



RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS POLICY

Policy Adopted: 9th March 2026
Minute Ref: AJP2081/3477d
Next Review Date: May 2027

Introduction

The Parish Council recognises that the 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 policy provides a framework through which this effective management and retention of public records can be achieved and properly audited. It covers:-

Scope

Responsibilities

Retention Schedule

Scope of the Policy

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 the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council, and she 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 for which 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 a Councillor considers that some of these documents are important in the context of the Parish Council's records, they should ensure 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 GDPR; the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Retention Schedule

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Parish 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 for the different retention periods when creating new record keeping systems.

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

Please see the Retention Schedule at Appendix 1.

This policy will be reviewed annually by Kirk Ella & West Ella Parish Council to ensure that is relevant to working practice.

APPENDIX 1

RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR THE AUDIT OF PARISH COUNCILS

DOCUMENT	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minute Books	Indefinite
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correspondence/papers on important Local issues/Activities regardless of the media it is stored on	Indefinite
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Routine Correspondence, papers & emails	1 year
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scales of Fees and Charges	6 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receipts and Payment Account(s)	Indefinite
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Return & Audited Accounts	Indefinite
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receipt books of all kinds	6 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bank Statements, including deposit/savings accounts	5 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bank paying-in books	5 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cheque book stubs	5 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BACS Authorisation Forms	5 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quotations & Tenders	6 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paid Invoices	6 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paid Cheques	6 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• VAT Records	6 years generally but 20 years on VAT rents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PAYE Information	12 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insurance Policies	While Valid
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificates for Insurance against liability for employees	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equipment Inspection Records	15 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk Assessments	3 years from Last Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assets Register	Indefinite

• Investments	Indefinite
• Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite
• Members allowances register	6 years
• Register of Members Interests	1 year after individual ceases to be a member
• Declarations of Acceptance	Term of Office + 1 year

Personnel/Human Resources

DOCUMENT	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD
• Application forms (unsuccessful)	6 months
• Applications forms (successful)	Period of Employment + 6 months
• Disciplinary Records	Period of Employment + 6 months
• Personal Files (appraisals/pay reviews etc.)	Period of Employment + 6 months

Miscellaneous

DOCUMENT	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD
• Complaints	2 years after Closure
• Information Requests	2 years after Closure
• Press Releases	5 years
• Public Consultation	5 years
• Reports, Newsletters	As long as useful

Planning Applications

All planning applications and relevant decision notices are available on the E.R.Y.C. Planning Portal. There is no requirement to retain duplicates locally. All Parish Council recommendations in connection with these applications are recoded in the Council's minutes and are retained indefinitely. Correspondence received in connection with applications will be retained as per the below.

*General correspondence will be retained for as long as is 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 be considered for archiving.