

PATCHING PARISH COUNCIL

DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

The council recognises the need to retain documentation for audit purposes, staff management, tax liabilities and the eventuality of legal disputes and proceedings.

In agreeing a document retention scheme, the council has addressed these needs, and taken into account its obligations.

Subject to the aforementioned reasons for retaining documents, and as a basic starting point, papers and records may be destroyed if they are no longer of use or relevant. If in doubt, document(s) should be retained until proper advice has been received.

1. Retention of documents for legal purposes

- 1.1 Most legal proceedings are governed by the Limitation Act 1980. The 1980 Act provides that legal claims may not be commenced after a specified period. The specified period varies, depending on the type of claim in question. The table below sets out the limitation periods for the different categories of claim.

Category	Limitation Period
Negligence (and other torts)	6 years
Defamation	1 year
Contract	6 years
Leases	12 years
Sums recoverable by statute	6 years
Personal Injury	3 years
To recover land	12 years
Rent	6 years
Breach of trust	None

- 1.2 Some types of legal proceedings may fall into two or more categories. In these circumstances, the documentation should be kept for the longest of the differing limitation periods.
- 1.3 As there is no limitation period in respect of trusts, the council will never destroy trust deeds and schemes and other similar documentation.
- 1.4 Some limitation periods can be extended. Examples include:
- where individuals first become aware of damage caused at a later date (e.g. in the case of personal injury);
 - where damage is latent (e.g. to a building);
 - where a person suffers from a mental incapacity;
 - where there has been a mistake or where one party has defrauded another or concealed relevant facts.
- 1.5 In such circumstances the council will consider the costs of storing relevant documents and the risks of:
- claims being made;
 - the value of the claims; and
 - the inability to defend any claims made should relevant documents be destroyed.

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2. Retention Policy:

DOCUMENT	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD	REASON
Minute books	Indefinite	Archive
Scale of fees and charges	6 years	Management
Receipt and payments account(s)	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds, including ledgers	6 years	VAT
Bank statements, including savings/deposit 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 after completion of contract	Limitation Act 1980
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980
VAT records, P60s and P45s	6 years	VAT, Tax
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980
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 the insurance commenced or was renewed	Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998, Management
Correspondence and emails	1 year	Limitation Act 1980
Accident book	3 years	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Act 2013
Annual accounts and asset registers	Indefinite	Archive
Pension contribution records	6 years	Pensions Act 2014
Personnel records, including SSP and maternity records	6 years	Limitations Act 1980
Asbestos and hazardous materials records	Indefinite	Asbestos Regulations
Job applications	For period of employment for staff appointed	Management
Previous versions of policies, standing orders, schemes of delegation	3 years	Data Protection Act 1998

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3. **Disposal Policy:**

- When paper documents are no longer required they:
 - may be scanned and stored electronically as an alternative to hard copy.
 - should be regarded as confidential waste and disposed of securely by shredding or comparable means.
- Electronic documents should be deleted along with any back up copies.
- Minutes for archive should be passed to the higher authority (ADC) at intervals not exceeding 5 years.