

# Cardinham Parish Council

## Document Retention and Disposal Policy

### 1. Purpose

Cardinham Parish Council ("the Council") recognises that effective records management is essential to good governance, transparency, and legal compliance.

This policy establishes a framework for the retention, review, and secure disposal of Council records. It ensures that records are retained for no longer than necessary whilst preserving those documents that have permanent administrative, legal, historical, or evidential value.

The policy supports compliance with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR);
  - Data Protection Act 2018;
  - Freedom of Information Act 2000;
  - Local Government Act 1972;
  - Limitation Act 1980;
  - Employment legislation;
  - HM Revenue and Customs record keeping requirements;
  - The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioner's Guide.
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### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all records created, received, or maintained by the Council, including:

- Paper records.
- Electronic records.
- Emails.
- Photographs and digital images.
- Audio recordings.
- Contracts and legal documents.
- Financial and personnel records.

The policy applies to councillors, the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), employees, contractors, and any person handling Council records.

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### 3. Principles

The Council will:

- Maintain accurate and accessible records.
  - Retain records only for as long as necessary.
  - Dispose of records securely and confidentially.
  - Preserve records of permanent historical or legal importance.
  - Review retained records periodically.
  - Maintain compliance with data protection legislation.
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### 4. Responsibility

#### **The Parish Council**

The Council has overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate records management arrangements are in place.

#### **The Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer**

The Clerk is responsible for:

- Maintaining Council records.
  - Applying the retention schedule.
  - Arranging secure destruction of records.
  - Maintaining a record of disposals where appropriate.
  - Reviewing the schedule periodically.
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### 5. Disposal of Records

When records reach the end of their retention period, they shall be reviewed before destruction.

Records containing personal or confidential information shall be securely destroyed by:

- Cross-cut shredding.
- Confidential waste disposal services.
- Permanent deletion from electronic systems.

Routine deletion of electronic records should include removal from archived storage where reasonably practicable.

A record of significant document destruction may be maintained by the Clerk.

No records shall be destroyed where they are:

- Subject to an ongoing Freedom of Information request.

- Subject to a Subject Access Request.
- Required for litigation, investigation, audit, or insurance purposes.

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## Document Retention Schedule

| Record Category                                   | Minimum Retention Period                                 | Disposal Action                  |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Minutes of Council and Committee Meetings         | Permanent                                                | Archive                          |
| Signed Agendas                                    | 6 years                                                  | Confidential disposal            |
| Council Policies                                  | Superseded version + 6 years                             | Confidential disposal            |
| Standing Orders and Financial Regulations         | Superseded version + 6 years                             | Confidential disposal            |
| Annual Reports                                    | Permanent                                                | Archive                          |
| Asset Register                                    | Permanent (retain historic versions)                     | Archive                          |
| Annual Governance & Accountability Returns (AGAR) | Permanent                                                | Archive                          |
| Internal Audit Reports                            | 6 years                                                  | Confidential disposal            |
| External Audit Reports                            | Permanent                                                | Archive                          |
| Accounting Records, Cash Books and Ledgers        | 6 years after audit                                      | Confidential disposal            |
| Bank Statements                                   | 6 years                                                  | Confidential disposal            |
| Invoices and Receipts                             | 6 years                                                  | Confidential disposal            |
| VAT Records                                       | 6 years                                                  | Confidential disposal            |
| Payroll Records                                   | 6 years after end of tax year                            | Confidential disposal            |
| PAYE Records                                      | 3 years after end of tax year (minimum HMRC requirement) | Confidential disposal            |
| Pension Records                                   | 12 years after employment ends                           | Confidential disposal            |
| Employee Personnel Files                          | 6 years after employment ceases                          | Confidential disposal            |
| Job Application Forms (unsuccessful candidates)   | 6 months                                                 | Confidential disposal            |
| Employment Contracts                              | 6 years after employment ends                            | Confidential disposal            |
| Health and Safety Records                         | 6 years                                                  | Confidential disposal            |
| Accident Books                                    | 3 years after last entry (or longer where required)      | Confidential disposal            |
| Insurance Policies                                | 6 years after expiry                                     | Confidential disposal            |
| Insurance Claims Files                            | 6 years after settlement                                 | Confidential disposal            |
| Contracts and Agreements                          | 6 years after expiry or termination                      | Confidential disposal            |
| Leases and Property Documents                     | Permanent while property retained, then 12 years         | Archive or confidential disposal |
| Planning Consultation Responses                   | 6 years                                                  | Confidential disposal            |
| Correspondence of Routine Administrative Value    | 2 years                                                  | Confidential disposal            |
| Significant Correspondence relating               | 6 years                                                  | Confidential disposal            |

| <b>Record Category</b>                                  | <b>Minimum Retention Period</b>  | <b>Disposal Action</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| to Council Decisions                                    |                                  |                        |
| Complaints Files                                        | 6 years after closure            | Confidential disposal  |
| Freedom of Information Requests and Responses           | 3 years                          | Confidential disposal  |
| Subject Access Requests                                 | 3 years after closure            | Confidential disposal  |
| Data Breach Register                                    | 6 years                          | Confidential disposal  |
| Register of Members' Interests (copies held by Council) | Current plus 6 years             | Confidential disposal  |
| Register of Gifts and Hospitality                       | 6 years                          | Confidential disposal  |
| Election Expenses and Nomination Papers (where held)    | 1 year unless otherwise required | Confidential disposal  |
| Cemetery or Burial Records (if applicable)              | Permanent                        | Archive                |
| Allotment Tenancy Records (if applicable)               | 6 years after tenancy ends       | Confidential disposal  |
| Website Content (archived versions where significant)   | As required                      | Review periodically    |

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## 6. Emails

Emails should be treated as Council records where they relate to official business.

Routine emails of short-term administrative value may be deleted when no longer required.

Emails forming part of Council decisions, financial transactions, contracts, or legal matters should be retained in accordance with this schedule.

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## 7. Historical Records

Certain records may have enduring historical value to the parish.

The Council may choose to retain or deposit such records with an appropriate archive service rather than destroy them.

Examples include:

- Council minute books.
  - Historic photographs.
  - Maps and plans.
  - Significant correspondence.
  - Documents relating to major parish projects.
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## 8. Suspension of Disposal

Where litigation, audit, investigation, Freedom of Information requests, Subject Access Requests, or other legal proceedings are pending, disposal of relevant records shall be suspended until the matter is fully concluded.

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## 9. Review

This policy and retention schedule shall be reviewed every three years, or sooner if changes in legislation or best practice require amendment.

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## 10. Policy Approval

**Adopted by:** Cardinham Parish Council

**Date adopted:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Minute reference:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Review date:** \_\_\_\_\_