Policies

Document Retention Policy

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Preamble

Council requires a policy to provide the Clerk with guidance relating to the time for which documents should be kept, and how they should be stored. This enables efficient use of space and time – searching for documents and responding to Freedom of Information requests can be difficult and time-consuming.

Given that much will be stored electronically, it is vital that a secure and safe back-up system is in place.

Compliance with GDPR should always be observed.

How long should documents be stored?

There are minimum periods set down by NALC for such retention. These minimums apply to Brancaster Parish Council. They are listed in the Appendix.

Historic records

Those documents where an indefinite storage time is specified should be stored at the Norfolk Records Office – this to be done on a regular basis, at least once per four-year Council term. Ideally all such records should be scanned to allow local availability.

Form of storage

Documents older than two years, where paper storage is not specifically required, may be kept in digital form. Because of the quantity of storage, paid invoices and bank statements may be kept in digital form once the audit has been signed off by the External Auditor.

Keeping records for longer than the required minimum period

There are occasions when retention of records for longer that the required period may be useful. Examples might be invoices which could provide evidence in adverse possession cases, or to provide historical context. In this case they may be retained indefinitely in paper or electronic form. This should be at the discretion of the Clerk, but advice sought from Council with documents other than invoices.

Destruction of records

Council should be informed of what has been done from time to time.

Once a year the retention of those records existing should be reviewed against this policy. A suggested time would be at the completion of the annual audit process.

Appendix – NALC retention policy in place 2021

DOCUMENT	MINIMUM RETENTION	REASON
• Minute books	Indefinite	Archive
• Scales of fees and charges	6 years	Management
• Receipt and payment account(s)	Indefinite	Archive
• Receipt books of all kinds	6 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	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
• Paid invoices	6 years	VAT

• Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
• VAT records	6 years	VAT
• Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
• Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit
• Wages books	12 years	Superannuation
• Insurance policies	While valid	Management
• Certificates for Insurance against liability for employees	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI. 2753), Management.
• Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management
• Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
• Members allowances register	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)

For Halls, Centre, Recreation Grounds		
• application to hire • lettings diaries • copies of bills to hires • record of tickets issued	6 years	VAT
For Allotments		
• register and plans	Indefinite	Audit, Management
For Burial Grounds		

• register of fees collected • register of burials • register of purchased graves • register/plan of grave spaces • register of memorials • applications for interment • applications for right to erect memorials • disposal certificates • copy certificates of grant of exclusiveright of burial	Indefinite	Archives, Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI. 204)

This policy is based on decisions of Council taken under minute refs 2021.11.02.08.e & 2024.05.07.10.a

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