

LONGWICK CUM ILMER PARISH COUNCIL

RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

1. Introduction:

- a. The Council accumulates much information and data during its everyday activities. This includes data generated internally in addition to information obtained from individual and external organisations.
- b. Documents may be retained in either 'hard copy' or in electronic form. For the purpose of this policy 'document' and 'record' refers to both hard copy and electronic records.
- c. It is important that documents are retained for an adequate period of time. In contrast the Council should not retain documents longer than necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations so that personal information is not retained longer than necessary.

2. Scope and Objective of the Policy

- a. The aim of this policy is to provide a working framework to determine which documents are to be retained, for how long, and then disposed of and by what method.
- b. There are some records that do not need to be kept at all or that are routinely destroyed in the course of business. This usually applies to information that is duplicated, unimportant or only of short-term value.

3. Roles and Responsibilities for Document Retention and Disposal

- a. The Council is responsible for determining whether to retain or dispose of documents and should undertake a review of documentation at least on an annual basis to ensure that any unnecessary documentation being held is disposed of in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.
- b. Councils should ensure that all employees are aware of the retention / disposal schedule.

4. Digital Security and Access Controls

The Council is committed to protecting electronic records through appropriate security measures. All personal data stored electronically must be protected by password access, and where possible, encryption. Access to sensitive records is restricted to authorised personnel only, such as the Clerk or designated councillors.

Example: Payroll and HMRC records stored on the Clerk's computer are encrypted and backed up to an external drive with restricted access. Passwords are changed regularly and not shared.

5. 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 of intrinsic value?
- b. When documents are scheduled for disposal the method of disposal should be appropriate to the nature of and sensitivity of the documents concerned.
- c. Documents can be disposed of by any of the following methods:
 - Non- confidential records: place in waste paper bin for disposal.

- Confidential records or records giving personal information: Shred documents
- Deletion of computer records
- Transmission of records to an external body such as the County Records Office.

6. Scanning of Documents

- In general, once a document has been scanned onto a document image system the original becomes redundant. There is no specific legislation covering the format for which local government records are retained following electronic storage, except for those prescribed by HM Revenue and Customs.
- As a general rule hard copies of scanned documents should be retained for three months after scanning
- Original documents required for VAT and tax purposes should be retained for six years unless a shorter period has been agreed with HM Revenue and Customs.

7. Review of Document Retention

It is planned to review, update and where appropriate amend this document on a regular basis (at least every three years in accordance with the Code of Practice on the Management of Records issued by the Lord Chancellor).

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason	Storage and Disposal	Contains Personal Data (GDPR)
Agendas and Minutes				
Draft notes of minutes taken at meetings	Once the draft minutes have been typed	Management	Disposed of by shredding.	No
Signed Council & Committee Minutes	Indefinite	Archive	Original signed papers copies of Council minutes of meetings must be kept indefinitely in safe storage. At regular intervals they must be archived and deposited with the County Archives.	No
Agendas and reports	5 years	Management	Disposed of by shredding.	No
Finance, Payroll, Insurance, and Investments				
Annual Governance and Accountability Return	Indefinite	Audit	Stored with the Clerk in safe storage on Computer. At regular intervals they must be archived and deposited with the County Archives.	Yes
Bank Statements	6 years	Audit	Stored with the Clerk in safe storage and disposed by shredding.	Yes
VAT records	6 years	VAT	Stored with the Clerk in safe storage and disposed by shredding.	Yes
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT	Stored on computer backed up to an external drive. Disposed of by shredding.	Yes

Payroll and pension information	12 years	Superannuation	Stored with the Clerk in safe storage and disposed by shredding.	Yes
Insurance policies	Whilst valid (note the following two items)	Management	Stored with the Clerk in safe storage and disposed by shredding.	No
Insurance company names and policy numbers	Indefinite	Management	Stored with Clerk on computer and backed up.	No
Employer and public liability insurance certificates	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI 2753) Management	Stored with the Clerk in safe storage and disposed by shredding.	No
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management	Stored with the Clerk in safe storage and on computer backed up to an external drive	No
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management	Stored with the Clerk in safe storage and on computer backed up to an external drive	No
Other				
Routine correspondence paper and email	As required to action the information or request	Management	Stored with Clerk and disposed by shredding where appropriate.	Yes
Register of electors	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Management	Stored on Clerk's computer backed up to an external drive. Deletion when no longer required.	Yes
Quotations and tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Stored with the Clerk in safe storage and disposed by shredding.	Yes
Accidents / Incident reports	20 years	Potential claims	Stored with the Clerk in safe storage and disposed by shredding.	Yes
Declaration of acceptance of office	Term of Office + 1 year	Management	Stored with the Clerk in safe storage and disposed by shredding.	Yes
Complaints	2 years from closure	Management	Stored with the Clerk in safe storage and disposed by shredding.	Yes
Information from other bodies e.g. circulars from Unitary Council, NALC etc	Retained for as long as it is useful and relevant	n/a	Stored with Clerk and disposed by shredding where appropriate.	No
.gov.uk email accounts	Whilst in use + 6 months	Management	Email accounts are retained while in use.	Yes

			When a member ceases to be a Councillor, the password will be changed immediately, and the account will be deleted after 6 months.	
Local / historical information	Indefinite	Management	To be securely kept for the benefit of the Parish with the Clerk or County Archives Office.	Yes