



# **Great Maplestead Parish Council**

## **Retention, Storage and Destruction of Documents Policy**

**Adopted: 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025  
For Review: May 2026**



# Great Maplestead Parish Council

## Retention, Storage and Destruction of Documents Policy

**Great Maplestead Parish Council** recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to its effective overall management.

The correct retention and storage of **Parish Council** documents is important as they are the legal and financial records of the **Council**. Legal actions may be brought by and against the **Council** and failure to have kept key documents may mean the difference between success and failure in any such eventualities.

It is therefore the responsibility of the **Council** to ensure that a thorough and documented storage and retrieval process is in place.

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

- Scope of the Policy
- Responsibilities
- Retention Schedule
- Retention of Documents
- Planning Applications
- Destruction/Disposal of Documents

### 1. Scope of the Policy

- a. This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the **Parish Council** in the course of carrying out its functions.
- b. 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.
- c. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.
- d. 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.

## 2. Responsibilities

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

## 3. Retention Schedule

- a. Under the **Freedom of Information Act 2000**, the **Parish Council** is required to maintain a Retention Schedule listing the record series which it creates in the course of its business.
- b. 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.
- c. The **Parish Clerk** is expected to manage the current record keeping systems using the Retention Schedule and to take account of the different retention periods when creating new record keeping systems.
- d. This Retention Schedule refers to record series regardless of the media in which they are stored.

## 4. Retention of Documents

| Document                    | Minimum Retention      | Reason           |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Minute Books                | Indefinite             | Archive          |
| Annual Accounts             | Indefinite             | Archive          |
| Annual Return               | Indefinite             | Archive          |
| Receipt and Payments        | Indefinite             | Archive          |
| Scale of Fees and Charges   | 6 years                | Management       |
| Bank Statements             | 6 years                | Audit/management |
| Cheque Book Stubs           | 6 years                | Management       |
| Paying-in Books             | 6 years                | Management       |
| Quotations                  | 6 years                | Audit            |
| Paid Invoices               | 6 years                | Audit/VAT        |
| VAT Records                 | current year + 6 years | Audit/VAT        |
| Salary Records              | current year + 6 years | Audit            |
| Tax & NI records            | current year + 6 years | Audit            |
| Insurance Policies          | Indefinite             | Audit            |
| Cert of Employers Liability | 40 years               | Audit/legal      |
| Cert of Public liability    | 40 years               | Audit/legal      |
| Assets Register             | Indefinite             | Audit            |
| Deeds, Leases               | Indefinite             | Audit            |

- a. The **Parish Clerk** shall retain all original records, in as far as possible electronic format, which shall be backed up at least monthly, and paper records, as far as possible in locked metal filing cabinets.
- b. If any Councillors hold the original of any documentation the **Parish Clerk** should be made aware and also hold a copy.
- c. The following documentation should be retained, for management reasons, for the respective durations stated below:
 

|  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| ○ Declarations of Acceptance of Office | Indefinite              |
| ○ Members' Register of Interests       | Term of office + 1 year |
| ○ Complaints                           | 10 years                |
| ○ General Information                  | 1 year                  |
| ○ Routine Correspondence & e-mails     | 1 year                  |

## 5. Planning Applications

- a. All planning applications and relevant decision notices are available at or from **Braintree District Council** – there is therefore no requirement for the **Parish Council** to retain duplicates locally.
- b. All **Parish Council** recommendations in connection with planning applications are recorded in the **Council** minutes, which should be retained indefinitely.
- c. Correspondence received in connection with applications will be retained, for management reasons, for the duration of 1 year.

## 6. Disposal/Destruction Procedures

- a. All documents that are no longer required for administrative reasons should be removed and disposed of safely and securely, whether held electronically or via hard copies.
- b. There should be an annual review of documents held and disposal/destruction arranged accordingly.

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This Retention, Storage and Destruction of Documents Policy was adopted at the **Great Maplestead Parish Council** meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

For further information on the Council's responsibilities under the **General Data Protection Regulation** please refer to the appropriate page of the website.