

FERRYHILL TOWN COUNCIL



POLICY

DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DISPOSAL

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The guidelines set out in this document supports the Town Council's Data Protection Policy and assists us in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and other associated legislation.
- 1.2 It is important that the Council has in place arrangements for the retention and disposal of documents necessary for the adequate management of services in undertaking its responsibilities. This policy sets out the minimum requirements for the retention of documents and sets out the requirements for the disposal of documents. However it is important to note that this is a live document and will be updated on a regular basis.
- 1.3 Ferryhill Town Council will ensure that information is not kept for longer than is necessary, and will retain the minimum amount of information that it requires to carry out its functions and the provision of services, whilst adhering to any legal or statutory requirements.

2 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 It is recognised that up to date, reliable and accurate information is a vital to support the work that the Council do and the services that we provide to our residents. This document will help us to:-
- i) Ensure the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information that is necessary for the Council to operate and provide services to the public.
 - ii) Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
 - iii) Save employees' time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily. This will assist them as they carry out their daily duties, or if searching for information requested under the Freedom of Information Act.
 - iv) Ensure archival records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

3 Scope

- 3.1 For the purpose of this policy, 'documents' includes paper and electronic records, including those which appear on the website.
- 3.2 Where storage is by means of paper records, originals rather than photocopies should be retained where possible.

4 Standards

4.1 The Council will make every effort to ensure that it meets the following standards of good practice:

- i) Adhere to legal requirements for the retention of information as specified in the Retention Schedule. This document provides a framework for good practice requirements for retaining information.
- ii) Personal information will be retained in a locked filing cabinet within the rear office of the Town Hall and access to these documents will only be by authorised personnel.
- iii) Appropriately dispose of information that is no longer required.
- iv) Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that confidential and sensitive information is securely destroyed.
- v) Information about unidentifiable individuals is permitted to be held indefinitely for historical, statistical or research purposes eg. Equalities data.
- vi) Wherever possible only one copy of any personal information will be retained and that will be held within the personnel filing cabinet in the rear office of the Town Hall.

5 Breach of Policy and Standards

5.1 Any employee who knowingly or recklessly contravenes any instruction contained in, or following from, this Policy and Standards may, depending on the circumstances of the case, have disciplinary action, which could include dismissal, taken against them.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Town Clerk has overall responsibility for the policy and is responsible for the maintenance and operation of this policy including ad-hoc checks to ensure compliance.

6.2 Individual Officers are responsible for ensuring their records are kept and destroyed in line with this policy and that any documents disposed of are done so in accordance with their 'sensitivity' (i.e. whether they are normal waste or 'Confidential Waste').

7 Confidential Waste

7.1 Any information that is required to be produced under the Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations, is available on the website or is open to public inspection, should not be treated as confidential waste.

7.2 However, any information that is protected by the Data Protection Act or as Confidential under the Councils Constitution should be treated as confidential waste for disposal purposes.

7.3 Examples of what constitutes confidential waste:

- i) Exempt information contained within committee reports.
- ii) Files containing the personal details of an individual and files that predominantly relate to a particular individual or their circumstances. For example completed application forms and letters.
- iii) Materials given to the Council on a 'confidential' or on a limited use basis e.g. material provided by contractors or the police.

7.4 Examples of what does not constitute confidential waste:

- i) Documents that are available to the public via the Council's website or by submitting an appropriate search request to the Council for general information.
- ii) All reports and background papers of matters taken to Committee in public session unless specifically exempt.

8 Disposal of Documentation

8.1 Confidential waste which clearly shows any personal information or information which can be identified using the parameters set out in 7.3 will be shredded within the Town Hall.

8.2 All E Cafe information which appertains to the children is to be shredded.

8.3 All other documents requiring disposal are to be placed in the paper bins provided in the Town Hall and will be disposed of as general paper waste for recycling purposes.

9 Retention & Storage

9.1 Timeframes for retention of documents have been set using legislative requirements and guidelines.

9.2 Throughout retention the conditions regarding safe storage and controlled access will remain in place.

- 9.3 Disclosure information appertaining to Disclosure and Barring Checks must be kept securely in a locked cabinet. Only the Town Clerk and the Finance & Administration Manager are entitled to see it in the course of their duties. The security and confidentiality of all disclosure information is closely registered under the Police Act 1997.
- 9.4 Disclosure information must not be retained for a period of more than six months and must be destroyed in a secure manner using the shredder in the Town Hall.
- 9.5 Any unauthorised employee accessing or attempting to access Disclosures or Disclosure information or personnel records will be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedures.
- 9.6 The attached Retention Schedule shows the minimum requirements for the retention of documents as determined by those officers responsible for the management of these particular documentation types. Officers holding documents should exercise judgement as to whether they can be disposed of at the end of those periods detailed in the Schedule.

10 Handling

- 10.1 The Council complies with s124 of the Police Act 1997, so that Disclosure Information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. The Council recognises that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.
- 10.2 Personal information will only be available to those who are authorised officers.
- 10.3 Customers details and information will be kept up to date and reviewed by the Finance & Administration Manager.

11 Usage

- 11.1 Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's/employee's consent has been given. Disclosure information will be shared between different areas of the Council, if necessary.
- 11.2 Where Disclosure information is shared with anyone other than the Town Clerk, Finance & Administration Manager and the Works Manager, the employee must be given a reason why this information is being shared.

RETENTION SCHEDULE

The recommended retention period should be the number of years specified below **plus** the current financial year (ie six years plus the current period, therefore at least six years documentation will always be retained)

DOCUMENT / (OWNERSHIP)	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD
Allotments (Committee & Civic Administrator)	
Allotment Application Forms/ Agreements	Length of Tenancy plus 2 Years
Register & Plans	Indefinitely
Cemeteries (Committee & Civic Administrator)	
Applications for Right To Erect Memorials	Indefinitely
Applications for Interment	Indefinitely
Burials/Caretakers Cashbook	Indefinitely
Burial Search Applications	1 Year
Copy Certificates of Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial	Indefinitely
Disposal Certificates	Indefinitely
General Correspondence	6 Years
Index Books	Indefinitely
Papers relating to plot purchase	Indefinitely
Plan of Grave Spaces	Indefinitely
Register of Burials	Indefinitely
Register of Purchased Graves	Indefinitely
Section Books	Indefinitely
Corporate (Town Clerk)	
Asset acquisition & disposal – legal documents relating to purchase/sale	6 Years if under £50,000 12 Years if over £50,000
Contracts Documentation – executed under hand	Life of contract plus 6 Years
Contracts Documentation – executed under seal	Life of contract plus 12 Years
Copy of Register Of Electors	Until updated
Gifts & Hospitality Register	6 Years after last entry
Land & Property Rental Agreements	12 Years after expiry of the agreement
Lease Agreements	12 Years after expiry of the agreement
Members Declaration of Office Register	Indefinitely
Neighbourhood Plan	Indefinitely
Policies & Procedures	Until updated & reviewed
Press Releases	6 Years
Property Evaluation Lists	Indefinitely
Property Plans	Indefinitely
Register of Officers Interests	Indefinitely
Risk Management Reports	Indefinitely
Risk Register	Indefinitely
Seal Register	Indefinitely
Title Deeds for Land & Property	Indefinitely
Tender documentation–Successful executed under hand	Life of contract plus 6 Years
Tender documentation–Successful executed under seal	Life of contract plus 12 Years
Tender documentation -- Unsuccessful	Until final payment is made

DOCUMENT / (OWNERSHIP)	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD
E Cafe (E Café Co-ordinator)	
Youth Co-ordinator Session Evaluation Form	3 Years
Tuck Shop Sales recording Sheet	6 Years
Notification of Off Site Activity	3 Years (or attached to Incident Report Form)
Register of Attendance	3 Years
Young People Registration Form	7 Years
Incident Report Form	Until 21 st Birthday
Workshop Evaluation Form	5 Years (or attached to Incident Report Form)
Record of Accreditations	5 Years
Parental Consent Form	3 Years
Subs & Tuck Banking Form	6 Years
Accident Book	Until 21 st Birthday
Safe Use of Cameras Permission Form	7 Years
Events (Events Officer)	
Events Papers & Documents including Road Closure Applications	3 Years
Finance (Finance & Admin Manager)	
Asset Register for statutory accounting purposes	10 Years
BACS Listings	6 Years
Bank Reconciliation	3 Years
Bank Statements	6 Years
Bank Paying In Books	6 Years
Budget Working Papers & Summaries	3 Years
Budgetary Control Papers	2 Years
Cashbooks	12 Years
Charities & Friends Groups Accounts & Paperwork	Indefinitely
Cheque Books Stubs/Cancelled Cheques	3 Years
Copy Invoices issued	6 Years
Copy Receipt Books/Till Rolls/Till Spreadsheets	6 Years
Donations Application Forms (Section 137)	6 Years
Fees & Charges Schedules	6 Years
Final Accounts/Financial Return	Indefinitely
Final Accounts Working Papers	6 Years
Internal & External Audit Reports	6 Years
Investments	Indefinitely
Journal Sheets	6 Years
Ledgers - Purchases & Sales	10 Years
Loans & Investment Records	10 Years following repayment of loan
Medium Term Financial Plan	Indefinitely
Paid Invoices/Purchase Orders/Advice Notes	6 Years
Postage/Petty Cash Books	6 Years
Published Budget Books	Indefinitely
Quotations / Tenders & Quotes Register	12 Years
Scale of Fees & Charges	6 Years
VAT Records	10 Years
Grants & Funding (Grant & Projects Officer)	
Public Consultation:	
actual completed surveys & returns	5 Years

DOCUMENT / (OWNERSHIP)	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD
summaries of completed surveys	Indefinite
Successful Applications – all paperwork	6 Years
Unsuccessful Applications – all paperwork	6 years
Health & Safety (Health & Safety Officer)	
Accident Books (injuries to Adults)	3 Years from closure (unless an accident involving chemicals or asbestos is contained within, then must be kept for 40 years)
Accident Books (injuries to Children)	25 Years from closure
Asbestos Records for premises/property including survey/accidents & removal	40 Years
COSHH Assessments	5 Years after substance removed from use
COSHH Training Records	5 Years from date of training
Electrical Test Certificates - Premises	10 Years
Fire Alarm Certificates	10 Years
Fire Alarm Log Book	3 Years
Gas Test Certificates - Boilers	3 Years
Ladder/Stepladder Inspection Forms	3 Years
Legionella Inspection Records	5 Years
PAT / Equipment Calibration Certificates	3 Years
Parks & Play Area Inspection Records	25 Years
PPE Records	3 Years
Premises Inspection Records	25 Years
Records relating to accidents – person over 18 yrs	3 Years from date of accident
Records relating to accidents – person under 18 yrs	Until 21 st birthday
Risk Assessments	3 Years from last assessment
Street Furniture Inspection Records	25 Years
Tree Survey Reports	5 Years
Warranties	10 Years
Insurance Policy (Finance & Admin Manager)	
Certificates	Indefinitely
Insurance Claim Records	10 Years after all obligations are concluded (allowing for claimant to reach age of 25)
Policy renewal records & correspondence	5 Years after policy has been renewed
Mayor's Charity (Committee & Civic Administrator)	
Small Society Lottery Registration Forms	1 Year
Small Society Lottery Returns Forms	1 Year
Correspondence	Retain as long as useful
Members (Finance & Admin Manager)	
Members Allowances Register	6 Years
Register of Members Interests	18mths after individual ceases to be a Member
Minutes & Correspondence (Committee & Civic Administrator)	
Agenda	Indefinitely
Complaints	5 Years after closure of case
Correspondence & papers on important local issues or activities	Indefinitely
Minutes of Committees, Sub Committees & Working Groups	Indefinitely
Reports, minutes, newsletters etc from other bodies	Retain as long as useful
Reports & other documents circulated	Indefinitely

DOCUMENT / (OWNERSHIP)	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD
with agendas not attached to signed Minutes	
Routine correspondence, papers & e-mails	Retain as long as useful
Signed Minutes of Council Meetings	Indefinitely
Miscellaneous (Reception & Communications Administrator)	
Applications to hire rooms, recreation facilities	6 Years
Celebrations Application Forms	1 Year
Equipment Loan Register	1 Year after return of equipment
Football Team Agreements / Bookings Register	1 Year
Parking Enforcement Records	6 Years
Registers of Sales – Parking Discs, Dog Bags, Radar Keys	6 Years
Stock Control Record Sheets	1 Year
User Questionnaires – Cricket, Football, Bowls	1 Year
Outside Works (Works Manager)	
Chemical Records – Stock & Usage	3 Years
Cleaning Materials Stock Control Records	1 Year
Daily Vehicle Service Schedule	6 Years
Fuel Usage Record Sheets	3 Years
Fuel Stock Records	3 Years
Chemical Spraying Records	3 Years
Staff Weekly Worklists	3 Years
Vehicle Registration Documents, MOT Certificates	2 years after disposal of vehicle
Payroll (Finance & Admin Manager)	
Inland Revenue/HMRC/Pension Annual Returns	Indefinitely
Mileage & Expenses Claims	6 Years
Payroll Records incl Pension, Tax & National Ins	12 Years
Timesheets & Overtime Claims	6 Years
Personnel (Finance & Admin Manager)	
Application forms (interviewed - unsuccessful)	1 Year
DBS Checks	6 Months
Disciplinary or Grievance Investigations – proved	Verbal – 6 months Written – 1 Year Final Warning – 18 months Anything involving children - permanently
Disciplinary or Grievance Investigations – unproven	Destroy immediately after investigation or appeal
Personal files (not payroll information) including annual/unpaid leave, pensions, training records	6 years after ceasing employment
Records relating to staff working with children	25 Years after ceasing employment
Redundancy Details	6 Years from date of redundancy
Statutory Sick Pay/ Maternity/Paternity Records	6 Years after ceasing employment
Termination–voluntary redundancy, dismissal, retirement	6 Years after termination. If pension paid then 6 Years after last payment of pension
Planning (Reception & Communications Administrator)	
Applications - All consultative documents including plans	Not retained
Applications upon which Council has commented	12 Months
- All consultative documents including plans	
Maps and Plans	Indefinitely