

Spaldwick Parish Council Document Retention and Archive Policy

Policy adopted: February 2025

Last reviewed: May 2025

Next review date: May 2026

Introduction

- The Council accumulates a vast amount of information and data during the course of its everyday activities (including data generated internally and information obtained from individuals and external organisations.) This information is recorded in various different types of document.
- Records created and maintained by the Council are important and must be safeguarded. Properly managed records provide authentic and reliable evidence of the Council's transactions and are necessary to ensure it can demonstrate accountability.
- Documents or records may be retained in either 'hard' paper form or in electronic form.
- It is imperative that documents are retained for an adequate period of time. If documents are destroyed prematurely the Council and individual officers concerned could face prosecution for not complying with legislation and it could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the Council.
- The Council should equally not retain documents longer than is necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) of personal information.

Objectives

- The aim of this document is to provide a framework, in accordance with GDPR, the Freedom of Information Act and Human Rights legislation requirements, to determine which documents are:
 - Retained – and for how long; or
 - Disposed of – and if so by what method

Roles and Responsibilities for Document Retention and Disposal

- Councils are responsible for determining whether to retain or dispose of documents and should ensure all employees are aware of the retention/disposal schedule.
- undertake an annual review of documentation to ensure that any unnecessary documentation being held is disposed of under GDPR.

Retention or Disposal of Documents

- Retention of records is required for the following reasons:
 - to fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements
 - to meet the operational needs of the service
 - to evidence events in the case of dispute
 - because the document or record is of historic interest or intrinsic value
- Records for permanent retention should be transferred to the Records Office or held by solicitors as appropriate.
- If the retention criteria do not apply, documents should be disposed of.

Destruction and Deletion

- Electronic data stored on alternative media must be permanently deleted from the records at the same time
- Information held in more than one media, including the website, should be destroyed at the same time
- Whenever there is a possibility of litigation, the records and information should not be amended or disposed of until the threat of litigation has been removed
- Duplicate, insignificant or records of short-term value should be destroyed in the normal course of business
- All documents will be shredded.

List of Documents

LEGAL DOCUMENTS	
Minute books/files	Keep permanently. Archived to Huntingdon Library. Minutes for the current term of the Council and the previous 4 years to be kept in secure storage. Draft notes of minutes destroyed once the minutes have been approved.
Deeds/Leases	Originals archived. Keep photocopies in secure storage.
Correspondence relating to deeds/leases	Filed in secure cabinet
INLAND REVENUE/VAT/PENSIONS/INSURANCE	
Pension	Keep any records until 3 years after the death of the former employee. Paper – in secure storage. Electronic records backed – up to external hard drive.
Inland Revenue	Keep for 7 years in secure storage
VAT	Keep for 10 years in secure storage
Certificates of Employers Liabilities	Keep permanently
Public Liability Insurance Policies (including receipts for payments and certificates)	Keep for 21 years – in secure storage
PLANNING	
Consultation Papers	All available on Huntingdonshire District Council website. General applications- 6 months after the Planning Authority decision made. Applications for larger or controversial developments consider keeping longer.
Parish Council Planning Applications	Keep permanently in secure storage
CONTRACTS	
All paperwork relating to contracts and tenders	Successful: paper – keep for 7 years after the completion of the project. Paper under seal – keep for 12 years. Electronic – keep for 12 years. Unsuccessful applicants: destroy 2 years after the start of the contract.
COMPUTER HARD DRIVES	
Data on PC	Retained until computer is replaced. All data to be copied and the hard drive destroyed. Data to be kept securely.
EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF	
Recruitment and selection	Permanent record of appointment in the Council minutes. Keep all paperwork for successful candidates for 6 years after termination of employment. Unsuccessful applicants – destroy after 6 months
Personnel File	Disciplinary and grievance procedures archived after employment terminated. Destroyed 6 years after termination of employment.
Annual Appraisal	Keep whilst employed. Destroyed at termination of employment.
Termination Process	Destroy 6 years after termination of employment
Payroll records	Timesheets, absence/sickness records, P60, payslips, pension payments- current year plus 6 years
FINANCE	
Invoices	Current year plus 6 years

Receipt Books	Current year plus 6 years
Bank statements	Current year plus 6 years
Bank reconciliations	Current year plus 6 years
Annual returns	Keep permanently
List of authorised signatories	Noted in Annual meeting minutes.
COUNCILLORS	
Declaration of Acceptance of Office	Retain for 18 months after a member leaves.
Register of Interest	Register of all current members to be retained. Retain for 18 months after a member leaves.
OTHER MATERIAL	
Historical Events/Celebrations e.g. Millenium	Keep for historical record
Personal Data	Kept for no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it is held
FOI Disclosure log & details of request made under FOI Act	Destroy each record 5 years after record is opened
General Paperwork or emails	Review every 2 years. Anything controversial or on-going – keep. Anything else - destroy

NB: Secure storage – locked filing cabinet. Archive facility – Huntingdonshire District Council Archives Unit, Huntingdon / County Council Archive Office, Ely. Documents to be destroyed will be shredded. All folders clearly labelled.