

SWINTON PARISH COUNCIL
DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

Document Retention Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 In the course of carrying out its various functions and activities, the Council collects information from individuals and external organisations and generates a wide range of data/information which is recorded. These records can take many different forms including:-

- Letters received from third parties
- Copy letters which have been sent out
- File attendance notes
- Invoices
- Completed application forms
- Plans/drawings
- Financial records
- Registers
- Contracts/deeds
- E-mail communications, and any attachments
- Photographs
- Tape recordings

1.2 Many of the above documents can be retained as 'hard' paper records or in electronic form.

1.3 Retention of specific documents may be necessary to:

- Fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements
- Evidence events/agreements in case of disputes
- Meet operational needs
- Ensure the preservation of documents of historic or other value

1.4 The untimely destruction of documents could cause the Council:

- Difficulty in defending litigious claims
- Operational problems
- Embarrassment
- Failure to comply with the Freedom of Information or Data Protection Acts requirements.

1.5 Conversely, the permanent retention of all documents is undesirable, and appropriate disposal is to be encouraged for the following reasons:

- There is a shortage of storage space
- Disposal of existing storage use can free up space for more productive activities
- Indefinite retention of personal data may be unlawful
- Reduction of fire risk
- Decluttering can be psychologically beneficial

1.6 Modern day records management philosophy emphasises the importance of organisations having in place systems for the timely and secure disposal of documents / records that are no longer required for business purposes. Additionally the freedom of information act will

make it important that the Council has clearly defined policies and procedures in place for disposing of records, and that these are well documented

2. Scope and Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a corporate policy framework to govern decisions on whether a particular document (or set of documents) should either be:

- Retained – in what format and for what period, or
- Disposed of – if so when and by what method

3. Retention Period & Reasons

3.1 The retention periods for the different types of documentation and information held is set out in the table below, also the reason for retention given therein

3.2 In the event a decision is taken to dispose of a particular document or set of documents in accordance with the table below, consideration should be given to the method of disposal as set out below:

4. Method of Disposal

4.1 Disposal can be achieved by a range of processes:

- Confidential waste – i.e. making available for collection by a designated refuse collection service.
- Physical destruction on site – i.e. shredding paper records
- Deletion – where computer files are concerned
- Migration of document to external body

Retention of documents table for Swinton Parish Council

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Minute books	Indefinite	Archive
Scale of fees and charges	6 years	Management
Project/Event Files	1 year	For as long as is useful and relevant
Accounting Records	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	HMRC Inspections
Bank statements, including deposit and savings accounts	6 years	Statutory Regulations
Bank paying in books	6 years	Statutory Regulations
Cheque book stubs	6 years	Statutory Regulations
Quotations and Tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid invoices	6 years	HMRC Inspections
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
VAT records	6 years	HMRC Inspections
Petty cash	6 years	HMRC Inspections
Insurance policies	While valid	Management
Certificates for Insurance against liability for employees	40 years from the date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI. 2753), Management
Investments	Indefinite	Management
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Management
Members allowances register	6 years	HMRC Inspections
For Play Areas		

Weekly/Annual Inspection Registers	17 years	Management
For Planning Documentation		
Planning reference from planning papers	1 year	Available on the District Council website
Information from other bodies		
County Associations, NALC, SLCC, principal bodies	Undefined	For as long as is useful and relevant
Magazines and Journals	Undefined	For as long as is useful and relevant
Staffing		
Documentation relating to staff	Not longer than is necessary for the purpose it was held – 6 months if a claim / proceedings etc	To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit
Wages and PAYE records	12 years	Superannuation/HMRC Inspection
Personnel Files	3 years after employment terminated	Management
Interview Records	6 months	For as long as is useful and relevant