

Cotesbach Parish Council

Document Retention Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Cotesbach Parish Council (the PC) 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 PC.

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the PC in the course of carrying out its functions. Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the PC and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.

The PC will retain its important documents, both electronic and paper documents for the periods listed in the table below (consistent with advice from NALC Legal Topic Note 40 – September 2016). These periods are to be considered as minimum retention times. The Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that the documents are filed in an orderly and secure manner at all times. Documents will be made available on request according to the requirements of the Council's Document Publication Policy.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

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. This retention schedule refers to record series regardless of the media in which they are stored.

3. CORRESPONDENCE

General correspondence and emails will be retained for as long as is relevant, the minimum period is 3 months. 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 be considered for archiving.

It is down to individual Councillors to delete emails in their allocated Councillor email account.

4. TRUSTS

As there is no limitation period in respect of trusts, councils are advised that they should never destroy trust deeds and scheme and other documentation.

Some types of legal proceedings may fall into two or more categories. NALC recommends that the longest of the limitation periods is adhered to.

5. RECORDS IDENTIFIED FOR PERMANENT PRESERVATION

These should be archived once there is no longer an administrative need for them.

7. RECORD-KEEPING

To ensure records are easily accessible, it is necessary to comply with the following:

- All files will be stored in a safe and secure place.
- Electronic files will be saved using relevant file names and be backed up periodically on a portable hard drive. Documentation no longer required will be disposed of in line with Section 8.

8. RECORDS TO BE DESTROYED

To protect confidential information, all records assigned for disposal should be securely destroyed. Paper records containing confidential information should be shredded. Electronic records should be deleted from digital files.

9. RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS

Document Type

Minutes	Indefinite
Notes of minutes taken at meeting	Until minutes are approved
Agendas	Indefinite
Reports and other documents circulated with agendas	Indefinite
Councillors Declaration of Acceptance of Office & Register of Interests	Term of office

The Parish Clerk will obtain the formal approval of the Parish Council before records of a sensitive or confidential nature are deleted or destroyed.

2. All physical documents that are sensitive, confidential or refer to individuals, and are no longer required for administrative reasons, will be shredded or otherwise destroyed before disposal.

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Declaration of Acceptance	Member's Term of Office	Held by Clerk
Members Register of Interests	Member's Term of Office	Held by Clerk
Planning applications and related papers	Not retained by PC. Planning applications and relevant decisions are available on the Harborough District Council Website. All Parish Council decisions in relation to application are recorded in the Minutes.	Management

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Contracts, and other agreements of a financial nature	6 years	Audit, Management
Quotations and tenders	12 years/indefinite	Statute of Limitations
Important correspondence relating to decisions, transactions and activities	1 year	Management
General Information (including invitations, lobbying, promotional material)	No minimum	Management
Routine correspondence and emails	3 months	Management
Complaints	1 year	Management
Scales of fees and charges	5 years	Management
Annual Accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Returns	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt and payment account(s)	6 years	Archive
Bank statements, including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT
VAT Records	6 years	VAT
Income Tax & NI records	3 years	Audit
Insurance policies	While Valid	Management

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Certificates for Insurance against liability for employees	While Valid	The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI. 2753), Management
Assets Register	Indefinite	Audit, Legal
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	

Approved at the Parish Council Meeting on 3rd September 2024. Minute 17 .