

# LITTLE OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

## DATA & DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

Adopted 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026 (Minute Number 25/XXX)

Reviewed biennially

Next Review Date March 2028

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### Introduction

Little Oakley Parish Council is obliged to maintain and retain documentation and/or data for a number of purposes, including audit, tax liabilities and in the event of legal disputes and proceedings. Subject to those reasons, papers, records and data may be destroyed if they are no longer of use or relevance.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) require public bodies to manage information and its access in particular ways. The guidelines set out in this document support the Parish Council's Data Protection Policy, IT Policy and Publication Scheme. It assists the Council in compliance with relevant associated legislation as well as the Local Government Transparency Code 2014, the SAPP Practitioner's Guide, NALC and SLCC Guidelines.

### Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this policy on record management is to enable the Council to:

- Comply with the relevant legislation and codes of practice
- Create authentic, reliable and useable records
- Support the Council's business functions, including asset management
- Document the Council's decisions and activities
- Reduce storage costs
- Facilitates working towards a paperless environment
- Enable the efficient and accurate retrieval of information
- Ensure personal data is retained no longer than necessary
- Dispose correctly of records and data no longer required

This policy applies to all documents and data held or processed by the Parish Council including but not limited to:

- Emails sent and received via official council addresses
- Financial records
- General council publications (minutes and agendas)
- Correspondence with the public
- Data processed for statutory and service delivery purposes

Documents and Data may be held in either 'hard' paper form or electronic form. For the purpose of this policy 'document' and 'record' refers to both.

### Staff and Councillor Responsibility

The Parish Clerk will be responsible for overseeing record management.

All staff are obliged to:

- Keep accurate records in an organised and accessible form
- Keep records only for as long as necessary
- Document actions and decisions in records
- Document reasons for the disposal of records

Ensure all records created by the Parish Council are relevant, complete and accurate, without any unsubstantiated or subjective commentary, and protected against unauthorised addition, deletion, alteration, use or concealment.

All councillors are obliged to:

- Retain and dispose of council-related documentation or data, obtained from external sources, in accordance with this policy.

### **Periods of Retention**

The minimum periods for which various types of records must be kept are set out in the Retention Schedule at Annex A. Where applicable, these reflect statutory requirements, codes of practice and recommendations published by professional and other bodies. In the absence of any guidance, it will be the responsibility of the Parish Clerk to determine a suitable retention period. The council retains the right to adjust any **non-statutory** retention periods following a policy review.

At the end of the retention period, the record must be assessed to determine whether it should be retained for a further period. This is particularly relevant where the record has been the subject of a request for access to information under the GDPR or the FOIA this is the case even where access to information has been refused, as the record should be retained until the end of the period in which an appeal can be lodged or the appeals procedure exhausted.

### **Document Disposal**

Documents designated for disposal must be securely disposed of to preserve confidentiality. Documents and data will be disposed of following the retention periods and methods laid out in Annex A. In the absence of any guidance, no document is to be disposed of without the approval of the Parish Clerk. Reasons must be given for disposal, and a record of which documents are destroyed with their date of destruction.

Little Oakley Parish Council

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**ANNEX A - RETENTION SCHEDULE**

|    | <b>Document</b>  | <b>Minimum Retention Period</b>               | <b>Reason</b>                              | <b>Method of Disposal</b>   |
|----|--|---|--|---|
| 1  | <b>Minutes</b>   | Indefinite                                    | Archive                                    | N/A. Original signed paper copies of council minutes of meetings must be kept indefinitely in safe storage.<br>Destroy, bin |
|    | <b>Meeting Notes</b>   | When minutes are approved                     | Management                                 |   |
| 2  | <b>Agendas &amp; Meeting Papers</b>                            | 5 Years                                       | Management                                 | Destroy, shred confidential waste (hard copies)   |
| 3  | <b>Recordings &amp; Notes of Meetings</b>                      | Immediately following approval of the minutes | Management                                 | Destroy, shred confidential waste   |
| 4  | <b>Accident / Incident Reports</b>                             | 20 Years                                      | Potential Claims                           | Destroy, shred confidential waste   |
| 5  | <b>Scales of Fees and Charges</b>                              | 6 Years                                       | Management                                 | Destroy, bin  |
| 6  | <b>Receipt &amp; Payment Accounts</b>                          | Indefinite                                    | VAT, Audit & Archive                       | N/A   |
| 7  | <b>Receipt Books of all kinds</b>                              | 6 Years                                       | VAT & Audit                                | Destroy, shred confidential waste   |
| 8  | <b>Bank Statements, including Deposit and Savings Accounts</b> | Last completed audit year                     | Audit                                      | Destroy, shred confidential waste   |
| 9  | <b>Bank Paying-In Books</b>                                    | Last completed audit year                     | Audit                                      | Destroy, shred confidential waste   |
| 10 | <b>Cheque Book Stubs</b>                                       | Last completed audit year                     | Audit                                      | Destroy, shred confidential waste   |
| 11 | <b>Quotations and Tenders</b>                                  | 6 Years                                       | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)           | Destroy, shred confidential waste   |
| 12 | <b>Paid Invoices</b>   | 6 Years                                       | VAT  | Destroy, shred confidential waste   |
| 13 | <b>Paid Cheques</b>  | 6 Years                                       | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)           | Destroy, shred confidential waste   |
| 14 | <b>VAT Records</b>   | 6 Years                                       | VAT  | Destroy, shred confidential waste   |
| 15 | <b>Postage and Telephone Books</b>                             | 6 Years                                       | Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) | Destroy, shred confidential waste   |

|    |   |  |  |                                   |
|----|---|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| 16 | <b>Grants Given</b>   |  | Management, Audit  | Destroy, shred confidential waste |
|    | <b>Hardcopy Applications</b>  | 12 months after award given  |  |                                   |
|    | <b>Electronic Copy</b>  | 3 Years  |  |                                   |
| 17 | <b>Timesheets</b>   | Last completed audit year<br>3 Years   | Audit<br>Personal Injury   | Destroy, bin                      |
| 18 | <b>Wages Books/Payroll</b>  | 12 Years   | Superannuation (element)   | Destroy, shred confidential waste |
| 19 | <b>Insurance Policies</b>   | While Valid  | Management   | Destroy, bin                      |
| 20 | <b>Insurance Company Name &amp; Policy Number</b>                     | Indefinite   | Management   | N/A                               |
| 21 | <b>Certificates for insurance against liability for employees</b>     | 40 Years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed   | The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations renewed 1998 (S12753) Management | Destroy, bin                      |
| 22 | <b>Investments</b>  | Indefinite   | Audit, management  | N/A                               |
| 23 | <b>Title Deeds &amp; Trust Deeds</b>                                  | Indefinite   | Audit, Management  | N/A                               |
| 24 | <b>Agreements &amp; Contracts</b>                                     | 6 Years  | Audit, Management  | Destroy, shred confidential waste |
| 25 | <b>Leases</b>   | 12 Years   | Audit, Management  | Destroy, shred confidential waste |
| 26 | <b>Members Allowances Register</b>                                    | 6 Years  | Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)  | Destroy, shred confidential waste |
|    | <b>Members Acceptance of Office</b>                                   | Term of office plus 6 months   | Management   | Destroy, shred confidential waste |
|    | <b>Members Declarations of Interest</b>                               | Term of office plus 6 months   | Management   | Destroy, shred confidential waste |
| 27 | <b>Attendance Register</b>  | Term of office plus 4 years  | Management   | Destroy, shred confidential waste |
| 28 | <b>Elections Information</b>  | For duration of term of office   | Management   | Destroy, shred confidential waste |
| 29 | <b>Employee Personnel File</b>  | 12 Years after termination of employment unless through ill health or industrial tribunal case (keep until person aged 65 years) | Tax, Management  | Destroy, shred confidential waste |
|    | <b>Record of employees (name only), job role, dates of employment</b> | Indefinite   | Management   | N/A                               |

|    |  |   |   |   |
|----|--|---|---|---|
| 30 | <b>Councillor Personal Details</b>   | Term of office plus 1 year  | Management                                    | Destroy, shred confidential waste                       |
| 31 | <b>Income Tax Records</b>  | 7 Years after termination of employment                             | The Income Tax (Employments) Regulations 1993 | Destroy, shred confidential waste                       |
| 32 | <b>Pension Records</b>   | 7 Years after termination of employment                             | Management                                    | Destroy, shred confidential waste                       |
| 33 | <b>Prospective Employee &amp; unsuccessful applicant Information (job applications/CVs)</b>          | Following completion of probationary period of successful candidate | Management                                    | Destroy, shred confidential waste                       |
| 34 | <b>Play Equipment Inspection Records</b>   | 21 Years  | Management                                    | Destroy, bin (hardcopy following receipt of superseded) |
| 35 | <b>Health &amp; Safety Documents<br/>Any building reports (i.e. Structural, Asbestos or surveys)</b> | 3 Years or until superseded   | RIDDOR  | Destroy, bin  |
| 36 | <b>Risk Assessments</b>  | Until superseded  | Management                                    | Bin   |
| 37 | <b>Event Documentation</b>   | 6 Years   | Management                                    | Bin   |
| 38 | <b>Planning Applications (including appeals)</b>   | Until determined  | Management                                    | Bin   |
|    | <b>Local/Neighborhood Plans</b>  | Whilst in force   | Reference purposes                            | Bin   |
| 39 | <b>Complaints</b>  | 3 years   | Management                                    | Destroy, shred confidential waste                       |
| 40 | <b>General Correspondence (hardcopy &amp; electronic)</b>  | 12 Months   | Data Protection, Management                   | Bin   |
| 41 | <b>Emails</b>  | 24 Months   | Data Protection, Management                   | Delete  |
| 42 | <b>Information from other bodies e.g. circulars from EALC, NALC, Principal Authorities</b>           | Whilst useful   | Management                                    | Bin   |
|    | <b>Magazines &amp; Journals</b>  | Whilst useful   | Management                                    | Bin   |

|           |  |               |            |     |
|-----------|--|---------------|------------|-----|
| <b>43</b> | <b>Local/Historical Information</b>                                | Indefinitely  | Archive    | N/A |
| <b>44</b> | <b>Equipment Manuals, User Guides &amp; Operational Procedures</b> | Whilst in use | Management | Bin |