

# **PADBURY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Document Retention Policy and Data Audit**

### **DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY**

#### **Introduction**

The Council accumulates a vast amount of information and data during the course of its everyday activities. This includes data generated internally in addition to information obtained from individuals and external organisations.

Records created and maintained by the Council are an important asset and as such measures need to be undertaken to safeguard this information. Properly managed records provide authentic and reliable evidence of the Council's transactions and are necessary to ensure it can demonstrate accountability.

Documents may be retained in either 'hard' paper form or in electronic forms. For the purpose of this policy, 'document' and 'record' refers to both hard copy and electronic records.

It is imperative that documents are retained for an adequate period of time. If documents are destroyed prematurely the Council and individual officers concerned could face prosecution for not complying with legislation and it could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the Council.

In contrast to the above the Council should not retain documents longer than is necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations so that personal information is not retained longer than necessary. This will also ensure the most efficient use of limited storage space.

#### **Scope and Objectives of the Policy**

The aim of this document is to provide a working framework to determine which documents are:

- Retained – and for how long; or
- Disposed of

There are some records that do not need to be kept at all or that are routinely destroyed in the course of business. This usually applies to information that is duplicated, unimportant or only of a short-term value. Unimportant records of information include:

- 'With compliments' slips.
- Catalogues and trade journals.
- Non-acceptance of invitations.
- Trivial electronic mail messages that are not related to Council business.
- Requests for information such as maps, plans or advertising material.
- Out of date distribution lists.

Duplicated and superseded material such as stationery, manuals, drafts, forms, address books and reference copies of annual reports may be destroyed.

Records should not be destroyed if the information can be used as evidence to prove that

something has happened. If destroyed the disposal needs to be disposed of under the General Data Protection Regulations.

### **Roles and Responsibilities for Document Retention and Disposal**

Councils are responsible for determining whether to retain or dispose of documents and should undertake a review of documentation at least on an annual basis to ensure that any unnecessary documentation being held is disposed of under the General Data Protection Regulations.

### **Schedule of Documents**

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the parish council is required to maintain a retention schedule which lays down the length of time certain records need to be retained.

<b>Document</b>	<b>Minimum retention period</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Minute books	Indefinite	Archive
Asset register	Indefinite	Management
Scales of fees and charges	Six years	Management
Receipt and payment account(s)	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds	Six years	VAT
Bank statements, including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Quotations and tenders	Six years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid invoices	Six years	VAT
Paid cheques	Six years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
VAT records	Six years generally but 20 years for VAT on rents	VAT
Petty cash, postage, and telephone books	Six years	Tax, VAT, and Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Timesheets	Three years (or last completed audit year)	Audit (requirement) and personal injury (best practice)
Wages books	12 years	Superannuation
Insurance policies	As long as a claim can be made under it	Management and legal proceedings
Certificates for Insurance against liability for employees	Indefinitely	Future claims
Investments	Indefinite	Audit and management
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit and management
Members allowances register	Six years	Tax and Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)

Accident/incident reports	20 years	Potential claims
Employees' records	Employment period + 6 years	Management
Park equipment inspection reports	21 years	Future claims
Electoral Register	1 year (once new one is issued destroy previous)	Management
Parish Councillors Application for co-option  Declarations of acceptance of office  Members register of interests	Term of Office + 1 Year	Management
Information from other bodies e.g. circulars from county associations, NALC, principal authorities	Retained for as long as it is useful and relevant	Management
Local/historical information	Indefinite – to be securely kept for benefit of the Parish	Councils may acquire records of local interest and accept gifts or records of general and local interest in order to promote the use for such records (defined as materials in written or other form setting out facts or events or otherwise recording information).
Routine correspondence and emails	6 months after relevant issue is completed	Management
Planning applications	1 year or until development is complete	Management
Planning – Appeals	1 year unless significant development	Management

Adopted at 15th April 2026 meeting

# Data Audit - April 2026

Document	Personal Detail Held	Purpose	How it is Held	Legal Basis	Length of Time to be Held	Shared With	Purpose of Sharing
<b>PERSONNEL - STAFF</b>							
Employment (e.g. contract, pension, CV, appraisal)	Contact details, National Insurance number, employment history etc	For setting up and managing employment of staff	Electronically / hard copy	Legal obligation	Until 6 years after employment has ceased with the Parish Council	Not shared	n/a
CVs & applications of job applicants	Contact details and personal details of employment history	Recruitment	Electronically / hard copy	Public task	For 6 months after notifying unsuccessful applicant/s	Not shared	n/a
Employment – payment of salaries	Bank details	Payment of salaries	Hard copy / Scribe	Legal obligation	For duration of employment	Parish Council bank signatories	Authorise payment
<b>COUNCILLORS</b>							
Application for co-option	Contact details and reasons for wanting to become a parish councillor	Reference	Electronically / hard copy	Public task	For 3 months after councillor vacancy filled	Not shared	n/a
Declaration of Interests forms	Pecuniary and other interests of parish councillors	Legal requirement	Electronically / hard copy	Public task	For length of time a councillor is a member of the Parish Council	Public via Website	Public information
Contact list of councillors' details	Contact details	Reference - for the public to contact councillors	Electronically / hard copy / Website / Pump newsletter	Public task	To be updated / amended as change dictates and kept for up to a year after a councillor leaves the Parish Council	The public via website, newsletter and noticeboard	Public information
<b>CORRESPONDENCE</b>							
Planning applications	Personal details	To assist planning application recommendations	Electronically	Public task	1 year or until development is complete	Not shared	n/a
Correspondence from parishioners and addresses/email	Personal details	To respond to parishioners correspondence	Electronically / hard copy	Public task	6 months	Staff / Councillors as required	To assist in resolving queries

addresses		nce					
<b>MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b>							
Electoral Register	Names, addresses	Reference	Electronic copy	Public task	Current year only (until new register is issued)	Not shared	n/a
Enquiries from members of the public	Contact details	To request information, pass on information or make a statement	Electronically / hard copy	Public task	For as long as is necessary	Not shared	n/a
Pavilion booking forms	Contact details	To book the facilities	Electronically / Hard copy	Contract	Up to 1 year	Not shared	n/a
<b>MEETINGS</b>							
Minutes	Minutes from Council	Record of decisions	Electronically / hard copy	Legal obligation	Indefinitely	Electronically on the Parish Council website. Hard copies temporarily on notice boards	Public information
<b>CONTRACTORS/ PROCUREMENT</b>							
Contractors providing goods or services to the Parish Council	Contact details, details of contract between the two parties	Contractual	Electronically / hard copy	Contract	Life of the contract and up to 7 years for auditing purposes	Not shared	n/a
Invoices	Goods / services received / supplied	As a record / for financial purposes (annual return and audit)	Electronically / hard copy	Legal obligation	Indefinitely	Not shared	n/a
Paying for goods / services	Bank details	Bank details for contractors / suppliers are stored within the banking system. Annually, following auditing, the RFO will review and remove any	Electronically	Contract	Whilst providing services and for up to one year after cessation of contract	Not shared	n/a

		details no longer in use.					
<b>EMAILS</b>							
Staff and Councillors using gov.uk email addresses	Names, emails, addresses, personal information	Information sharing and communication between staff, councillors, statutory consultees and members of the public	Electronically	Contract / public task	For 6 months (some emails may be kept longer if it conflicts with the documents listed above)	Parish Council	n/a
<b>INSURANCE</b>							
Insurance documents	Insurance schedule	To evidence sufficient insurance cover for the Council	Electronically / hard copy	Legal obligation	Until superseded by new policy paperwork	Not shared	n/a

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