COPDOCK & WASHBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

Copdock and Washbrook Parish Council recognises the efficient and effective management of its records is essential to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to assist in the satisfactory management of public business by the Parish Council. This Policy provides a framework through which this effective management and retention of public records can be achieved and properly audited.

Scope

This Policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Parish Council. Records are defined as all those documents which relate to the business carried out by the Parish 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.

Responsibilities

The Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with regulatory requirements. The person with overall responsibility for maintaining this Policy is the Clerk and Proper Officer of the Parish Council.

The person responsible for records management will give guidance for good records management practice and will promote compliance with this Policy so that information will be stored and retrieved easily, appropriately and timely.

The Clerk and Proper Officer must ensure that the records for which they are 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 the Councillor considers that some of these documents are important in the context of the parish 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. Councillors should be aware that records that they may hold may be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004. The Parish Council must also ensure it acts within the General Data Protection Regulations.

Retention Schedule

The Parish Council is required to maintain a retention schedule listing types of records which it 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 and the action which should be taken when it is of no further administrative use.

The Clerk will be expected to manage the current record keeping systems using the retention schedule and to take account of the different retention periods when they are creating new record keeping systems.The retention schedule refers to all Parish Council records irrespective of the media in which they are stored.

STATUS: ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2026
Minute number 3215(t)/2627

MINIMUM RETENTION PERIODS

Document or Record	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Minutes and Correspondence		
Signed Minutes of Council Meetings	Indefinite	Archive
Correspondence & papers on important local issues	Indefinite	Archive
Routine correspondence, papers & emails	1 year	Audit
Finance & Payroll		
Receipt & Payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Return & Audited Accounts	Indefinite	Archive
All Bank Statements	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank Paying-in Books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque Book Stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Correspondence relating to audit matters	Last completed audit year	Audit
Budgetary Control Papers	2 years + Current year	Audit
Quotations and Tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Receipt Books of all Kinds	Indefinite	Archive
Paid Invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid Cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
VAT Records	6 years (but 20 years on rents)	VAT
Investments	Indefinite	Audit and Management
Payroll Records	Last completed audit year	Audit
Insurance Policies		
Certificate of Employers Liability	50 years	Future Claims
Certificate of Public Liability	21 years	Future Claims
Other Insurance Policies	While valid or a claim can be made	Management and Legal Proceedings
Insurance Claim Records	7 years after all obligations concluded	Management and Legal Proceedings
Policy Renewal Records & correspondence	While valid	Management

General Management		
Title Deeds, Leases, Agreements, Contracts	Indefinite	Audit and Management
Allotments		
Register, plans, receipt books, scale of charges	Indefinite	Audit and Management
Health & Safety		
Accident Books (Injury to Adults)	50years from closure	Management and Legal Proceedings
Accident Books (Injury to Children)	50years from closure	Management and Legal Proceedings
Equipment Inspection Records	25 years	Management
Premises Inspection Records	25 years	Management
Risk Assessments	3 years from last assessment	Management
Members		
Register of Members Interests	18 months after individual ceases to A Member	Management
Register of Officers Interests	Indefinite	Archive
Member's Allowances Register	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Miscellaneous		
Complaints	2 years after closure of case	Management
Press Releases	5 years	Management
Public Consultation – surveys & returns	5 years	Management
Reports, newsletters etc from other bodies	Retain as long as useful	Management
Personnel/Human Resources		
Application Forms (interviewed – unsuccessful)	6 months	Management
Disciplinary Records	Retain for period of employment	Management
Personal Files (not payroll information)	6 years after ceasing employment	Management

General correspondence will be retained as long as relevant, the minimum period being 1 year.

An annual review of all documentation should be carried out and all items that have reached their deletion or destruction date being deleted/destroyed and the remainder being considered for archiving.

Review date: This Policy will be reviewed annually.