

Data Retention & Disposal Policy



Adopted by Council on
11 June 2024
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For review in June 2025

1 Introduction

1.1 The guidelines set out in this document support Ruskington Parish Council's (RPC) Data Protection Policy and assists in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the General Data Protection Regulation & The Data Protection Act 2018 and other legislation.

1.2 It is a requirement that Council has arrangements for the retention and disposal of documents necessary for the adequate management of services in undertaking its responsibilities. The policy sets out the minimum requirements for the retention and disposal of documents.

1.3 Council shall ensure that information is not kept for longer than is necessary and shall retain the minimum amount of information that it requires to carry out its functions and provision of services, whilst adhering to any legal or statutory requirements.

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 It is recognised that up to date, reliable and accurate information is a vital to support the work and the services that it provides to its residents.

The policy will:

- Ensure the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information that is necessary for Council to operate and provide services to the public.
- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, the General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2015.
- Save employees' time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily.
- Ensure archival records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

3 Scope

3.1 For the purpose of this policy, 'documents', includes electronic, microfilm, microfiche, CCTV footage, and paper records.

3.2 Where storage is by means of paper records, originals rather than photocopies shall be retained where possible.

4 Standards

4.1 Council shall endeavour to ensure that it meets the following standards of good practice:

- Adhere to legal requirements for the retention of information as specified in the Retention Schedule at Annex A that provides a framework for good practice requirements for retaining information.
- 'Hard Copy' Personal information shall be retained in locked filing cabinets within the Parish Office. Access to these documents shall only be by authorised personnel.
- Disclosure information shall be retained in a locked cabinet in the Parish Office.
- Appropriately dispose of information that is no longer required.
- Appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure that confidential and sensitive information is securely destroyed.
- Information about unidentifiable individuals is permitted to be held indefinitely for historical, statistical or research purposes e.g. Equalities data.
- Wherever possible only one copy of any personal information shall be retained and held in the Parish Office

5. Breach of Policy and Standards

5.1 An employee who knowingly or recklessly contravenes any instruction contained in, or following from, this Policy and Standards may, depending on the circumstances of the case, be subjected to disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Chairman of Council has overall responsibility for the policy.

6.2 The Clerk is responsible for the maintenance and operation of this policy.

6.3 Council shall provide an independent audit by councillors to ensure policy is maintained.

6.4 The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that the guidelines set out in this policy are adhered to and that any documents disposed of are done so in accordance with their 'sensitivity' (i.e. whether they are normal waste or 'Confidential Waste').

7. Confidential Waste

7.1 Information that is required to be produced under the Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations and is available on the parish website or is open to public inspection should NOT be treated as confidential waste.

7.2 Information that is protected by the Data Protection Act or as Confidential under the Councils Standing Orders should be treated as confidential waste for disposal purposes.

7.3 Examples of confidential waste:

- Exempt information contained within committee reports.
- Files containing the personal details of an individual and files that predominantly relate to a particular individual or their circumstances. For example, completed application forms and letters.
- Materials given to council on a 'confidential' or on a limited use basis e.g. material provided by contractors or the police.

7.4 Examples of what does not constitute confidential waste:

- Documents that are available to the public via the council website or by submitting an appropriate search request to council for general information.
- All reports and background papers of matters taken to Committee in public session unless specifically exempt.

8. Disposal of Documentation

8.1 Confidential waste which clearly shows any personal information or information which can be identified using the parameters set out in 7.3 shall be shredded within the Parish Office. Bulk shredding or shredding of items too large for the Office shredder, shall be collected and disposed of by a council approved firm, and a certificate of confidential shredding obtained. Laptops and other devices to be cleaned and disposed of by a council approved firm and a certificate obtained.

9. Retention

9.1 Timeframes for retention of documents have been set using legislative requirements in accordance with government legislation for local councils, as advised by the National Association of Local Councils.

9.2 Throughout retention the conditions regarding safe storage and controlled access shall remain in place.

9.3 DBS paperwork is the property of the individual and must not be stored or shared by Ruskington Parish Council. Only the date of expiry can be recorded. Employees and volunteers to be encouraged to sign up to the automatic renewal system.

9.4 Annex A provides the minimum requirements for the retention of documents.

10.Storage and Access

10.1 Personnel files to be stored in a secure lockable, non-portable cabinet with access strictly controlled and limited to the Chairman/ Vice Chairman, Chairman of the Human Resources Committee, Clerk, and/or Deputy Clerk.

11.Handling

11.1 Personal information shall only be available to those who are authorised councillors with a legitimate need to know the information.

11.2 An unauthorised employee accessing or attempting to access personal information or personnel records shall be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedures.

12.Usage

12.1 Personal information shall be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's/employee's consent has been given. Disclosure Information shall be shared between different Committees of Council, if necessary.

12.2 Where personal information is shared with anyone other than the Chairman of Council /Vice Chairman, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, the employee shall be given a reason why this information is being shared in writing.

ANNEX A

Recommended Document Retention Timescales

The retention period shall be the number of years specified plus the current financial period (i.e. three years plus the current period, therefore at least three years documentation will always be retained at any given point in time).

This list is not exhaustive; clarification about any document may be obtained through the Parish Clerk.

Document Retention Period – Finance

Document	Retention Period
Financial Published Final Accounts	Indefinitely
Signed Audited Accounts	Indefinitely
Final Account working papers	5 years
Records of all accounting transactions held by the Financial Management System	At least 5 years

Cash Books (records of monies paid out and received)	6 years
Purchase Orders	6 years
Cheque Payment Listings (Invoices received)	6 years
Payment Vouchers Capital and Revenue (copy invoices)	6 years
BACS listings	6 years
Goods received notes, advice notes and delivery notes	3 years
Copy receipts	6 years
Petty cash vouchers and reimbursement claims	6 years
Debtors and rechargeable works records	6 years
Expenses and travel allowance claims	6 years
Asset Register for statutory accounting purposes	10 years
Journal Sheets	5 years
Ledger / Trial Balance	10 years
Year-end ledger tabulations – ledger details and cost updates	5 years
Published Budget Books	Indefinitely Medium Term
Financial Plan	Indefinitely
Budget Estimates – Detailed Working Papers and summaries	3 years
Bank Statement (Disk Space) and Instructions to banks	6 years
Bank Statements (Hardcopy)	6 years
Banking Records including Giro cheques, bills of exchange and other negotiable instruments	6 years
Prime evidence that money has been banked	6 years
Bank Reconciliation	3 years
Cheques presented / drawn on the Council bank accounts	3 years
Prime records that money has been correctly recorded in the Councils financial systems	3 years
Grant/Funding Applications & Claims	5 years
Precept Forms	Indefinitely
Internal Audit Plans/ Reports	3 years
Fees and Charges Schedules	5 years
Time sheets and overtime claims	6 years
Payroll and tax information relating to employees	6 years
Payroll costing analysis	2 years

Records of payment made to employees for salaries / wages (including intermediate payslips)	6 years
Statutory end of year returns to Inland Revenue and Pensions Section	Indefinitely
Loans and Investment Records; temporary loan receipts and loan tabulations	6 years (after redemption of loan)
VAT, Income Tax and National Insurance Records	6 years
Current and expired insurance contracts and policies indefinitely Insurance records and claims	6 years
Capital and contracts register	Indefinitely
Final accounts of contracts executed under hand	6 years from completion of contract
Final accounts of contracts executed under seal	12 years from completion of contract
All Other reconciliations	3 years

Personnel

Unsuccessful application forms	6 months
Unsuccessful reference requests	1 year
Successful applications Forms and CVs	For duration of employment + 6 years
References received	For duration of employment + 6 years
Statutory sick records, pay, calculations, certificates etc.	For duration of employment + 6 years
Annual leave records	For duration of employment + 6 years
Unpaid leave/special leave	For duration of employment + 6 years
Annual appraisal/assessment records	For 6 years after ceasing employment
Time Control Records	2 years
Personnel files and training records	For 6 years after employment ceases
Disciplinary or grievance investigations - proved -Verbal -Written -Final warning - Anything involving children	6 months 1 year 18 months permanently

Disciplinary or grievance investigations - unproven	6 years after ceasing employment
Statutory Maternity/Paternity records, calculations, certificates etc	3 years after the tax year in which the maternity period ended
Wages/salary records, overtime, bonuses, expenses etc	6 years after ceasing employment.

Corporate

Minutes and reports of Committee meetings	Indefinitely
Minutes and reports for Special Committee meetings	Indefinitely
Minutes and reports of sub-committees	Indefinitely
Notes and reports of working groups	Indefinitely
Policies and procedures	Until reviewed or approved.
Asset Management records	Indefinitely
Asset management reports	Indefinitely
Internal audit records	3 years
Internal audit fraud investigation	7 years from date of final outcome of investigation
Risk register	Indefinitely
Risk management reports	Indefinitely
Performance reports	Indefinitely
Equalities data	Indefinitely
Questionnaire data	Indefinitely (No personal details to be kept. Can only use the info for 3 years for funding purposes.)
Details regarding burials	Indefinitely
Drivers' log books and mileage	6 years
Vehicle maintenance and registration records (all necessary certificates, MOT certificates, test records and vehicle registration documents etc)	2 years after vehicle disposed of
Fuel usage records	3 years
Allotment register and plans	Indefinitely
Allotment application forms	Length of Tenancy + 2 years
Allotment agreements	Length of Tenancy + 2 years
Facility hire/user agreements	1 year
All emails and correspondence	1 year
Paper applications	1 year

Pre-tender qualification document Summary list of expression of interest received Company contacts. A summary of any financial or technical evaluation supplied with the expressions of interest Initial application	1 year
Successful tender documentation Life of contract	6 years
Unsuccessful tender documentation	1 year
Deeds of land and property	Indefinitely
Land and property rental agreements	6 years after expiry of the agreement
Property evaluation lists	Indefinitely
Lease agreements, variation and valuation queries	6 years after the expiry of the agreement
Documentation referring to externally funded projects	6 years
Booking diaries	3 years
Electronic booking	Indefinite
Premises License applications	Indefinitely
Electoral Roll	Access via link to NKDC. No information to be shared or used other than for the stated on the Electoral Roll.

Cemetery and burials

Register of fees collected	Indefinitely
Register of burials	Indefinitely
Register of purchased graves	Indefinitely
Register / plan of grave spaces	Indefinitely
Register of memorials	Indefinitely
Applications for interment	Indefinitely
Applications to erect memorial stones	Indefinitely
Disposal certificates	Indefinitely

Copy of Exclusive Rights of Burial	Indefinitely
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Health & Safety

Health and Safety Accident books	3 years after the date of the last entry (unless an accident involving chemicals or asbestos is reported).
Medical records containing details of employee exposed to asbestos or as specified by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999	40 years from the date of the last entry
Medical examination certificates	4 years from date of issue
Records relating to accidents person over 18 years	3 years from date of accident
Records relating to accidents person under 18 years	Until 21st birthday
Asbestos records for premises/property including survey and removal records	40 years
Parks and play area inspection reports	5 years
All inspection certificates (Gas Safe, FENSA etc)	2 years
Repairs job sheets	2 years
Periodic machinery inspection tests (PAT, equipment calibration etc)	2 years
Warranties	10 years
Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of general waste	3 years
Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of hazardous waste	10 years
Plant and equipment testing	2 years
Risk Assessment Forms	2 years
Unusual Incident Forms	3 years
Manual Handling Assessment Forms	3 years

Additional Items	
Approved Minutes	Indefinitely

