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Document Retention Policy

Adopted at the Full Council meeting on 11th September 2025

1. Introduction.

Clifton Parish Council (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.

The Parish Council will retain its important documents, both electronic and paper for the periods listed in the table in section 8 (consistent with advice from NALC Legal Topic Note 40 – August 2022). These periods are to be considered as minimum retention times. The Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that the documents are filed in an orderly and secure manner at all times. Documents will be made available on request according to the requirements of the Council's Document Publication Policy.

2. Responsibilities.

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.

3. Correspondence.

General correspondence and emails will be retained for as long as is relevant, the minimum period is 1 year. An annual review of all documentation should be carried out and items that have reached their deletion or destruction date being deleted/destroyed and the remainder be considered for archiving.

It is down to individual Councillors to delete emails in their allocated email account.

4. Retention of Documents for Legal Purposes.

Most legal proceedings are governed by the Limitation Act 1980. This act provides that legal claims may not be commenced after a specified period. This period varies depending on the type of claim in questions. The reference to 'category' in the table below refers to claims brought in respect of that category.

Category	Limitation Period
Breach of Trust	No limitation period
Contract	6 years
Defamation	1 year
Leases	12 years
Negligence (and other 'torts')	6 years
Personal injury	3 years
Rent	6 years

Sums recoverable by statute	6 years
To recover land	12 years

Some types of legal proceedings may fall into two or more categories. NALC recommends that the longest of the limitation periods is adhered to.

5. Records Identified for Permanent Preservation.

These should be deposited with the local Archive Service once there is no longer an administrative need for them to be kept.

6. Record Keeping.

To ensure records are easily accessible, it is necessary to comply with the following:

- Files to be labelled clearly.
- Electronic files will be saved using relevant file names.

The electronic files will be backed up periodically on a portable hard drive and also in a cloud-based programme.

Documentation no longer required will be disposed of in line with Section 7.

7. Records to be destroyed.

To protect confidential information, all records assigned for disposal should be securely destroyed. Paper records containing confidential information should be shredded. Electronic records should be deleted from digital files.

8. Retention of Documents required for the Audit of Parish Councils.

Document Type	Minimum Retention Period (time is from the date on the document)	Retention Reason
Administrative		
Minutes	Indefinite	Archive signed copies.
Draft Minutes/Notes of Minutes Taken at a Meeting	Until minutes are approved	Operational
Reports and Other Documents Circulated with Agendas	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Councillors Declaration of Acceptance of Office & Register of Interests	Term of office + 2 years	Operational
Register of Electors	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Byelaws & Orders	Preserve one of each copy	Common Practice
Policy Documents	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement. Destroy old versions	Operational
Title Deeds & Property registers	Indefinite	Common Practice
Maps, Plans, Surveys of Property Owned by the Council	Indefinite	Common Practice
General Correspondence	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Complaints	5 years after resolution of complaint	Operational
Information Requests	1 year after resolution of request	Operational
Leases, Agreements, Contracts & Wayleaves	Indefinite	Audit, Management.
Parish Council Newsletter	Indefinite – One copy to archives	Common Practice
Routine Internal Correspondence and Papers	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Risk Assessments	Once superseded by a new risk assessment or once inactive – plus 1 prior year.	Operational
Health & Safety Records	6 years	Common Practice
Accident/Incident Reports	6 years or in the case of a child, until their 21 st birthday	Common Practice/Potential Claims

Personnel		
Personnel Files	6 years after termination of employment	Risk of investigation regarding any future litigation
Annual Leave Records	2 years	Operational
Recruitment data		Equalities Act
Successful	Add to personnel file	
Unsuccessful	6 months after recruitment finalised plus current year	
Financial		
Scales of Fees and Charges	5 years	Management
Receipt Books and Payment Accounts	Indefinite	Council Financial Regulations
Receipt Books of All Kinds	6 years	VAT
Annual Return and Audited Accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Accounts and Statements	6 years	Council Financial Regulations
Cash & Petty Cash Books, Rent Books, Postage & Telephone Books	6 years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980. Council Financial Regulations
Bank Statements Including Deposit/Savings Accounts	Last completed Audit year	Audit, Council Financial Regulations
Bank Paying-in Books, Cheque Book Stubs	Last completed Audit year	Audit, Council Financial Regulations
Paid Invoices	6 years	VAT Act 1994. Council Financial Regulations
Paid Cheques	6 years	Limitations Act 1980. Council Financial Regulations
VAT records & Claims	6 years (20 years for VAT on Rents)	VAT Act 1994
Wage Slips, PAYE, NI Records	12 years	Superannuation & Limitation Act 1980
Members Allowances Register	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980
Quotations & Tenders (successful)	6 years after contract ends	Limitation Act 1980
Quotations & Tenders (unsuccessful)	2 years	Operational
S137 Grants	6 years	Audit, Council Financial Regulations
Precept & Budgets	6 years	Audit, Council Financial Regulations
Insurance		
Certificates of Employers Liability Insurance Policies	40 years after expiry date	Employers Liability Act 1969 Employers Liability Regulations 1998
Insurance Policies	2 years	Operational
Playing Fields		
Records relating to applications to: - Letting Diaries - Copies of Bills to Hirers	6 years	VAT Council Financial Regulations
Inspection Sheets	6 years	Common Practice
Community Centre		
Records relating to applications to: - Letting Diaries - Copies of Bills to Hirers	6 years	VAT Council Financial Regulations
Inspection/Test Sheets and Reports	6 years	Common Practice
Planning (Applications held by Planning Authority)		
Village/Parish Appraisals, Plans, Projects & Supporting Papers	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Planning Applications & Related Papers for Major Controversial Developments	Indefinite	Future Compliance
Planning Applications Where Permission is Granted	6 years	Compliance

Planning Applications Where Permission is Refused	3 years or until period for appeal has Expired.	Limitation Act 1980
Neighbourhood Plans	Indefinite – final adopted plans	Archive
Miscellaneous		
Maps Created Under the Provision of the Rights of Way Act 1932	Archive once inactive	Common Practice
Papers concerning Rights of Way	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Community Magazine or Newsletters	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Charity Papers	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Press Cutting	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Historical
Photographs	Indefinite – To be securely kept for the benefit of the Parish or Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Historical Operational
Reports, Guides, Handbooks, etc Received From Other Organisations	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Historical Records	Indefinite – To be securely kept for the benefit of the Parish	Archive/Common Practice

Policy Details.

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Review Period: Bi-annually or when amendments required.

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