

BERRICK SALOME PARISH COUNCIL

RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS

(Adopted by Parish Council at their meeting of 11 July 2019; reviewed by the Parish Council at their meetings of 10 September 2020 and 14 July 2022)

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.

In drafting this policy the Parish Council has been guided by NALC Legal Topic Note LTN 40 (November 2016).

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.

Responsibilities

The Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory requirements. This is the responsibility of all Councillors and Officers. Financial records are the responsibility of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

The person with overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council, and 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. The Clerk must ensure that the records for which they are 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 General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Minimum Retention Periods

Retention periods are sometimes prescribed by statute and at other times by common best practice.

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.

Local Government Act 1972 – schedule 12, paragraphs 41(1) and 41(2) provides that signed minutes of all Parish Council meetings must be entered into a minute book, either bound or loose leaf, and held indefinitely. The act does not provide for electronic storage.

Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (December 2014) – under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 parish councils with a turnover not exceeding £25,000 per annum are required to publish certain information on their website. The code does not say how long the information needs to be displayed for.

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 A.

This policy will be reviewed annually by Berrick Salome Parish Council to ensure that it is relevant to working practice.

Adopted by Berrick Salome Parish Council

11 July 2019

Reviewed 10 September 2020

Reviewed 14 July 2022

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Chairman

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Parish Clerk

Appendix A

Retention Schedule

Document	Responsibility	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
ADMINISTRATION			
Agendas – hard copy	Clerk	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Administration
Agendas – website	Clerk	Indefinite	Transparency Code
Minutes and minute book – hard copy	Clerk	Indefinite	Archive
Minutes – website	Clerk	Indefinite	Transparency Code
Correspondence on important local issues or activities (see note 1 below)	Councillors and Clerk	Indefinite	Archive
General correspondence	Councillors and Clerk	1 year	Administration
Emails	Councillors and Clerk	1 year	Administration
Asset register, title deeds and leases	Clerk and RFO	Indefinite	Audit/Administration
FINANCE & PAYROLL			
Receipts and payments accounts	RFO	Indefinite	Archive
Annual returns (AGARs)	RFO	Indefinite	Archive
Cheque book stubs, paying in books and bank statements	RFO	Last completed audit year	Audit
Receipt advices, paid invoices, VAT records	RFO	7 years	Audit/VAT
Contracts, quotations and tenders	RFO	7 years	Audit
Petty cash and postage books	RFO	7 years	Audit
Salary records	RFO	7 years	Audit

INSURANCE			
Insurance policies	Clerk and RFO	While valid	Administration
Certificates of Employer Liability and Public Liability	Clerk and RFO	40 years from date on which the insurance commenced or was renewed	Legal
Insurance claim records	Clerk and RFO	7 years after conclusion	Legal
PLANNING			
Planning applications	Clerk	Until either approved or any relevant appeal has been dealt with.	Administration

Note 1: It is up to the Parish Council to decide if a local issue or activity is important enough to request that related correspondence and emails are retained indefinitely. In such cases emails should be printed and kept as hard copies.