

WIDDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

Adopted 07/07/2022

Next Review Date: September 2026

	Date	Minute reference
Adopted	07/07/2022	07.22.16
Reviewed	05/09/2024	09.24.15

Widdington Parish Council (The Council) recognises that documentation must be retained and managed to enable it to comply with legal requirements in the exercise of its functions together with Data Protection and Freedom of Information Legislation.

In this policy 'documentation' shall mean not only hard copy paperwork letters and documentation but also all documents including emails stored digitally.

To facilitate the effective management of the Council's business this document sets out an agreed policy regarding the management of documentation.

All members of the Council and employees shall keep paper records stored in a secure environment. In the case of computer records the records shall be password protected. The Clerk shall backup digitally stored records on an external storage device.

All documentation shall be reviewed on an annual basis to enable a decision to be made in accordance with the terms of this policy as to whether the individual documents should be retained as currently stored, archived either by the Council or a reputable institution or destroyed.

This policy shall be reviewed from time to time and particularly at such times when the Council acquires new functions or activities.

Documentation shall be retained or archived for the period set out in the following table. The Essex Records Office (ERO) provides archive services where required.

Administrative

Documentation	Retention Period	Action	Reason
Signed council minutes	Transfer to ERO after 6 years	Preserve	Record of decision making.
Agendas & draft minutes	Until no longer administrative requirement	Destroy	Operational
Title deeds, maps, leases, agreements & contracts.	Transfer to ERO once inactive. Title deeds need to be retained.	Preserve	Audit & management
Employers' liability insurance policies.	40 years after expiry date	Destroy	Employers' liability regulations 1998
Play Area Inspections	21 years	Destroy	RoSPA recommendation
Insurance policies	3 years	Destroy	Good Practice
Allotment plans	Until no longer administrative requirement	Destroy	Management
Car park/garages plan	Until no longer required	Destroy	Management

Risk Assessments	Until superseded or inactive	Destroy	Management
Any documents predating establishment of parish councils (1894)	Transfer to ERO	Preserve	Common practice
Records of other bodies (e.g. burial boards, charities, home guard, local society etc..)	Transfer to ERO when inactive.	Preserve	Common Practice
All other documentation not otherwise mentioned	3 years	Destroy	Good Practice

Financial Records

	Retention Period	Action	Reason
Receipt & Payment accounts (physical)	Transfer to ERO once become inactive	Preserve	Essex County Council financial regulations
Receipt & Payment accounts (electronic)	Back up and store indefinitely	Preserve	Essex County Council financial regulations
Annual audited accounts	6 years	Destroy unless receipt & payment books not survived.	Financial affairs record
Wage records	12 years	Destroy	Statute of limitation
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	Destroy	VAT legislation
Quotations & Tenders	6 years	Destroy	Limitation Act
Paid Invoices	6 years	Destroy	VAT legislation
VAT records	6 years	Destroy	VAT legislation
Bank statements, all accounts	6 years	Destroy	Tax legislation
Paying in books & cheque stubs	Last completed audit year	Destroy	ECC financial regulations
Time Sheets	Last completed audit year	Destroy	ECC financial regulations
Members allowance register	6 years	Destroy	Tax legislation & limitation act.