

Swardeston Parish Council – Document Retention Policy

The Parish Council recognised that efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the Parish Council. This document provides the policy framework thorough which this effective management can be achieved and audited.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Parish Council in the course of carrying out its functions. Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the Parish Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.

A small percentage 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 corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council, the Clerk is required to manage the Council's records in such a way as to promote compliances with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and in a timely manner.

RETENTION SCHEDULE

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Parish Council is required to maintain a retention schedule listing the recorded series which it creates 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 is expected to manage the current record keeping system using the retention schedule and to take account of the different retention periods when creating new record keeping systems. This retention schedule refers to records series regardless of the media in which they are stored.

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason
Minute Book	Indefinite	Archive
Accounts/Annual Return	6 years	Audit
Receipt & Payment Accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Receipts Books	6 years	VAT
Bank Statements	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque Book Stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank Paying-in Book	Last completed audit year	Audit
Quotation & Tenders	6 years	Audit
Paid Invoices	6 years	Audit/VAT
VAT Records	6 years	VAT
Salary Records	12 years	Audit
Insurance Policies	While valid	Management
Insurance Claims Records	6 years	Audit/legal
Employers Liability Certificate	While valid	Management
Public Liability Certificate	While valid	Management
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management

Title Deeds, Leases, Agreements & Contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Asset Register	Indefinite	Audit
Declaration of Acceptance of Office	Term of Office + 1 year	Management
Members register of Interest	Term of Office + 1 year	Management
Complaints	1 year	Management
General Information	3 months	Management
Routine correspondence/emails	6 months	Management
Planning Applications	All planning applications and relevant decision notices are available at South Norfolk District Council. There is no requirement to retain duplicates locally. All Parish Council recommendations in connection with these applications are recorded in the Council minutes and are retained indefinitely.	

DOCUMENT STORAGE

All parish council documents, whether hard-copy or electronic, are stored in accordance with the parish council's Risk Management Policy. Hard-copy documents shall be scanned wherever possible to facilitate their storage.

ARCHIVE

Documents in the parish council Archive are made available to the Norfolk Records Office from time to time.

DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

All hard-copy documents that are no longer required for administrative reasons should be shredded and disposed of. Electronic copies of documents, not required for the Archive, shall simply be deleted. As virtually all parish council documents are in the public domain security of disposal is not an issue.

This policy was adopted by the council at its meeting held on 10.10.2024.

Last reviewed on 10.10.2024

Next review due in January 2026