



HOLME VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Code of Practice on the Management of Records

Under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Code of Practice on the management of records), it is recommended that the Council should adopt the following practice in respect of the **retention, management and disposal of the Council's documents and records**.

Good records and information management benefits those requesting information because it provides some assurance that the information provided will be complete and reliable. It benefits those holding the requested information because it enables them to locate and retrieve it easily within the statutory timescales or to explain why it is not held. It also supports control and delivery of information promised in the Council's Publication Scheme or required to be published by the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the EIR), under the General Data Protection Regulation (which comes into force on 25 May 2018) and in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 20 refers).

2. Good practice in records management is made up of a number of key elements:

- a. The Council should have in place a formal records management policy, with organisational arrangements in place to support that policy.
- b. The Council should ensure it keeps the records it needs for business, regulatory, legal and accountability purposes.
- c. Records should be kept in systems that enable the records to be stored and retrieved as necessary.
- d. The Council should know what records it holds, where they are and that they remain usable for as long as they are required (i.e. that they can be retrieved, used and relied upon).
- e. Records should be stored securely, with access to them controlled.
- f. The Council should define how long it needs to keep particular records, should dispose of them when they are no longer needed and should be able to explain why records are no longer held (i.e. if they have been disposed of or transferred to a third party).
- g. Records shared with other bodies or held on their behalf by other bodies should be managed in accordance with the FOIA Code of Practice.
- h. The Council should monitor compliance with the FOIA Code of Practice and assess the overall effectiveness of the records management policy.
- i. The policy should be kept up-to-date so that it reflects the current needs of the Council, by reviewing it at agreed intervals, e.g. every year or after major organisational or technological changes.
- j. The Council should publish the policy so that members of the public can see the basis on which it manages its records.

3. Requests made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

As a matter of good practice, the Information Commissioner's Office recommends that any requested information should be kept for at least 6 months after the date of the last communication about the request, to allow for appeals to the Information Commissioner (Source: ICO Practical guidance: Destruction of requested information).

4. 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 e-mail received will then be destroyed.



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5. Paper Filing and other Systems

- a. Records titles used on the Council's paper filing system (housed in suspension files in filing cabinets) should reflect their specific nature and contents, so as to facilitate retrieval.
- b. Records that are no longer required for frequent reference, but need to be retained indefinitely, should be digitally scanned for easier longer term access, but then 'archived' to the West Yorkshire Archive Service after two years in appropriately labelled archive transfer cases.
- c. Records to be removed from the Council's website after four years (as recommended by the Publications & Communications Committee), e.g. Minutes (which will still be held electronically and/or in hard copy archived files).
- d. The Council's records system is documented to facilitate officer training, maintenance of the system and reconstruction in the event of an emergency. It also helps the Clerk and Council to know the whereabouts and movement of files, at all times.
- e. Daily backups are taken of all data on the Council's laptops, with a further backup of all system files/folders taken regularly, i.e. at least once a month. Backups are taken on external hard drives, one of which is kept in the Council's fire-proof safe; another is kept in a separate location (offsite at the Clerk's home) to be used to restore data in case of emergency. Access to data is password protected to ensure the records are stored securely and access to the data is controlled; password details are retained as long as valid, in the Council safe.
- f. All Agenda Supporting Documents (ASD) are now available electronically, as are all relevant/key emails. As these are accessible and backed up regularly, hard copies do not need to be retained.

6. Disposal of Records

- a. In general, records should be kept for as long as they are needed by the Council, for reference or accountability purposes, to comply with regulatory requirements or to protect legal and other rights and interests.
- b. Destruction at the end of the period ensures that office and computer space are not used and costs not incurred in maintaining records that are no longer required. Any personal data (e.g. on CVs submitted for job vacancies) should only be kept for as long as it is needed.
- c. Once the minimum retention period has passed, records should be destroyed in a rolling programme, taking into account security of the information contained in the records and confidentiality needs.
- d. The Clerk will be responsible for all disposals and destruction of records, in as secure a manner as required by the level of confidentiality. Destruction of all sensitive information will normally be by shredding or incineration. Digital records will be over-written to ensure that the data is destroyed completely.
- e. Details of the destruction of records will be kept by the Clerk, as part of the audit trail.
- f. If any records are not included in the retention and disposal schedule, the Clerk will be responsible for reviewing the records and deciding whether they can be destroyed or archived for indefinite preservation. Such decisions should be documented and kept to provide evidence of which records have been identified for destruction, when the decision was made, and the reasons for the decision, where this is not apparent from the overall policy.
- g. Ephemeral material should be disposed of on a routine basis, e.g. print-outs of electronic documents should not be kept after the meeting for which they were printed.
- h. Trivial emails should be deleted immediately after being read.
- i. Keeping multiple or personal copies of documents should be discouraged.

Jen McIntosh
Clerk to the Council
13 May 2024



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Retention and Disposal Schedule

Document	Minimum retention period	Reason
Minutes of the Council and its Committees:	Indefinite	WY Archive Service
Agendas and supporting papers	18 months	Admin purposes
Annual Parish Meeting (meeting of the electorate)	Indefinite	WY Archive Service
(Informal records of the Council in connection with the preparation of the Minutes to be destroyed following completion of the relevant Minutes)		
Annual Reports:	Indefinite	WY Archive Service
Policies:	6 years or as long as relevant	Copies in Minute Books to WY Archive Service
Financial Records:		
Assets	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Audit and Annual Returns*	Indefinite	WY Archive Service
Budget	Indefinite	WY Archive Service
Precept Demands	Indefinite	WY Archive Service
Grant applications	6 years	Audit
Tenancies	6 years	Audit
Receipts and Payments a/cs – computerised	Indefinite	Archive – cloud and datastick backups
Receipt books	6 years	VAT
Bank statements	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	12 years	Statute of Limitations ¹
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT
VAT Returns	6 years	VAT
Petty cash, postage etc.	6 years	Tax, VAT and Statute of Limitations
Timesheets (Officer & Admin Support)	Last completed audit year	Audit
Wages/pension records	12 years	Superannuation
PAYE/NI contributions	3 years from end of year to which the records relate	Audit
Insurance policies	While valid	Management
Insurance claims	6 years	Audit, Management
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Members' Allowances	6 years	Tax, Statute of Limitations
Members' Interests	Duration of service	Management
Members' Code of Conduct matters	Duration of service	Management, Subject Access Requests

*Annual Return must remain available for public access for a period of not less than five years from date of publication, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234).

¹ Statute of Limitations is part of the UK legal system which determines the longest amount of time after a certain event that legal proceedings can be taken out based upon that event.



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Document	Minimum retention period	Reason
Human Resources:		
Personnel files – current and former employees	Indefinite: Paper copies – Secured under lock; Electronic records password protected	Management Standing Orders refer
Staff Development Review	6 years	Management
Job applications – vacancies and speculative	6 months or as long as relevant	Admin purposes
Journals:		
Local Council Review, YLCA White Rose Update, NALC Legal Topic Notes (LTNs), WYPF (Pension Matters)	12 months or as long as relevant	Held in ‘Reference Library’ for Members to review/refer to as appropriate
All other Journals	6 months	
Information from other Bodies:		
e.g. circulars etc. from County Associations, NALC and other bodies too numerous to mention – this information should be retained as long as it is useful and relevant.		
Planning:		
Planning applications – application details, decision notices and appeals	Computerised records – 12 years or as long as useful (paper copies no longer held)	Retained on Council’s computer system (specialised software) for reference purposes only. Details are also available on Kirklees Council’s website and the Planning Portal.
Statutory documents, development plans and consultations	Retained for duration of the document	
General Correspondence:		
Paper copies and/or emails	2 years minimum	
Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)	All Members notified of TROs by email	Digital ‘Reference Library’
If the correspondence is related to audit matters, it should be kept for the appropriate period specified as above.		
Specific Activities and Projects:		
Charities on which HVPC has had representation but charity now ceased to operate		WY Archive Service
Broadheads Charity	3 years from close of Charity (23 August 2012)	Archived – retain until 23 August 2015 and then destroy (shred)
Awarded Quarries	Where subject of an FOIA/EIR request since transfer to Holme Valley Land Charity (6 January 2009) information should be retained for at least 6 months after date of last communication about a request	Transferred to HVLC. Any information provided under FOIA/EIR legislation is deemed to be in public domain and can be published on website (personal details redacted) – suggest publish for 2 years minimum, then archive for further 2 years.



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Document	Minimum retention period	Reason
Awarded Quarries (continued)	Information may be held on behalf of the Council by a third party (e.g. solicitor or the Land Charity); third party's document management policy may be different to that of the Council	Scanned/Digital Archives