

Nettlestead Parish Council: document retention policy

REVIEWED APRIL 2022

Introduction

Nettlestead Parish Council is obliged to maintain and retain documentation for a number of purposes, including audit, tax liabilities and in the event of legal disputes and proceedings. Subject to those reasons, papers and records may be destroyed if they are no longer of use or relevance.

Both the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) require public bodies to manage information and its access in particular ways.

Strategic approach to record management

Nettlestead Parish Council's policy on record management will enable the Council to:

- Comply with the relevant legislation and codes of practice
- Create authentic, reliable and useable records
- Support the Council's business functions, including asset management
- Document the Council's decisions and activities
- Reduce storage costs
- Facilitate the paperless office
- Enable the efficient and accurate retrieval of information
- Dispose correctly of records no longer required

The Parish Clerk will be responsible for record management. Initial queries should be made to the Parish Clerk.

Responsibility – Parish Clerk is obliged to:

- Keep accurate records in an organised and accessible form
- Keep records for as long as necessary
- Document actions and decisions in records
- Document reasons for the disposal of records
- Ensure all records created by the Parish Council are relevant, complete and accurate, without any unsubstantiated or subjective commentary, and protected against unauthorised addition, deletion, alteration, use or concealment

Periods of retention

The minimum periods for which various types of records must be kept are set out in the Retention Schedule at Annex A. These reflect statutory requirements, codes of practice and recommendations published by professional and other bodies. In the absence of any guidance, it will be the responsibility of the Parish Clerk to determine a suitable retention period.

At the end of the retention period, the record must be assessed to determine whether it should be retained for a further period. This is particularly relevant where the record has been the subject of a request for access to information under the DPA or the FOIA. This is the case even where access to information has been refused, as the record should be retained until the end of the period in which an appeal can be lodged or the appeals procedure exhausted.

Record disposal

Records designated for disposal must be securely disposed of to preserve confidentiality. No record is to be disposed of without the approval of the Parish Clerk, reasons must be given for disposal, and a note made of which records are destroyed with their date of destruction.

ANNEX A

RETENTION SCHEDULE DOCUMENT	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD	REASON
Minute Books	Indefinite	Archive
Scales of fees and charges,	6 years	Management
Receipt and payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive receipt
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT
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
Quotations and tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid Invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
VAT records	6 years	VAT
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit
Insurance policies	While valid	Management
Certificates for insurance against liabilities for employers	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was reviewed	The Employers Liability (Compulsory Insurance) regulations 1998 (SI.2753), Management
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Title Deeds, Leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management