

# Luston Group Parish Council

## Document Retention Policy for Parish Council Records

---

The accompanying schedule displays the main types of parish and town council records. Each entry lists the record series along with the recommended action, guidelines for retention periods and reasons for the action.

The policy will inform the management of parish council records and the deposit of records with Herefordshire Archive. The following information provides an explanation for each of the three action terms used within the schedule.

**Records identified for permanent preservation** - Records in this category have been identified by the Archive Service for permanent retention. These should be deposited with the Archive Service once there is no longer an administrative need for them to be kept locally.

Documents earmarked for permanent preservation are usually identifiable if they have been stored as discrete groups. When no organised filing system is employed this process can be challenging. Other record series are complicated regardless of their filing, e.g. correspondence and planning files. In these cases clerks are often best placed to evaluate which documents relate to significant local issues. Such records should be identified prior to their transfer to the Archive Service.

Typically the only financial records recommended for deposit are the payment and receipt books or the annual audited accounts if the former has not survived. These are often filed with receipts and payments that are not necessary for preservation and should be weeded prior to their transfer to the Archive Service.

**Records to be reviewed by Herefordshire Archive Service** - Records in this category should be transferred to the Archive Service after the minimum retention period or once they become inactive. An archivist will then review the collection and select documents to preserve. Those records not selected may be safely destroyed by the parish or town clerk, or retained locally.

**Records to be destroyed by the parish clerk** - A large number of parish and town council records can be destroyed once they become inactive or the minimum retention period expires. Financial records account for the majority of this category. Typically these must be kept for a minimum of 6 years after the last entry (Limitation Act 1980, VAT Act 1994 etc.), but may be retained for longer depending on local circumstances. Records not given a minimum retention period can be destroyed once there is no longer an administrative requirement for their custody. If unsure whether a document or series of records should be destroyed the Archive Service can provide further guidance.

To protect confidential information, all records assigned for disposal should be securely destroyed. Paper records containing confidential information should be shredded or pulped, and not simply thrown out with other classes of records. Electronic or machine-readable records will require a two-step process for assured confidential destruction: deletion of the contents of digital files, and the use of commercially available software applications to remove all residual data from the storage device.

Records	Retention period	Action	Reason
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE</b>			
Signed council and committee minutes	Transfer to HRO after 6 years or when they become inactive	Preserve	Common practice
Draft minutes	Until the date of the confirmation of the minutes	Destroy	Operational
Agendas	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	12 months	Operational
PC generated reports and documents circulated with agendas	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement. Destroy if copies included with signed minutes.	Review	Common practice
Councillors' declarations of office	4 years or until they leave office	Destroy	Operational
Register of electors	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Destroy	Copies already in existence
Grouping orders (if applicable)	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Destroy	Operational
Byelaws and orders (if applicable)	Preserve one of each copy and transfer to HRO once they become inactive	Preserve	Common practice
Policy documents	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational
Title deeds (if applicable)	Transfer to HRO once they become inactive. HRO will not accept deeds still needed to prove title	Preserve if more than 100 years old. Review if less than 100 years old.	Common practice
Property registers and terriers	Transfer to HRO once they become inactive	Preserve	Common practice
Maps, plans, and surveys of property owned by the council (if applicable)	Transfer to HRO once they become inactive	Preserve	Common practice
Correspondence and papers on important local issues or activities	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational

Village/parish appraisals, NDPs, millennium projects and supporting papers	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review/ Destroy personal data	Operational
Planning applications and related papers for major controversial developments	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review with the view to destroy	Operational
Planning applications for minor works where permission is refused	6 years	Destroy	Limitation Act 2020
Leases, agreements, contracts and wayleaves (if applicable)	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational
Quotations and tenders (successful)	12 years	Destroy	Limitation Act 2020
Quotations and tenders (unsuccessful)	2 years	Destroy	Operational
Routine correspondence and papers	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Destroy	Operational
Scale of fees and charges	Until superseded by new charges	Destroy	Operational
Employers' liability insurance policies	40 years after expiry date	Destroy	Employers' Liability Act 1969 Employers' Liability Regulations 1998
Risk assessments	Once superseded by a new risk assessment or once inactive	Destroy	Operational
Personnel files	12 Years after termination of service	Destroy	Risk of investigation regarding any future litigation
Recruitment data	1 year after recruitment finalized	Destroy	Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986, Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations, Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations

<b>FINANCIAL</b>			
Receipt and payment books	Transfer to HRO once they become inactive	Preserve	Financial regulations
Rate books	Transfer to HRO	Preserve	Common practice
Annual audited accounts	6 years	Destroy, but preserve if the receipt and payment books or electronic files have not survived.	Financial regulations
Accounts and statements	6 years	Destroy	Financial regulations
Cash and petty cash books and rent books	6 years	Destroy	Financial regulations
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	Destroy	Financial regulations
Bank statements including deposit/saving accounts	6 years	Destroy	Financial regulations
Bank paying-in books	Last completed Audit year	Destroy	Financial regulations
Paid invoices	6 years	Destroy	Financial regulations
VAT records including claims	6 years	Destroy	VAT Act 1994
Wage books	12 years	Destroy	Statute of limitations
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>			
Maps created under the provision of the Rights of Way Act 1932	Transfer to HRO once they become inactive	Preserve	Common practice
Papers concerning Rights of Way	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Destroy	Operational
Community magazine articles or newsletters	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational
Charity papers (if applicable)	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational
Press and media	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational
Photographs	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review/ Destroy recognizable photos of members of the public if taken within last 25 years	Operational

Any records predating the establishment of Parish Councils (1894), e.g. poor law, surveyors of the highway, tithe maps and apportionments, enclosure awards etc.	Transfer to HRO immediately	Preserve	Common practice

Approved by Luston Group Parish Council at a meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_ 2021.

\*\*\*