



West Wycombe Parish Council Document & Record Retention Policy

Introduction

West Wycombe Parish Council (WWPC) is required to maintain a record of its proceedings, decisions and actions. Information about this is contained in the documents (paper or electronic media) and records which the Parish Clerk and the Councillors use when undertaking Parish business. The majority of this material is a public record available for inspection and is also required for audit purposes, staff management, tax liabilities, and the possibility of legal proceedings.

It is not practicable to retain all documentation / records forever; the majority will not contain key information about decisions and actions hence should they be weeded and destroyed in a controlled manner.

This document provides an approach to document / record retention by WWPC.

NALC have provided a general list of documentation / records and recommended retention periods as maybe required by law, general convention or by the council's need. This is at Annex A. This Policy supplements the NALC guidance.

General Policy

Documents/records held by WWPC are in paper or electronic form (e.g. e-mails, Word documents). Both are covered by this policy, although disposal methods may differ.

A document register (see Annex B for details) will be maintained by the Clerk to record receipt, action, retention and disposal of documentation & records.

Subject to specific reasons for retaining documents, and as a starting point, documents/records may be destroyed when they are no longer of use or relevant. If in doubt they should be retained until proper advice has been received. Documents/records will be removed by:

- lodging them with the Buckinghamshire Records Office, or,
- returning originals to the originators, or,
- acknowledging that the originals remain accessible and in the possession of the originator (e.g. on their website), or,
- destruction/deletion of the documents.

Policy Coverage

All documents, whether physical or electronic, received or generated by WWPC (its Clerk, Chair, or Councillors) in relation to WWPC business.

Retention of Documents

Other documents not mentioned in the Annex A may be treated as follows:

Type	Examples	Retention action	Action
Policy & Standards	Health & Safety	Formally retained once adopted by Councillors Destroyed as new versions adopted.	Clerk

West Wycombe Parish Council Document & Record Retention Policy

Type	Examples	Retention action	Action
Planning Applications & related papers	As received from planning authority	Received from WDC / BCC	Agenda
		WWPC comment recorded in minutes & sent to Authority	Minuted
		WDC/BCC planning committee Decision provided to WWPC	Minuted
		Destroyed (as originals held by WDC/BCC)	destroy within 2 months
General Administration	Meeting scheduling	Retained until general purpose met	Destroy within 12 months
	Clerk's electronic Backups	Automatic daily back up	
	Chair's cc emails		Destroy within 12 months
Council Administration	Councillor interests	Formally retained once provided By Councillor	Destroy upon receipt of latest version
General Correspondence	NALC circulars Newsletters etc	Circulated to Councillors then destroyed	Destroy within 2 months
Topical. Correspondence	Letters / e-mails commenting on Parish business	Added to related documentation / records	Destroy once resolved
		Audit related - kept for the Appropriate period	Refer to Annex A
		Planning matters - retained until the development is complete or WWPC comment posted on planning websites.	Destroy after 12 months
		Any anonymous letters will be recorded in Parish records but will not be responded to.	Destroy after 3 months
Structure Plans, Local Plans and Similar	Parish Plan	retained as long as in force	Hold electronically
	Local Area Plan	retained as long as in force	Destroy

West Wycombe Parish Council Document & Record Retention Policy

Type	Examples	Retention action	Action
Insurance Documents	Policies, Certificates of Insurance, claim information	Kept for as long as a claim may be made under them .i.e. insured period	Retention 4 years from the date the policy is commenced or renewed
Staff related	Job Description; performance; appraisals; pay; disciplinary Records about former staff for giving reference, payment of tax, national insurance contributions and pensions, and any legal claims.	Data Protection Act 1998 applies. Date relating to staff is kept securely for no longer than necessary for the purpose it was held	Current staff Former staff delete after 7 years (max) for tax and NI
Local/ Historical Information	Donated or discovered local interest pictures / gifts / documents / etc.	Decide where to be held	Retain by WWPC or Offer to local organisations or County Records
Project Information	e.g. upgrade of playing field equipment	Retain all material until project closed Review and weed non-important Documents Remaining project documentation	Destroy at time of review Retain for 6 years
Legal Documents	Claims; actions; related Correspondence Submissions etc.	Category Limitation Period Negligence 6 years Defamation 1 year Contract 6 years Leases 12 years Rent 6 years Sums recoverable by statute Personal Injury 3 years To Recover Land 12 years Breach of Trust	Review for possible retention upon expiry Destroy once period expired Permanent

Arrangements for storage

- s.22 7 of the Local Government Act 1972: the Parish Council may request the District Council provide proper depositories for all specified papers (defined as public books, writings, council papers and all documents) directed by law to be kept where there is no provision.
- Electronic material - retained on the Clerk's computer within appropriate file structure
- Electronic back ups - retained by the Clerk separately from the main computer
- Paper documentation - retained in a filing cabinet by the Clerk.
- Key paper documentation – original retained; scanned copy held on computer.

Policy Review

Once adopted by WWPC, this Policy is to be reviewed within 5 years or upon revision.

Adopted

In Council meeting dated 8th March 2018

document and record retention policy v2
March 2018
Review date: March 2023

Annex A – NALC list Legal Topic Note 40

Retention of Documents required for the audit of parish councils.

Document	Minimum retention period	Reason
Minute Books	Indefinite	Archive
Scales of fees and charges	5 years	Management
Receipt & Payment (or Income & Expenditure) Accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds	6 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	12 years/ indefinite	Statute of Limitations
VAT Invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Statute of limitations
VAT Records	6 years	VAT
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 Years	Tax, VAT, Statute of Limitations
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit
Wages books	12 years	Superannuation
Insurance policies	While valid	Management
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Members allowance register	6 years	Tax, Statute of Limitations

For halls, centres and Recreation grounds - Application to hire - Lettings diaries - Copies of bills to hirers - Record of tickets issued	6 years	VAT
For allotments Register and plans	Indefinite	Audit, Management

Annex B – Document register

The Document register is likely to be electronic and held either as a database or as a spreadsheet. It will be audited.

Field	Explanation
Topic	subject matter
Date received	self explanatory
Sender	originator/organisation
Media	paper / electronic / book / pamphlet / poster
Style	e-mail / pdf / word / graphic / etc.
Action	circulated / filed / etc.
Retention	see policy
Disposal	e.g. deleted / destroyed /
Date of disposal	self explanatory
Disposer	name

Annex C - Definitions

Document

In general, a document provides and preserves information about some event or thing. Usually, a document is written, but can also be made with pictures and sound. A document usually adheres to some convention based on similar or previous documents or specified requirements. Examples of documents are sales invoices, wills and deeds, oral history recordings, executive orders, photographs and product specifications.

A document as a form of information and can be in physical or electronic form and stored in a computer as one or more files. Often a single document is a single file. As files or data, a document may be part of a database.

Record

Records include all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics. These records are made or received by WWPC or in connection with the transaction of public business and are preserved as evidence of WWPC's functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities or because of the informational value in them.

5 of 5

document and record retention policy v2

March 2018

Review date: March 2023