



WOMBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Document Retention Policy

Introduction

Wombourne 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.

This policy applies to all records created, received, or maintained by the Parish Council while 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.

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 overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council, and she is required to manage the Council's records in such a way as to promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and in a timely manner. The Clerk must ensure that the records for which she is responsible are accurate and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the Parish Council's records management guidelines.

Individual Councillors may hold records in hard copy format or electronically at home or on their home computers. If a Councillor considers that some of these documents are important in the context of the Parish Council's records, they should ensure that the Clerk retain a copy for the official record. Individual Councillors are strongly advised to undertake "weeding" and "housekeeping" on a regular basis. On resigning from the Council Councillors should delete electronic records they hold and destroy hard copy documents.

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 during 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.

The Clerk is expected to manage the current record keeping systems using the retention schedule and to take account of the different retention periods when creating new record keeping systems. This retention schedule refers to record series regardless of the media in which they are stored.

Retention of Documents

<u>Document</u>	<u>Minimum Retention</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Minute Books	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Return	Indefinite	Archive
Bank statements	7 years	Audit/management
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit	Management
Paying in books	Last completed audit	Management
Quotations	7 years	Audit
Paid invoices	7 years	Audit/VAT
VAT records	7 years	Audit/VAT
Salary records	7 years	Audit
Tax & NI records	7 years	Audit
Insurance policies	Whilst valid	Audit
Cert of Employers Liability	40 years	Audit/legal
Cert of public liability	40 years	Audit/legal
Assets register	Indefinite	Audit
Deeds, leases	Indefinite	Audit
Booking policy	7 years	Management
Copies of invoices to hirers	7 years	Management/audit
Declarations of acceptance	Term of Office + 4 years	Management
Members register of interests' book	Term of office + 4 years	Management
Complaints	2 years	Management
General information	3 months	Management
Routine correspondence & e-mails	6 months	Management

Planning Applications

All planning applications and relevant decision notices are available from South Staffordshire Council. There is no requirement to retain duplicates locally. All Parish Council recommendations in connection with these applications are recorded in the Council minutes

and are retained indefinitely. Correspondence received in connection with applications will be retained as stated above.

Disposal procedures

All documents that are no longer required for administrative reasons or that fall into the schedule above should be shredded and disposed of.

Should some documentation require confidential disposal, these documents will be retained until arrangements can be made to dispose of those documents. This may mean the Parish Council agreeing to include confidential waste management in their next budget for the following financial year.