**PRESHUTE PARISH COUNCIL DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY**

Preshute Parish Council (the “Council”) recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and statutory obligations and contributes to effective transaction of business. This policy provides a framework through which effective management and retention of public records can be achieved and properly audited.

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Council. Records are defined as all those documents, which relate to the business carried out by the Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its communications, transactions and activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically. Some of the Council’s records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council’s archives and for historical research.

**Responsibilities**

The Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory requirements. The person with overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Council, who 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 are accurate and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with statutory requirements and the 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 retains 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. Councillors should be aware that records that they hold may be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998; the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

**Retention Schedule**

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Council is required to maintain a retention schedule listing the types of records which is creates or holds in the course of its business. The retention schedule lays down the length of time which the record needs to be retained for 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.

Destruction of documents will be undertaken securely and in accordance with the provisions of this Policy to avoid any inference that a document was destroyed in anticipation of a problem. Records maintained on electronic data processing storage media will be subject to the same rules of retention and security as paper records.

The retention schedule in Appendix A refers to all the Council’s records, irrespective of the media in which they are stored.

**Storage of Information**

The Clerk’s home will be the main location for records/documents until such time that they are moved to archives.

If records have to be archived, the Council’s Proper Officer shall arrange for documentation to be stored at the Wiltshire Records Office, which is accessible to the public.

**Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed by the Council periodically to monitor its effectiveness, taking account of users’ comments.

Appendix A - Retention Schedule

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Minutes | Indefinite | Preserve | Audit, Operational |
| Agendas | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement | Destroy | Operational |
| Reports and other documents circulated with agendas | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement. Destroy these reports if copies are already included with signed minutes | Review | Common practice |
| Councillors’ declarations of office | 4 years or until they vacate office | Destroy | Operational |
| Register of electors | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement | Destroy | Copies already in existence |
| Byelaws and orders | Preserve one of each copy and transfer to WCA once they become inactive | Preserve | Common practice |
| Policy documents | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement | Review | Operational |
| Title deeds  | Transfer to WCA once they become inactive. WCA will not accept deeds still needed to prove title | Preserve | Common practice |
| Maps, plans, and surveys of property owned by the council or meeting | Transfer to WCA once they become inactive | Preserve | Common practice |
| General correspondence | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement | Destroy | Operational |
| Complaints | 6 Years after resolution of complaint | Destroy | Operational |
| Information Requests | 6 Years after resolution of request | Destroy | Operational |
| Village/parish appraisals, plans, millennium projects and supporting papers | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement | Review | Operational |
| Planning applications and related papers for major controversial developments | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement | Review with the view to destroy | Operational |
| Planning applications for minor works where permission is refused | 6 years | Destroy | Limitation Act 1980 |
| Leases, agreements, contracts and wayleaves | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement | Review | Operational |
| Parish council newsletter | Transfer one copy to WCA | Preserve | Common practice |
| Newsletter mailing list | Retain until consent withdrawn or following regular review consent no longer provided | Destroy | Operational |
| Quotations and tenders (successful) | 6 years after contract ends | Destroy | Limitation Act 1980 |
| Quotations and tenders (unsuccessful) | 2 years | Destroy | Operational |
| Routine internal correspondence and papers | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement | Review with the view to destroy | Operational |
| Scale of fees and charges | Until superseded by new charges | Destroy | Operational |
| Employers’ liability insurance policies | 40 years after expiry date | Destroy | Employers’ Liability Act 1969Employers’ Liability Regulations 1998 |
| Risk assessments | Once superseded by a new risk assessment or once inactive | Destroy | Operational |
| Personnel files | 6 Years after termination of service | Destroy | Risk of investigation regarding any future litigation |
| Recruitment data Successful  Unsuccessful |   Add to personnel file 6 months after recruitment finalised plus current year | Destroy | Equalities Act |
|   |   |   |   |
| Financial |   |   |   |
|  |   |   |   |
| Receipt and payment books | Transfer to WCA once they become inactive | Preserve | Council financial regulations |
| Annual audited accounts  | 6 years. | Destroy,  | Council financial regulations |
| Accounts and statements | 6 years | Destroy | Council financial regulations |
| Bank statements including deposit/saving accounts | 6 years | Destroy | Council financial regulations |
| Bank paying-in books | Last completed Audit year | Destroy | Council financial regulations |
| Cheque book stubs | Last completed Audit year | Destroy | Council financial regulations |
| Paid invoices | 6 years | Destroy | Council financial regulations |
| Paid cheques | 6 years | Destroy | Council financial regulations |
| VAT records | 6 years | Destroy | VAT Act 1994 |
| VAT claims | 6 years | Destroy | VAT Act 1994 |
| Time sheets  | Last completed Audit year | Destroy | Council financial regulations |
|  |   |   |   |
| Miscellaneous |   |   |   |
|  |   |   |   |
| Maps created under the provision of the Rights of Way Act 1932 | Transfer to HRO once they become inactive | Preserve | Common practice |
| Papers concerning Rights of Way | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement | Destroy | Operational |
| Legal Papers | Indefinite | Preserve | Audit, Operational |
| Community magazines or newsletters(not created by the parish council) | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement | Review | Operational |
| Photographs | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement | Review | Operational |
| Any records predating the establishment of Parish Councils (1894), e.g. poor law, surveyors of the highway, tithe maps and apportionments, enclosure awards etc. | Transfer to WCA immediately | Preserve | Common practice |
| Reports, guides, handbooks etc received from other organisations | Until there is no longer an administrative requirement | Review | Operational |