

RETENTION POLICY

ORIGINALLY ADOPTED 6th JAN 2015

REVIEWED 4th FEB 2025

NEXT REVIEW DUE 4th FEB 2028

The schedule accompanying these guidelines lists the main types of parish council records and gives recommendations for their retention and disposal. The following notes provide an explanation of the terms used in the schedule and give additional guidance to the Clerk on how to assess the records in their care.

Storage at the Essex Records Office has a cost to the County Council and records which will duplicate those supplied by District Council Departments should not be included in records permanently retained.

Records to be preserved permanently at the ERO (P)

Records in this category when no longer regularly consulted in the parish should be deposited in the Essex Records Office. They are generally easy to identify; the obvious examples are the main series of signed council and committee minutes and the receipt of payment books. Other records may be less easy to select, in particular correspondence files on important local issues and planning applications and papers for major or controversial developments.

Here the Clerk should be best placed to judge which documents relate to significant or contentious local issues about which more detailed information needs to be preserved. The following points may assist:

- Firstly where detailed minutes survive there should be less need to preserve large amounts of correspondence.
- Secondly a filing system arranged by subject can ease considerably the process of selecting material on important issues.
- Lastly, important files can often be overloaded with material of an ephemeral nature; it is a good idea therefore to remove such papers from the files at a regular interval.

Records to be reviewed by the ERO for possible permanent preservation (R)

Records in this category should be passed to the ERO for review, either when the prescribed minimum retention period is over, or when they are no longer required in the parish for administrative purposes.

Records that may be destroyed by the Parish Clerk (D)

A large number of parish council records, mainly financial, may be safely disposed of by the Parish Clerk, usually after a minimum retention period prescribed for audit or other statutory purposes, generally 7 years. Where no minimum period is given records in this category may be destroyed when they are no longer required for parish council administrative purposes. Review these files after 5 years.

All documents should be treated as confidential waste and shredded.

RETENTION POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR WICKHAM BISHOPS PARISH COUNCIL RECORDS

Schedule

Records	Action	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
<u>Administration</u>			
Minutes of Council/meeting (signed)	P	Transfer to ERO after 6 years	Common practice
Draft minutes	D	Until the date of confirmation of the minutes	Operational
Agendas	D, but P if minutes do not survive	Treat as minutes if minutes do not survive	Operational
Reports and other documents circulated with agendas	R, but D if copies are included with signed minutes	Transfer to ERO after 6 years	Common practice
Councillors' Declarations of Office	P	Transfer to ERO after 4 years	Common practice
Register of Interests, Register of Electors	D	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Copies exist at MDC
Nominations forms (parish council elections)	D	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Common practice - ballot papers are destroyed after 6 months (statutory)
Byelaws and orders	P, one copy of each	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Common practice
Policy documents	R with a view to D	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Title deeds	P	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Common practice
Property registers and terriers including registers of allotments	P	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Common practice
Maps, plans and surveys of property owned by the council or meeting	P	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Common practice
Correspondence and papers on important local issues or activities	P	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Village/parish appraisals, plans and millennium projects	R with the view to P	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
MDC Local Plans	D	Once superseded	Operational Copies exist at MDC

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Granted planning applications, plans and decision letters and related paper for major controversial developments; also granted planning appeal decisions	R with a view to D	Until development completed/5 years	Operational
Refused planning applications, plans and decision letters and related paper for major controversial developments; also refused planning appeal decisions	D	2 years	Statute of Limitation Operational Copies exist at MDC
Leases, agreements, contracts and wayleaves	P	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Quotations and tenders (successful)	D	12 years	Statute of Limitation
Quotations and tenders (unsuccessful)	D	3 years	Operational
Routine correspondence and papers	R with the view to D	Retain as long as useful	Operational
Scale of fees and charges	D	Once replaced by new charges	Operational
Employers' Liability Insurance policies	D	40 years after expired	Employers' Liability Act 1969; Employers' Liability Regulations 1998
Risk Assessments	D	Once superseded by a new risk assessment or once inactive	Operational
Staff files	D	6 years after left employ unless through ill-health or industrial tribunal case (12 years)	Risk of investigation regarding any future litigation
Recruitment data Successful Unsuccessful	D	9 months after recruitment finalised 1 year after recruitment finalised plus current year	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

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<u>Finance</u>			
Receipt and payment books	P	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	
Financial returns to district auditors	D, but P if the receipt and payment books have not survived	7 years	
Cash and petty cash books and rent books	D, but P if the receipt & payment books have not survived	7 years	Tax, VAT, Statute of Limitation
Receipt books of all kinds	D	7 years	VAT
Postage and telephone books	D	7 years	Tax, VAT, Statute of Limitation
Bank statements including deposit/saving accounts	D	7 years	
Bank paying-in books	D	Last completed Audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	D	Last completed Audit year	Audit
Paid invoices	D	7 years	VAT
Paid cheque	D	7 years	Statute of Limitations
VAT records	D	7 years	VAT
Time sheets	D	Last completed Audit year	Audit
Wage books	D	12 years	Statute of Limitation
Members' allowances register	D	7 years	Tax, Statute of Limitations
<u>Miscellaneous</u>			
Maps created under the provision of the Rights of Way Act 1932	P	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Common practice
Community magazines, newsletters, Annual Report	R one copy of each issue	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Press cuttings	R	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational

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Photographs [annotated with date and event/place]	R	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Operational
Photographs [not annotated with dates and events/places]	D		Operational
Any records dating from before 1894 now held by the parish council (eg poor law, surveyors of the highway, enclosure awards etc)	P	Transfer to ERO immediately	Common practice
Records of other bodies such as burial boards, charities, fire brigades, home guard, local societies or ad hoc committees	R with view to D	Transfer to ERO as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	
General reports, guides, handbooks etc, received by the parish council from other Essex bodies	D	Replace with new guides as issued	
Emails and attachments	R with view to D	Emails and attachments relating to Council business are corporate records and must be managed in accordance with the above schedule. Emails for retention should be forwarded or copied to the Clerk then may be deleted from the Sender's account.	

Approved and Adopted by Wickham Bishops Parish Council.

Signed:

Date: