1. **Introduction**

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 document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited. It covers:

**Scope**

**Responsibilities**

**Retention Schedule**

**Disposal of Records**

**Retention of Records Schedule**

1. **Scope**

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.

1. **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 overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council, and she/he 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.

1. **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.

1. **Disposal of Records**

All documents that are no longer required for administrative reasons should be disposed of. If they contain information of a sensitive nature such as financial or bank details, or are covered by GDPR regulations etc, hard copy documents should be shredded before disposal. If in doubt shred all documents. Electronic documents should be retained under password control and action taken to ensure that any hard drives or computer memory is properly wiped before disposal.

1. **Digital records**

Digital systems used to retain records are to be backed up regularly onto secure storage medium which is tangibly independent of the systems used for day to day business. All passwords are to be retained in a secure location where they can be accessed by a nominated councilor in the event of the non-availability of the custodian of the system. REDUNDANT DOCUMENTS

1. **Redundant records**

Documents of local and or historical importance, if not retained and stored by the Council in accordance with its relevant policies, will be offered first to the Cumbria County Record Office where they are accessible to all members of the public.

1. **Retention of Documents Schedule**

This retention schedule refers to record series regardless of the media in which they are stored.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Minimum Retention** | **Reason** |
| Minute Books and Agendas | Indefinite | Archive |
| Business papers taken at Meetings | 7 Years | Archive |
| Policies and Procedures | 7 Years | Legal |
| Annual Accounts | Indefinite | Archive |
| Annual Return | Indefinite | Archive |
| Bank statements | 7 years | Audit/management |
| Cheque book stubs | Last completed | Audit Management |
| Paying in books | Last completed | Audit Management |
| Quotations | 7 years | Audit |
| Paid invoices | 7 years | Audit/VAT |
| VAT records | 7 years | Audit/VAT |
| Salary records | 7 years | Audit |
| Tax & NI records | 7 years | Audit |
| Insurance policies | 7 years | Audit |
| Grant Applications and final reports | 7 years | Audit/legal |
| Cert of Employers Liability | 40 years | Audit/legal |
| Cert of public liability | 40 years | Audit/legal |
| Assets register | Indefinite | Audit |
| Deeds, leases, Land Registry correspondence etc | Indefinite | Audit |
| Declarations of acceptance | Term of Office + 1 year | Management |
| Members register of interests’ book | Term of office + 1 year | Management |
| Complaints | 1 year | Management |
| General information | 3 months | Management |
| Routine correspondence & e-mails | 1 year | Management |
| Non-routine and Significant papers or correspondence & e-mails | Minimum of 1 Year after completion of work on the project | Management |
| Planning Applications | See Footnote | - |

**Footnote:** All planning applications and relevant decision notices are available on line at Cumberland Council Built Environment Public Register. There is no requirement to retain duplicates locally. All Parish Council recommendations in connection with these applications are recorded in the Authority minutes and are retained indefinitely. Correspondence received in connection with applications will be retained as stated in the above schedule.