HANDFORTH TOWN COUNCIL

DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY June 2017 Updated March 2024

1 Purpose: Handforth Town Council (HTC) requires a wide variety of documents for transacting its business and is committed to retaining these documents in a format and for periods of time that:

Enables HTC to meet its statutory obligations in respect of documents subject to legislation;

- Ensures security of documents;
- Protects employees' privacy;
- Facilitates access to information;
- Optimises the use of storage space;
- Is cost effective; and
- Facilitates destruction of redundant documents.

2 Scope: This Policy applies to users of HTC's information records, both paper and electronic, it includes Councillors and employees.

3 Statutory Requirements: Documents subject to a statutory period of retention are identified by their associated legislation in Annex A.

4 Security of Documents: HTC's records are held in paper and/or electronic format. To minimise the risk of accidental loss of valuable records, masters or copies (as deemed appropriate) of paper-documents will be stored off-site.

5 Employees' Privacy: The privacy of personnel records will be appropriately assured.

6 Availability & Access: All records necessary for HTC's business will be retained for a period of time that reasonably assures the availability of records when needed.

7 Storage Space and Cost: Redundant records may be destroyed in order to reduce the cost of storage, indexing and handling the vast quantity of documents that would otherwise accumulate. Destruction of documents will be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of this Policy to avoid any inference that a document was destroyed in anticipation of a problem.

8 Electronic Storage: Records maintained on electronic data processing storage media will be subject to the same rules of retention and security as paper records.

9 Implementation of Policy: The Clerk will be responsible for the implementation of the Policy.

10 Monitoring & Review of Policy: The appropriate Committee will review the Policy periodically to monitor its effectiveness, taking account of users' comments.

Annex A

Document	**Minimum retention period**	**Reason**
Signed minutes of council meetings (Hard copy)	Indefinite	Archive
Scale of fees and charges	6 years	Management
Receipt and payment accounts (Hard copy)	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT
Bank statements including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Quotations and tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
VAT records	6 years	VAT
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit
Wages books/Payroll records	12 years	Superannuation
Insurance policies	While valid	Management
Certificates for insurance against liability for employees	40 years from date from when insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI. 2753), Management
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management

Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Members allowances register	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
For Halls, Centre, Recreation Grounds		
Application to hire	6 years	VAT
Lettings diaries	6 years	VAT
Copies if bills to hirers	6 years	VAT
Record of tickets issued	6 years	VAT
Health and Safety		
Accident books	25 years from closure	Management
Equipment Inspection Records	25 years	Management
Premises Inspection records	25 years	Management
Risk assessment	3 years from last assessment	Management
Members		
Register of members interests	18 months after individual ceases to be a Member	Management
Miscellaneous		
Complaints	5 yrs. after closure of case	Management
Press releases	6 years	Management
Public consultation - survey and returns	5 years	Management
Register of Officer interests	Indefinite	Management
Reports, newsletters etc.	Retain as long as useful	Management
Town Council Newsletter	Deposit copy with British Library Own copy as long as wish	Archive Management
Correspondence	6 months	Management
Planning		
Planning applications where granted, plans and decision letters	Until development completed	Planning and enforcement
Appeal decision notice	Until development completed, maybe longer as may set a precedent	Planning and enforcement
Planning applications where refused, plans and decision letters	Until period in which appeal can be made expires	Planning and enforcement
Structure plans, Local Plans and similar documents	As long as in force	Planning and enforcement
Documentation for Legal purposes (unless extended)		
Negligence	6 yrs.	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)

Defamation	1 yr.	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended
Contract	6 yrs.	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended
Sums recoverable	6 yrs.	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended
Leases	12 yrs.	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended
Personal injury	3 yrs.	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended
To recover land	12 yrs.	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended
Rent	6 yrs.	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended
Breach of Trust	None	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended

This policy was adopted by Handforth Parish Council on 13th June 2017 Minute Ref: 17/17/8

Updated March 2024.