

Riverhead Parish Council Retention and Disposal Policy

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to detail the procedures for the retention and disposal of information to ensure that we carry this out consistently and that we fully document any actions taken. Unless otherwise specified the retention and disposal policy refers to both hard and soft copy documents.

2. Review

2.1 Review is the examination of closed records to determine whether they should be destroyed, retained for a further period or transferred to a safe archive for semi permanent or permanent preservation.

3. How long we should keep our paper records

3.1 Records should be kept for as long as they are needed to meet the operational needs of Riverhead Parish Council, together with legal and regulatory requirements. We have assessed our records to:

- determine their value as a source of information about the Authority, its operations, relationships and environment,
- assess their importance as evidence of business activities and decisions
- establish whether there are any legal or regulatory retention requirements (including: Public Records Act 1958, Data Protection Act 1988, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Limitation Act 1980).

3.2 Where records are likely to have a historical value, they will be retained in the Council office or archives at Kent County Council.

4. Disposal schedule

4.1 A disposal schedule is a key document in the management of records and information. It is a list of series or collections of records for which predetermined periods of retention have been agreed between *Data protection Officer and Riverhead Parish Council*.

4.2 Records on disposal schedules will fall into three main categories:

1. Destroy after an agreed period – where the useful life of a series or collection of records can be easily predetermined (for example, destroy after 3 years; destroy 2 years after the end of the financial year).
2. Automatically select for permanent preservation – where certain groups of records can be readily defined as worthy of permanent preservation and transferred to an archive.

3. Review – see 2 above.

4.3 Records can be destroyed in the following ways:

Destruction of

- Non-sensitive information – can be placed in a normal rubbish bin
- Confidential information – cross cut shredded and pulped or burnt.
- Electronic equipment containing information - destroyed using commercial body to render them non-recoverable even using forensic data recovery techniques and for individual folders, they will be permanently deleted from the system.

Archival transfer

4.4 This is the physical transfer of physical records to a permanent archive.

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5. Sharing of information

5.1 Duplicate records should be destroyed. Where information has been regularly shared between bodies only the original records should be retained in accordance with the guidelines in section 2 above. Care should be taken that seemingly duplicate records have not been annotated.

5.2 Where we share information with other bodies, we will ensure that they have adequate procedures for records to ensure that the information is managed in accordance with the relevant legislation and regulatory guidance.

6. An audit trail

6.1 You do not need to document the disposal of records which have been listed on the records retention schedule. Documents disposed of within the schedule either by being disposed of earlier or kept for longer than listed will need to be recorded for audit purposes.

6.2 This will provide an audit trail for any inspections conducted. This will aid in addressing Freedom of Information requests, where we no longer hold the material.

7. Monitoring

7.1 Responsibility for monitoring the disposal policy rests with the Data Protection Officer. The policy should be reviewed annually.

Policy Written by Cllr Irene Collins Chairman of Riverhead Parish Council
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Appendix 1 - schedule detailing minimum retention time for council documents

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APPENDIX 1

Retention of Documents and Records

This schedule details the minimum retention time required for council documents before disposal in order for the council to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Publication Scheme. Where variable times are indicated the Council will review storage after the minimum period has elapsed.

Document	Minimum Period	Reason
MINUTES		
Approved minutes	Indefinite	Archive/historical
Draft/rough/notes of minutes taken at meetings	2 years	Management
FINANCE		
Receipt and Payment Accounts	Indefinite	Archive/historical
Paid invoices	8 years	HMRC/VAT/Audit
VAT records	8 years	HMRC/VAT/Audit
Bank Statements	8 years	HMRC/VAT/Audit
Paying in books	8 years	HMRC/VAT/Audit
Cheque stubs	8 years	HMRC/VAT/Audit
Scales of fees and charges	8 years	Management
Members allowances register	8 years	Tax, Statute of Limitations
INSURANCE		
Insurance policies	2 years	Management
Certificates of Employers' Liability Insurance	40 years	Limitation period
OTHER		
Quotations and tenders	12 years /indefinite	Statute of Limitations
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Routine correspondence, papers & emails		Retain as long as useful
Notes from meetings	Until minutes are confirmed	Minutes are signed