

Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council

Data Retention Policy

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 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 prescribed period in accordance with this policy) 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 a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council and the Clerk 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, appropriate and in a timely manner.

Retention Periods

Document	Retention Period	Reason
Minute Books	In Perpetuity	Archive – legal requirement under the Local Government Act 1972
Minute Books of Annual Parish Meeting	In Perpetuity	Archive – legal requirement under the Local Government Act 1972
Draft Minutes/Clerk's notes of meeting used to prepare minutes	Until the Minutes are approved	Management
Meeting Agendas and Supporting Papers	4 years	Management
Leases	Indefinite	Audit
Title Deeds	Indefinite	Audit
Asset registers	Indefinite	Audit
Byelaws and orders	Indefinite	Management/Archive
Policies and Procedures	Indefinite (archive after superseded)	Management/Archive
Risk Assessments	7 years	Management/Insurance
Financial Records		
Annual Accounts (AGAR)	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Returns (AGAR)	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Budget	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Precept Demands	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Bank Statements	7 years	Audit/HMRC/management

Cheque book stubs	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Paying in books	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Paid invoices	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Receipt books	7 years	Audit/HMRC
VAT records	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Tax & NI records	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Salary records	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Quotations and tenders (successful)	12 years	Statute of Limitation
Quotations and tenders (unsuccessful)	2 years	Audit/Management/Legal challenges
Contracts	12 years	Statute of Limitation
Accident Books/reports	3 years or if a child/young adult, until that person reaches the age of 21	RIDDOR (SI.1995/3163)
Insurance		
Insurance policy	Whilst valid	Audit/legal
Certificate of employer's liability	40 years from date of which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI.2753)
Certificate of public liability	21 years	Legal
Planning applications		
Minor applications with no strategic relevance	Until decided by the Planning Authority	Management
Significant/controversial applications or those with strategic relevance	Indefinite	Management/archive
Councillor information		
Declarations of acceptance	Term of Office + 1 year	Management/legal
Declarations of Interest	Term of Office + 1 year	Management/legal
Correspondence and other information		
Complaints	1 year	Management
Routine correspondence & emails with private individuals to which the Parish Council/Clerk provided a response	6 months	Management
Correspondence & emails with the County Council and District Council	Until issue is no longer of ongoing relevance	Management
Trivial correspondence/emails/circulars/ not requiring a decision/response from the Parish Council	Not retained	Not required
Human Resources		
Personnel files	6 years after ceasing employment	Management/references
Recruitment information (not appointed)	6 months	Management/for claims of unfair process
Disciplinary records	Period of employment	Management

Website		
Information relating to local organisations independent from the Council	Annual confirmation sought from each organisation that data remains accurate	Management
Completed contact forms (general)	Automatically transferred to Clerk's Parish Council email address. Copy on website deleted within one month of receipt	Management
Completed contact forms (sewerage problems)	6 years	Management – for purposes of having a record of local sewerage issues
Parish Council information – minutes, agendas, meeting papers, financial information	4 years	Guidance from Information Commissioner

Records not in the Retention Schedule

The Clerk will be responsible for reviewing any records not specifically covered by the retention schedule and for deciding when they can be destroyed or whether they should be archived for indefinite preservation.

Requests made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)

As a matter of good practice, and as recommended by the Information Commissioner's Office, any requested information will be kept for at least 6 months after the date of the last communications about the request, to allow for appeals to the Information Commissioner.

Anonymous Communications

Any communication received anonymously will be reported to the Council or a relevant Committee and action taken, if appropriate. Any anonymous letter or email received will then be destroyed.

Significant Local Events and Issues

Sometimes documents are of such local significance that they are worth preserving for archive purposes even though they would normally have a shorter retention in accordance with the above retention policy. Before any records are disposed of the Clerk should consider whether they are of such local significance that they should be preserved. The Clerk will bring such records to the attention of the Parish Council in order that councillors can decide whether the records should be retained for archive purposes.

Disposal of Documents

The Parish Council is corporately responsible for ensuring that records which are no longer required are disposed of in a timely manner. The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that this disposal policy is complied with.

Unless the records contain data on an individual/s or personal data, they will be disposed of by recycling.

Any records that contain data on individual/s or personal data must be disposed of by shredding (with a cross-cutting shredder).

Councillor Responsibilities

The Clerk is responsible for storing the records of the Parish Council in accordance with this Policy. Councillors are provided with agendas, supporting papers for meetings (the Clerk's Briefing Notes) and minutes. These documents must be treated as confidential - whilst much of the information on these documents are in the public domain, certain elements, relating in particular to employees and commercial decisions may not in the public domain and should be retained securely and disposed of at the earliest opportunity.

After a councillor has left office, they must either securely dispose of all Parish Council records that they hold by shredding them (with a crosscut shredder) or must return them to the Clerk for disposal. All electronic files must similarly be securely deleted. Councillors may be required to provide formal written confirmation that the records they have held have been securely destroyed.

Archive

The Parish Council archive is held by the Aston History Group. The Clerk maintains a record of the documentation held by the History Group. These documents remain the property of the Parish Council, and the Parish Council can request that they are returned at any time.

Date Policy adopted: 7 June 2018 and reviewed on 10 June 2021, 3 July 2025.