

# Stanley and Stanley Common Parish Council

## **Document Retention and Disposal Policy**

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### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The Parish Council accumulates a vast amount of information and data during its everyday activities. This includes data generated internally in addition to information obtained from individuals and external organisations. This information is recorded in various types of documents.

1.2 Records created and maintained by the Parish Council are an important asset and as such measures need to be undertaken to safeguard this information. Properly managed records provide authentic and reliable evidence of the Parish Council's transactions and are necessary to ensure it can demonstrate accountability.

1.3 Documents may be retained in either 'hard' paper form or in electronic forms. For this policy, 'document' and 'record' refers to both hard copy and electronic records.

1.4 It is imperative that documents are retained for an adequate period. If documents are destroyed prematurely, the Parish Council could face prosecution for not complying with legislation and it could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage, and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the Parish Council.

1.5 In contrast to the above, the Parish Council should not retain documents longer than is necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with current legislation so that personal information is not retained longer than necessary. This will also ensure the most efficient use of limited storage space.

### **2.0 Scope and Objectives of the Policy**

2.1 The aim of this document is to provide a working framework to determine which documents are:

- Retained – and for how long
- Disposed of – and if so by what method
- Security of documents – methods for both the Parish Council and Councillors

2.2 There are some records which do not need to be kept at all or that are routinely destroyed in the course of business. This usually applies to information that is duplicated, unimportant or only of a short-term value.

2.3 Records should not be destroyed if the information can be used as evidence to prove that something has happened.

### **3.0 Roles and Responsibilities for Document Retention and Disposal**

3.1 Councils are responsible for determining whether to retain or dispose of documents and should undertake a review of documentation on an annual basis to ensure that any unnecessary documentation being held is disposed of.

#### **4.0 Document Retention Protocol**

4.1. Councils are required to maintain their records in accordance with legislation and the Clerk to the Parish Council is required to manage the Council's records in such a way as to promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and in a timely manner.

4.2 Councils are required to maintain a retention schedule. The retention schedule below provides guidance on the recommended retention periods for specific classes of documents and records.

4.3 Whenever there is a possibility of litigation, the records and information which are likely to be affected should not be amended or disposed of until the threat of litigation has been removed.

#### **5.0 Document Disposal Protocol**

5.1 Documents should only be disposed of if reviewed in accordance with the following:

- Is retention required to fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements?
- Is retention required to meet the operational needs of the service?
- Is retention required to evidence events in the case of dispute?
- Is retention required because the document or record is of historic interest or intrinsic value?

5.2 When documents are scheduled for disposal the method of disposal should be appropriate to the nature and sensitivity of the documents concerned.

5.3 Documents can be disposed of by any of the following methods:

- Non-confidential records: place in waste paper bin for disposal.
- Confidential records: shred documents.
- Deletion of computer records.
- Transmission of records to an external body such as the County Records Office.

#### **6.0 Review of Document Retention**

6.1 It is planned to review, update and where appropriate amend this document annually.

#### **7.0 List of Documents**

7.1 The full list of the Council's documents and the procedures for retention or disposal can be found below.

#### **8.0 Security**

8.1 The Parish Council will need to ensure that all data (hard copy or electronic) is kept securely and access is available only to authorised personnel.

8.2 Councillors will need to assess how they manage the data they receive or generate on behalf of the Parish Council and identify and potential weaknesses.

## 9.0 Official documents, forms, and publications retention schedule

| Document                                                   | Minimum Retention period                                       | Reason                                                                          | Location Retained                                | Disposal Method                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Accident / incident reports                                | 20 years                                                       | Potential Claims                                                                | Clerk's residence/Parish Filing cabinet          | Confidential waste - A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) |
| Agendas                                                    | 5 years                                                        | Management                                                                      | Clerk's residence / Computer / Website           | Recycle                                                                                                                                            |
| Bank paying – in books / receipts                          | Last completed audit year                                      | Audit                                                                           | Clerk's residence                                | Confidential Waste                                                                                                                                 |
| Bank statements including deposit / saving accounts        | Last completed audit year                                      | Audit                                                                           | Office                                           | Confidential waste                                                                                                                                 |
| Certificates for insurance against liability for employees | 40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed | The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance Regulations 1998) and Management | Clerk's residence/Parish Filing cabinet/computer | Recycle                                                                                                                                            |
| Cheque book stubs                                          | Last completed audit year                                      | Audit                                                                           | Clerk's residence                                | Confidential waste                                                                                                                                 |
| Contracts of employment                                    | Duration of employment plus 6 years                            | Legislation                                                                     | Clerk's residence/computer                       | Confidential waste                                                                                                                                 |
| Correspondence - General                                   | 1 year                                                         | Management                                                                      | Clerk's residence / Computer                     | Confidential waste/recycling                                                                                                                       |
| Correspondence - Staff                                     | 3 years                                                        | Management                                                                      | Clerk's residence / Computer                     | Confidential Waste                                                                                                                                 |
| DALC/SLCC circulars                                        | 1 year                                                         | Management                                                                      | Clerk's residence/Computer                       | Recycling                                                                                                                                          |
| Deeds, leases,                                             | Indefinite                                                     | Legislation                                                                     | Clerk's residence/Computer/Parish Filing cabinet | n/a                                                                                                                                                |

Stanley and Stanley Common Parish Council Document Retention Policy was adopted Oct 2023. Reviewed 22/09/25. Next Review Sept 2026.

|                                            |             |                                  |                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| contracts and agreements                   |             |                                  |                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Grant Applications                         | 6 years     | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) | Clerk's residence/Parish Filing cabinet/Computer          | Confidential waste - A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)                                                           |
| Insurance company names and policy numbers | Indefinite  | Management                       | Clerk's residence/Parish Filing cabinet/Computer          | n/a                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Insurance Policies                         | While valid | Management                       | Clerk's residence/Parish Filing cabinet/Computer          | Recycling                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Local Development Plans                    | If in force | Reference                        | Clerk's residence/Parish Filing cabinet/Computer          | Recycling                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Local Historical information               | Indefinite  | Benefit of Parish                | Clerk's residence/Parish Filing cabinet/Computer          | n/a                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Magazines and journals                     | If relevant | Management                       | Clerk's residence/Parish filing cabinet                   | Recycling                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Minutes                                    | Indefinite  | Legislation                      | Clerk's residence/Parish Filing cabinet/Computer /website | Original signed copies of council minutes of meetings must be kept indefinitely in safe storage. At regular intervals of not more than 5 years, they can be archived and deposited with the higher authority |
| Neighbourhood Plans                        | Indefinite  | Reference                        | Clerk's residence/Parish Filing cabinet/Computer          | n/a                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Paid cheques                               | 6 years     | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) | Clerk's residence                                         | Confidential waste                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Paid Invoices                              | 6 years     | VAT                              | Clerk's residence/computer                                | Confidential waste                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Payroll                                    | 12 years    | Superannuation                   | Clerk's residence / computer                              | Confidential waste                                                                                                                                                                                           |

|                                         |                        |                                  |                                                             |                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Playground equipment inspection reports | Indefinite             | Legal                            | Clerk's residence / Parish filing cabinet/Computer          | n/a                                                                                                                                                |
| Quotations and tenders                  | 6 years                | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) | Clerk's residence / computer                                | Confidential waste - A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) |
| Receipt and Payment Accounts            | Indefinite             | Archive                          | Clerk's residence / computer                                | n/a                                                                                                                                                |
| Scales of fees and charges              | 6 years                | Management                       | Clerk's residence / Parish filing cabinet/Computer /website | Recycling                                                                                                                                          |
| Staff appraisals                        | Duration of employment | Management                       | Clerk's residence / computer                                | Confidential Waste                                                                                                                                 |