18th June 2020, to be reviewed each year at the Annual Council Meeting or sooner if legislation dictates.