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**Weaverham Parish Council**

**Data Retention Policy.**

**The Parish Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the Parish Council. This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Parish Council in the course of carrying out its functions. Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the Parish Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically. A small percentage of the Parish Council’s records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council’s archives and for historical research.**

**Responsibilities**

**The Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council, and the Clerk 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. Retention Schedule Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Parish Council is required to maintain a retention schedule listing the record series which it creates 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 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. This retention schedule refers to record series regardless of the media in which they are stored.**

**Retention of Documents**

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| **Document** | **Minimum Retention** | **Reason** |
| **Meeting Minutes** | **Indefinite** | **Archive** |
| **Agendas** | **5 years** | **Management** |
| **General correspondence** | **Records should be kept for as long as they are needed for reference or accountability purposes, to comply with regulatory requirements or to protect legal and other rights and interests.** | **Management** |
| **Annual Accounts** | **Indefinite** | **Archive** |
| **Annual Return** | **Indefinite** | **Archive** |
| **Bank Statements** | **7 years** | **Audit/management** |
| **Cheque book stubs** | **Last completed audit** | **management** |
| **Bank paying in books** | **Last completed audit** | **management** |
| **Quotations/tenders** | **6 years** | **Audit/ Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)** |
| **VAT records** | **7 years** | **Audit/VAT** |
| **Paid invoices** | **7 years** | **Audit/VAT** |
| **Paid Cheques** | **6 years** | **Audit/ Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)** |
| **Salary records** | **7 years** | **Audit** |
| **Tax and NI records** | **7 years** | **Audit** |
| **Insurance policies** | **Whilst valid** | **Audit** |
| **Certificate of employers liability** | **Whilst valid** | **Audit/legal** |
| **Certificate of public liability** | **Whilst valid** | **Audit/legal** |
| **Assets register** | **Indefinite** | **Audit** |
| **Title Deeds and leases** | **Indefinite** | **Audit** |
| **Accident/incident reports** | **20 years** | **Potential claims** |
| **Town Park equipment inspection reports** | **21 years** |  |

**Planning Applications**

**All planning applications and relevant decision notices are available at Chester and Cheshire West Council. There is no requirement to retain duplicates locally. All Parish Council recommendations in connection with these applications are recorded in the Council minutes and are retained indefinitely. Correspondence received in connection with applications will be retained as stated below:**

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| **Declarations of acceptance** | **Term of Office + 1 year** |
| **Members register of interests’ book** | **Term of Office + 1 year** |
| **Complaints** | **1 year** |
| **Routine correspondence and e-mails** | **6 months** |
| **General Information** | **3 months** |

**Disposal procedures**

**All documents that are no longer required for administrative reasons should be deleted or shredded and disposed of securely to protect any sensitive information.**

**Review and Update:**

**The data retention policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure it remains compliant with current regulations and best practices.**