

Sutton Bridge Parish Council

Document Retention Policy

Sutton Bridge Parish Council (the "Council") recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and statutory obligations and contributes to effective transaction of business. This policy provides a framework through which effective management and retention of public records can be achieved and properly audited.

This policy applies to all records created, received, or maintained by the Council. Records are defined as all those documents which relate to the business carried out by the 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 Council's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical research.

Responsibilities

The 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 the implementation of this policy is the clerk to the Council, who is 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 are accurate and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with statutory requirements and the 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 retains 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; the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Retention Schedule

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the 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. 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.

Destruction of documents will be undertaken securely and in accordance with the provisions of this policy to avoid any inference that a document was destroyed in anticipation of a problem. Records maintained on electronic data processing storage media will be subject to the same rules of retention and security as paper records.

The retention schedule in Appendix 1 refers to all the Council's records, irrespective of the media in which they are stored.

Excepting routine correspondence, papers, and emails, prior to the disposal of Parish Council documents, confirmation should be obtained from the Parish Council.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Council periodically to monitor its effectiveness, taking account of users' comments.

Appendix A - Retention Schedule

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason
General		
Signed Minutes	Indefinite	Archive
Audio-visual recordings of meeting (where taken)	To be deleted as soon as the minutes of the meeting have been approved.	Notetaking
Routine correspondence, papers, and emails	1 Year	Management
Correspondence, papers and emails on important local issues or activities	Indefinite	Archive
Financial & Insurance		
Annual Return and Audited Accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Invoices, VAT returns, Salary, Tax and NI Records	7 Years	Audit
Correspondence relating to Audit	3 Years	Management
Cheque Book Stubs and Paying-In Books	3 Years	Management
Budget Control Papers	3 Years	Audit
Precept Correspondence	3 Years	Audit
Contracts	7 Years	Audit
Insurance Policies and Renewal Records	Whilst Valid	Audit
Certificate of Employers Liability	40 Years	Audit/Legal
Certificate of Public Liability	40 Years	Audit/Legal
Insurance Claim Records	7 Years after resolution	Legal
Asset Register	Indefinite	Audit
Members		
Register of Members Interests	18 Months after individual ceases to be a member	Management
Declarations of Acceptance	Term of Office plus 1 Year	Management
Miscellaneous		
General Correspondence & Reports	1 Year, or as long as relevant	Management
Complaints	2 Years after closure	Management
Information Requests	2 Years after closure	Management