

Document Retention and Disposal Policy

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Introduction

Corringham Parish Council accumulates a significant amount of information and data from its parish and business activities, including data obtained from individuals and external organisations. This information is recorded in a variety of document and formats adhering to current Data Protection legislation.

Records created and maintained by the Parish Council are an important asset therefore measures are needed to safeguard and preserve this information. Properly managed records provide authentic and reliable evidence of the Parish Council's transactions and demonstrate accountability.

1. Scope

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by Corringham 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.

A **Retention Schedule** is a list of records that need to be kept by Corringham Parish Council for a specific length of time, and identifies records that may be worth preserving permanently as a part of a local authority archive as well as preventing the premature destruction of records that need to be retained for a specific legal, financial or statutory period.

This schedule specifies the retention periods for records created and maintained by Corringham Parish Council, many of which are determined by Statute and refer to all information regardless of the media in which it is stored. For example, documents may be retained in either 'hard' paper form or in electronic forms. For the purpose of this policy, 'document' and 'record' refers to both hard copy and electronic records.

The Schedule details the function of each record, the type of records that may fall within this function and the length of time Corringham Parish Council should hold the record before disposal or archiving. All data and records (active and archive) will be stored in accordance with appropriate security requirements and in the most convenient and appropriate location. The degree of security required for file storage will reflect the sensitivity and confidential nature of the recorded material.

Records should not be held longer than is necessary, and timely disposal of certain documents ensures compliance with current Data Protection Regulations. This also enables efficient use of limited storage space.

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2. Responsibilities

Corringham Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. Records of each activity should be accurate and complete to allow staff 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 Parish Council, its clients and any other persons affected by its actions.
- Provide authenticity of the records so that the evidence derived from them is shown to be credible and authoritative.

The person with overall responsibility for this policy is the Data Protection Officer (DPO). The DPO advises Corringham Parish Council on records management best practice and will promote compliance with this policy so that information can be retrieved easily, appropriately and within an appropriate time frame.

Individual staff and Councillors must ensure that records for which they are responsible are accurate, and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the Retention Schedule.

Individual Councillors may hold records securely in hard copy format or electronically at home or on their home computers subject to the Parish Council Electronic Communication, Press and Social Media Policy.

If a Councillor considers that some of these documents are important in the context of the Parish Council's records, they should ensure that a copy is retained for the official record.

3. Document Disposal Protocol

Documents should only be disposed of once 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?

When documents are scheduled for disposal the method of disposal should be appropriate to the nature and sensitivity of the documents concerned and may include any of the following methods:

- Non-confidential records: place in waste paper bin for disposal.
- Confidential records: shred documents.
- Deletion of computer records.
- Transfer of records to an external body such as the County Records Office.

Records should be maintained of appropriate disposals and should contain the following information:

- The name of the document destroyed.
- The date the document was destroyed.
- The method of disposal.

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4. Retention Schedule

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Administrative			
Minutes of Council meetings & AGMs	Indefinite	Archive	Original signed paper copies of Council minutes of meetings must be kept indefinitely in safe storage. At regular intervals of not more than 10 years they must be archived and deposited.
Minutes of committee meetings	Indefinite	Archive	
Correspondence, papers and emails on important local issues or activities	Indefinite	Archive	
Routine correspondence, papers and emails	1 year	Management	Confidential waste (shred)
Correspondence and Reports	1 year or as long as it is relevant	Management	Bin/confidential waste (shred)
Planning applications and related papers for major controversial developments	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Management	Bin
Planning applications for minor works where permission is refused	3 years	Management	Bin
Employment			
Staff employment contracts	6 years after ceasing employment	Management	Confidential waste (shred)
Staff payroll information	3 years	Management	
Staff references	6 years after ceasing employment	Management	
Application forms (interviewed – unsuccessful)	6 months	Management	
Application forms (interviewed – successful)	6 years after ceasing employment	Management	
Disciplinary files	6 years after ceasing employment	Management	
Staff appraisals	6 years after ceasing employment	Management	
Finance			
Annual Return and Audited Accounts	Indefinite	Archive	Original copies must be kept indefinitely in safe storage. At regular intervals of not more than 10 years they must be archived and deposited.
AGAR Reports	Indefinite	Archive	
Correspondence relating to Audit	3 years	Management	
Scales of fees and charges	6 years	Management	
Receipt and payment accounts	6 years	VAT	
Bank statements	Last completed audit year	Audit	
Cheque & Paying in stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit	
Paid invoices	Last completed audit year	VAT	
Paid cheques	Last completed audit year	Limitation Act 1980	
Payroll records, Salary, Tax & NI	3 years	HMRC	
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Petty cash accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit	
Budget Control Papers	3 years	Audit	
Precept Correspondence	3 years	Audit	
Awarded Contracts	6 years	Limitation Act 1980	
Asset Register	Indefinite	Audit	Original copies must be kept indefinitely in safe storage.
Insurance			
Insurance policies	8 years after policy end	Management	Electronic copies held securely Paper copies - Confidential waste (shred or burn)
Certificates for Insurance against liability for employees	8 years after policy end	Management	
Certificates for Public Liability	8 years after policy end	Management	
Insurance claim records	8 years after policy end	Management	
Burial Records			
Register of fees collected	Indefinite	Archives, Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI204)	Original copies must be kept indefinitely in safe storage. At regular intervals of not more than 10 years they must be archived and deposited.
Register of burials			
Register of purchased graves			
Register/plan of grave spaces			
Register of memorials			
Applications for interment			
Applications for right to erect memorials			
Disposal certificates			
Copy certificates of grant of exclusive right of burial			
Health and Safety			
Accident books	3 years from date of last entry	Statutory	Confidential waste (shred)
Risk assessment	3 years	Management	
General Management			
Councillors contact details	Duration of membership	Management	Confidential waste (shred)
Consent forms	Term of office plus 1 year	Management	
Declarations of Acceptance	Term of office plus 1 year	Management	
Register of Members Interests	2 years after individual ceases to be a member	Management	
GDPR Security Compliance Form	Duration of membership	Management	
Complaints	2 years after closure	Management	
Lease agreements	12 years	Limitation Act 1980	
Title deeds/land holding documents	Indefinite	Management	
Trust Deeds	Indefinite	Management	

Related Policies

This policy has been drawn up within the context of:

- Corringham Parish Council's Electronic Communication, Press and Social Media Policy
- Corringham Parish Council's Data Breach Policy
- Corringham Parish Council's Privacy Policy

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And with other legislation or regulations (including audit and Statute of Limitations) affecting Corringham Parish Council Document Retention and Disposal Policy. Review, update and amendments to this policy shall be made (where appropriate) on a regular basis, and at least every three years in accordance with the Code of Practice on the Management of Records issued by the Lord Chancellor.

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