**Hawthorn Parish Council**

**Retention of Documents and Records Policy**

*Approved October 2017*

# Introduction

Hawthorn Parish Council recognise that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the Parish Council.

This document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited. It covers:

• Scope

• Responsibilities

• Relationships with existing policies

• Retention Schedule

# Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Parish Council in the course of carrying out its functions. Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the Parish Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities.

These records can take many different forms e.g.

* Letters received from third parties
* Copy letters which have been sent out
* File attendance notes
* Invoices
* Minutes
* Completed application forms
* Plans/drawings
* Financial records
* Registers
* Contracts/deeds
* e-mail communications (and any attachments)
* Photographs

With the exception of the Minutes, Annual Returns and associated financial information, and Insurance Policies all the remaining records / information are held in electronic form.

**Retention of specific documents may be necessary to:**

• Fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements.

• Evidence events/agreements in the case of disputes.

• Meet operational needs.

• Ensure the preservation of documents of historic or other value.

**The untimely destruction of documents could cause the Council:**

• Difficulty in defending litigious claims.

• Operational problems.

• Embarrassment.

• Failure to comply with the Freedom of Information or Data Protection Acts

A small percentage of the Parish Council’s records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council’s archives and for historical research.

# Responsibilities

The Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with overall responsibility for this policy is the Clerk.

The parish clerk will give guidance for good records management practice and will promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and timely. The Clerk must also ensure that records are accurate, and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the Parish Council’s records management guidelines.

# Retention Schedule

The retention schedule lays down the length of time which the record needs to be retained and the action which should be taken when it is of no further administrative use.

The retention schedule refers to record series regardless of the media in which they are stored.

# Record Management table : All held electronically

* Also held in hard copy

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Min Retention** | **Reason** |
| **General admin** |  |  |
| Minutes\* | Indefinite | Legal Requirement |
| Agendas | Indefinite | To support the minutes |
| Correspondence | Indefinite | For reference |
| Reports and papers | Indefinite | For reference |
| Notes from meetings | Shredded after type up | These are not legal record and could be requested under FOI |
| Routine correspondence | Ten years | For reference |
| E mails | Clerk assesses and follows procedure s outlined in this document.  If not considered needed then other e mails are deleted each week | Reference only |
|  |  |  |
| **Finance** |  |  |
| Invoices | Indefinite | VAT inspections / audit |
| VAT Records | Indefinite | Vat inspection |
| Employee financial info | Two years after employee leaves | Recommended by SLCC |
| Management Receipt /payments | Indefinite | Future reference |
| Annual Returns\* | Indefinite | Legal Requirement |
| Cheque stubbs / Bank Statements\* | Ten years | Recommended by SLCC |
| Contracts\* | Ten years | Should a claim be brought |
| Audit budgetary control | Ten years | For reference |
| Quotations and tenders | Five years | Reference only |
|  |  |  |
| **Health and Safety** |  |  |
| Insurance certificates and policies\* | Indefinite | Should a claim arise |
| Insurance claim records | Indefinite | Should a claim arise |
| All inspection records | Indefinite | Should a claim arise |
| Title, deeds etc\* | Indefinite whilst owned by council | Legal requirement |
|  |  |  |
| **Other** |  |  |
| Members register of interests | Destroyed after member ceases to be a member | Only current info required |
| Newsletters from outside bodies | Retained as long as useful | For reference |
| Planning applications | Not retained – available from external source |  |
| Council newsletters | Indefinite | For reference |