



COGGESHALL PARISH COUNCIL

Record Retention Policy

Introduction

Coggeshall Parish Council recognises that its records are an important public asset, and a key resource for effective operation and accountability. Like any asset, they require careful management and this policy sets out the Council's responsibilities and actions in regard to the management of its records. It provides the framework for specific guidance and detailed operating procedures.

Scope

This policy is to help us manage our records effectively in accordance with professional principles and the legislation and guidelines specified in appendix 1. It applies to all the records of Coggeshall Parish Council.

A record is any recorded information on paper, microfilm, electronic, audio-visual and record copies of publications, which is created, collected, processed, used, stored or disposed of by CPC employees, as well as those acting as its agents in the course of a Council activity. It applies to all employees of Coggeshall Parish Council. [Not all documentary materials we use are records. For example, library and reference material, stocks of publications and documents retained for distribution, extra copies made for convenience of reference and personal papers are all not records in the terms of this policy.]

Policy Statement

The aim of the policy is to define a framework for managing records and ensure that the Council:

- Creates and captures authentic and reliable records to demonstrate evidence, accountability and information about its decisions and activities
- Facilitates auditing and protects our legal and other rights
- Maintains records securely and preserves access to them
- Disposes appropriately of records that are no longer required
- Protects vital records, which it needs in order to function effectively
- Maintains records to meet the authority's business needs
- Addresses the needs of the authority's stakeholders, including the public, employees and the Record Office
- Conforms to any legal and statutory requirements relating to record-keeping
- Complies with government directives.

Identification of roles and responsibilities

Coggeshall Parish Council is responsible for approving a framework for managing and overseeing its duties in relation to records management as set out in this policy.

The Clerk will advise on the retention and management of their records, and where appropriate will organise custody of those records deemed worthy of permanent preservation.

All Coggeshall Parish Council employees will be responsible for creating and maintaining records in relation to their work that are authentic and reliable. Staff with specific responsibilities for records management will have these clearly defined in their job descriptions. All employees will be responsible for receiving Freedom of Information Act requests, and passing them on to the Clerk. All Staff and Members will be responsible for receiving Environmental Information Regulations requests and passing them on to the Clerk.

Training and Awareness

Since all employees are involved in creating, maintaining and using records, it is vital that everyone understands their record management responsibilities as set out in this policy. Appropriate training will be given to ensure that all staff are aware of their obligations around Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Records Management.

Records Creation and Record Keeping

The Council maintains a record keeping system that documents its activities and provides for quick and easy retrieval of information. The system exists for paper and electronic records and ensures that the records are arranged and indexed in such a way that they can be retrieved quickly and efficiently.

Record Maintenance

The record keeping system will be maintained so that the records are properly stored and protected, and can easily be located and retrieved.

Record Retention and Disposal

With increasing public access to the records, it is important that disposal happens as part of a managed process and is adequately documented. Therefore, the Council will define the arrangements for the appraisal and selection of records for disposal. The system will ensure that records subject to a Freedom of Information request are not destroyed.

Access

Coggeshall Parish Council will ensure that decisions regarding access to the records are documented so that they are consistent, and can be explained and referred to.

Type of record	Format Hard	Format Digital	Minimum retention period	Reason	Rec by PC Clerk
Agenda – Council Meetings	✓	✓	2 years		✓
Agenda – Non Council Meetings		✓	3 years		✓
Agenda – Non Council Meetings	✓		1 year		✓
Allotment Agreement	✓		Indefinite		✓
Allotment – Register of Plans	✓		Indefinite	Audit	✓
Asset Register		✓	Indefinite		✓
Attendance Register (members)	✓	✓	4 years		✓
Bank Statements (inc deposit a/c)	✓		6 years	Audit	✓
Bank Paying in Books	✓		6 years	Audit	✓
Burial administration	✓	✓	Indefinite		✓
Cheque Book Stubs	✓		6 years	Audit	✓
Cheques paid	✓		6 years	Statute	✓
Customer/Resident Surveys		✓	3 years*		✓
Customer Resident Surveys	✓		1 year		✓
Gifts received register	✓	✓	Indefinite		✓
Grant applications made by CPC	✓		6 years		✓
Grant applications made to CPC	✓		6 years		✓
Investments	✓		Indefinite	Audit	✓
Invoices raised	✓	✓	6 years	VAT	✓
Invoices paid	✓		6 years	VAT	✓
Insurance Certificates	✓	✓	40 Years	Limitation period	✓
Insurance Policies	✓		6 years	Statute	✓
Insurance Policies (contractors etc)	✓		While valid		✓
Letters, general correspondence		✓	5 years		✓
Letters, general correspondence	✓		2 years		✓
Members' Allowance Register	✓		6 years	Tax, Statute	✓
Members' Declaration of Acceptance of Office	✓		Indefinite	Archive	✓
Members' Declarations of Interest Register	✓		Indefinite		✓
Minutes & Minutes Books – Council Meetings	✓	✓	Indefinite (hard copies to ECC Records office)		✓
Minutes– Non-Council meetings		✓	3 years		✓
Minutes – Non Council meetings	✓		1 year		✓
Minutes – Hand written notes by members and clerk	✓		Until the minutes have been agreed		✓
Planning Application and permissions		✓	6 years		✓
Personnel Records	✓	✓	6 years		✓
Petty Cash	✓		6 years	Tax, VAT	✓
Quotations & Tenders (successful)	✓		12 years/indefinite	Statute	✓
Quotations & Tenders (unsuccessful)	✓		1 year after completion		✓
Receipt and payment books	✓		Indefinite	Archive	✓
Receipt books of all kinds	✓		6 years	VAT	✓
Risk Assessments	✓	✓	25 years	Public	✓

				Liability	
Scales of Fees and Charges		✓	5 years	M'ment	✓
Standing orders	✓				✓
Timesheets	✓		2 years	Audit	✓
Title deeds, leases, agreements & contracts	✓		Indefinite		✓
VAT records	✓		6 years	VAT	✓
Wages books	✓	✓	12 years		✓

*Do not retain the supporting documentation once the survey results have been compiled.