

## **GRAFFHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

### **RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

**Adopted 7 January 2026**

Graffham 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
- Relationships with existing policies
- Retention Schedule

#### **Scope of the policy**

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.

#### **Responsibilities**

The Parish Council has corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with overall responsibility for this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council.

The person responsible for records management will give guidance for good records management practice and will promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and timely. Individual staff and employees must ensure that records for which they are responsible are accurate and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the Parish Council's records management guidelines.

#### **Relationship with existing policies**

This policy, which will take effect from the date adopted, has been drawn up within the context of:

- Freedom of Information Policy
- General Data Protection policy /Publication Scheme

And with other legislation or regulations (including audit and Statute of Limitations) affecting the Parish Council.

#### **Retention Schedule**

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Parish Council is required to maintain a retention schedule listing the records 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.

Members of staff are expected to manage their current record keeping systems using the retention schedule.

The retention schedule refers to records regardless of the media in which they are stored.

### **Planning Papers**

#### **Planning Permission Granted**

All papers retained until the development has been completed, but personal data removed.

#### **Appeal decisions**

These should be retained indefinitely as it may be required should there be longer term implications e.g. the decision creates a precedent for other developments in the locality. Personal data removed.

#### **Planning Permission Refused**

All papers should be retained until the period in which an appeal can be made has expired. If a resulting appeal is dismissed the documentation should be retained in case further applications relating to the same site result.

- Structure Plans and Local Plans should also be retained.

### **Retention of Documents Required For The Audit of Parish Council (Effective as from Date Adopted)**

#### **Items in red must be kept for specific time periods – to be put into storage at West Sussex County Council Records Office or Chichester District Council.**

Document - Minimum Retention Period - Reason

Signed Minutes of Council Meetings – forever

Agendas - indefinite archive forever

Routine correspondence, papers & e-mails - retain as long as useful. Only keep personal data (addresses, dates of birth, phone numbers, email addresses etc) if there is a reason.

Management Receipt and Payment accounts - 6 Years

Accounts/Financial Annual Return - indefinite archive

Receipt Books of all kinds- 6 years

VAT Bank Statements (including deposit/ savings accounts) - Last completed Audit and year Audit

Bank Paying-in Books Last completed audit year and current year audit

Cheque Books Stubs Last completed Audit year and current year audit

Budgetary Control Papers 2 years + current Audit

Quotations and Tenders 12 years/Indefinite Statute of Limitations

Paid Invoices - 6 years

VAT Paid cheques - 6 years VAT

VAT records - 6 years VAT

Payroll records - 12 years Superannuation

Timesheets - Last completed Audit audit year and current year audit.

Insurance Policies Cert of Employers Liability 50 years legal requirement

Cert of Public Liability - 21 years Legal requirement

Insurance Claim Records - 7 Years after all obligations are concluded (allowing for claimant to reach age of 25) Legal requirement

Policy renewal records & correspondence - while valid

Risk Assessments 3 Years from last assessment

Miscellaneous Complaints 5 Years after closure of case – no personal data (eg. DOB, addresses, email address, NIC no etc etc)

Public consultation: surveys & returns 5 Years – no personal data to be kept.

Register of Members Interests as long as useful

Reports, newsletters etc from other bodies Retain as long as useful

Personnel/Human Resources Application forms (interviewed - unsuccessful) 6 months

Disciplinary records Retain for period of employment.

Management Personnel files (not payroll information) 3 years after ceasing employment,

Keep payslips and payroll information, but do not keep job applications etc.

There are no firm guidelines for the retention of general correspondence. However, an annual review of all documentation should be carried out with ephemeral items marked for destruction and the remainder being considered for archiving.

This policy will be reviewed annually.