

## **WALBERSWICK PARISH COUNCIL - RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Walberswick Parish Council (WPC) recognises that the efficient and effective management of its records is essential to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to assist in the satisfactory management of public business by the Parish Council. This policy provides a framework through which this effective management and retention of public records can be achieved and properly audited. It covers:

- Scope
- Responsibilities
- Relationships with existing policies
- Retention Schedule

### **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. The person with overall responsibility for maintaining this policy is the Clerk and Proper Officer to the Parish Council.

The person responsible for records management will give guidance for good records management practice and will promote compliance with this policy so that information will be stored and retrieved easily, appropriately and timely.

The Clerk and Proper Officer must ensure that the records for which he/she is 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 the Councillor considers that some of these documents are important in the context of the parish 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 Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information regulations 2004.

### **Relationship with existing policies**

This policy has been drawn up within the context of other Parish Council policies including the Walberswick Publication Scheme

Records shall be managed in accordance with the Limitation Act 1980, the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the management of records.

### **Retention Schedule**

The Parish Council is required to maintain a retention schedule listing 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 and the action which should be taken when it is of no further administrative use.

The Clerk will be expected to manage the current record keeping systems using the retention schedule and to take account of the different retention periods when he/she is creating new record keeping systems.

The retention schedule refers to all Parish Council records irrespective of the media in which they are stored.

This procedure will be implemented during the calendar year 2013. "Weeding" and destruction of files that have passed their retention dates will be carried out by the Clerk with the support of a nominated councillor.

### **Planning Papers**

#### **• Permission Granted**

All papers should be retained until after the development has been completed to allow the Council to check that the development proceeds in accordance with the terms of the permission.

#### **• Appeal decisions**

All papers should be retained for 5 years as it may be required should there be longer term implications e.g. the decision creates a precedent for other developments in the parish.

#### **• Permission Refused**

All papers should be retained until after the period in which an appeal can be made has expired. If a resulting appeal is dismissed the documentation should be retained for 5 years in case further applications relating to the same site are submitted.

#### **• Local Development Framework and other planning policies produced by the relevant County and District Councils**

These policies shall be retained for the period the policies are in force. This is necessary so that the Council

- Can, in making comments on planning issues refer to the relevant policies
- Can, should it so wish, become involved in neighbourhood planning.

### **MINIMUM RETENTION PERIODS**

<b>Document or Record</b>	<b>Min Retention Period</b>	<b>Reason</b>
<b>Minutes &amp; Correspondence</b>		
Signed Minutes of Council Meetings	Indefinite	Archive
Correspondence & papers on important local issues & activities	Indefinite	Archive
Routine correspondence, papers & emails	1 year	Management
<b>Finance &amp; Payroll</b>		
Receipt and Payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Return and Audited accounts	Indefinite	Archive
All Bank Statements		
Bank Paying-in Books	Last completed Audit year	Audit
Cheque Books Stubs	Last completed Audit year	Audit
Correspondence relating to audit matters	Last completed Audit year	Audit
Budgetary Control Papers	2 years + current year	Audit
Quotations and Tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid Invoices	6 years	VAT
VAT records	6 years	VAT
Payroll records	Last completed Audit year	Audit

### **Insurance Policies**

Cert of Employers Liability	50 years	Legal requirement
Cert of Public Liability	21 years	Legal requirement
Other insurance policies	while valid or a claim can be made	Management
Insurance Claim Records	7 Years after all obligations are concluded	Legal requirement
Policy renewal records & correspondence	While Valid	Management
<b>General Management</b>		
Title Deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit/ Management
Members allowances	6 years	Tax
<b>Allotments</b>		
Register, plans, receipt books and scale of charges	Indefinite	Audit/ Management
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>		
Accident Books (injuries to Adults)	25 Years from closure	Management
Accident Books (injuries to Children)	25 Years from closure	Management
Equipment Inspection Records	25 Years	Management
Premises Inspection Records	25 Years	Management
Risk Assessments	3 Years from last assessment	Management
<b>Members</b>		
Register of Members Interests	18 months after individual ceases to be a Member	Management
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
Complaints	2 Years after closure of case	Management
Information requests	2 Years after closure of case	Management
Press Releases	5 Years	Management
Public consultation: surveys & returns	5 Years	Management
Register of Officers Interests	Indefinite	Management
Reports, newsletters etc from other bodies	Retain as long as useful	Management
<b>Personnel/Human Resources</b>		
Application forms (interviewed - unsuccessful)	6 Months	Management
Disciplinary records	Retain for period of employment	Management
Personal files (not payroll information)	6 years after ceasing employment	Management

General correspondence will be retained as long as relevant, the minimum period is 1 year. 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 being considered for archiving.

**Review Date:** This policy will be reviewed annually.

**Approved and adopted at the Walberswick Parish Council meeting held on 20.05.13**

**JK Gomm**  
**Clerk, Walberswick Parish Council**