

BARFORD ST JOHN AND ST MICHAEL PARISH COUNCIL DATA RETENTION POLICY

1. Introduction

Barford St John and St Michael 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 document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited.

2. Scope

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.

3. 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 responsibility for the day to day implementation of the policy and ensuring compliance is the Clerk. The Clerk will give guidance for good records management practice and will promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and in a timely fashion. The Parish Council will only keep data for as long as it is necessary to do so.

4. Retention Schedule

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Parish Council is required to maintain a retention schedule listing the record 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. Members of staff are expected to manage their current record keeping systems using the retention schedule and to take account of the different kinds of retention periods when they are creating new record keeping systems. The retention schedule refers to record series regardless of the media in which they are stored.

5. Document Retention Protocol

Councils should have in place an adequate system for documenting the activities of their service. This system should consider the legislative and regulatory environments to which they work. Records of each activity should be complete and

accurate enough to allow employees and their successors to undertake appropriate actions in the context of their responsibilities to:

- Facilitate an audit or examination of the business by anyone so authorised.
- Protect the legal and other rights of the Council, its clients and any other persons affected by its actions.
- Verify individual consent to record, manage and record disposal of their personal data.
- Provide authenticity of the records so that the evidence derived from them is shown to be credible and authoritative. To facilitate this the following principles should be adopted:

Records created and maintained should be arranged in a record-keeping system that will enable quick and easy retrieval of information under the General Data Protection Regulations. Documents that are no longer required for operational purposes but need retaining may be placed at the records office. The retention schedules in Appendix A: List of Documents and Period of Retention provide guidance on the recommended minimum retention periods for specific classes of documents and records. These schedules have been compiled from recommended best practice from the Public Records Office, the Records Management Society of Great Britain and in accordance with relevant legislation. Whenever there is a possibility of litigation, the records and information that are likely to be affected should not be amended or disposed of until the threat of litigation has been removed.

6. Document Disposal Protocol

- a. Documents should only be disposed of if reviewed in accordance with the following:
 - Is retention required to fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements?
 - Is retention required to meet the operational needs of the service?
 - Is retention required to evidence events in the case of dispute?
 - Is retention required because the document or record is of historic interest or intrinsic value?
- b. When documents are scheduled for disposal the method of disposal should be appropriate to the nature and sensitivity of the documents concerned.
- c. Documents can be disposed of by any of the following methods:
 - Non-confidential records: place in wastepaper bin for disposal.
 - Confidential records or records giving personal information: shred documents.
 - Deletion of computer records from any drives or Cloud storage.
 - Transmission of records to an external body such as the County Records Office.
- d. The following principles should be followed when disposing of records:

- All records containing personal or confidential information must be destroyed at the end of the retention period.
- Where computer records are deleted steps should be taken to ensure that data is 'virtually impossible to retrieve' as advised by the Information Commissioner.
- Where documents are of historical interest it may be appropriate that they are transmitted to the County Records office.
- Back-up copies of documents should also be destroyed (including electronic or photographed documents unless specific provisions exist for their disposal).

Appendix A: List of Documents and Period of Retention

Document	Minimum retention period	Reason
Minute books	Indefinite	Archive
Scales of fees and charges	Six years	Management
Receipt and payment account(s)	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds	Six years	VAT
Bank statements, including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Quotations and tenders	Six years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid invoices	Six years	VAT
Paid cheques	Six years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
VAT records	Six years generally but 20 years for VAT on rents	VAT
Petty cash, postage, and telephone books	Six years	Tax, VAT, and Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)

Timesheets	Three years (or last completed audit year)	Audit (requirement) and personal injury (best practice)
Wages books	12 years	Superannuation
Insurance policies	As long as a claim can be made under it	Management and legal proceedings
Certificates for Insurance against liability for employees	Indefinitely	Future claims
Investments	Indefinite	Audit and management
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit and management
Members allowances register	Six years	Tax and Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Councillor's Register of Interest	1 year after end of service	Council records
Correspondence	2 years unless relating to another category	Data protection legislation not to hold personal data unnecessarily
Allotment register and plans	Indefinite	Audit and management

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