



Horley Town Council

Retention of Documents Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Horley Town Council recognises the need to retain documentation for audit purposes, staff management, tax liabilities and the eventuality of legal disputes and proceedings.
- 1.2** In agreeing a Document Retention Scheme, the Council has addressed these needs, and taken into account its obligations under the Local Government Act 1972, the Audit Commission Act 1998, the Public Records Act 1958, the Data Protection Act 1998, the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998, the Limitation Act 1980, the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977, the Local Government (Records) Act 1962, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records Code 2002.

2. Retention of Documents for Legal Purposes

- 2.1** Most legal proceedings are governed by the Limitation Act 1980. The 1980 Act provides that legal claims may not be commenced after a specified period. The specified period varies, depending on the type of claim in question. The table below sets out the limitation periods for the different categories of claim.

Category	Limitation Period
Negligence (and other torts)	6 years
Defamation	1 year
Contract	6 years
Leases	12 years
Sums recoverable by statute	6 years
Personal Injury	3 years
To recover land	12 years
Rent	6 years
Breach of trust	None

- 2.2** Some types of legal proceedings may fall into two or more categories. In these circumstances, the documentation should be kept for the longest of the differing limitation periods.

2.3 As there is no limitation period in respect of trusts, the Council will never destroy trust deeds and schemes and other similar documentation.

2.4 Some limitation periods can be extended. Examples include:

- where individuals first become aware of damage caused at a later date (e.g. in the case of personal injury);
- where damage is latent (e.g. to a building);
- where a person suffers from a mental incapacity;
- where there has been a mistake or where one party has defrauded another or concealed relevant facts.

2.5 In such circumstances, the council will weigh up (i) the costs of storing relevant documents and (ii) the risks of:

- claims being made;
- the value of the claims; and
- the inability to defend any claims made should relevant documents be destroyed.

3. Document Retention Schedule

3.1 The Council has agreed a minimum Document Retention Schedule (Appendix A), based on the obligations under the previously named acts, codes, orders and regulations.

3.2 The need to retain any documents not included in the above Schedule should be considered on an individual basis. As a guide, and in the absence of any prevailing act, code, order or regulation to the contrary, documents may be destroyed if they are no longer of use or relevant. If in any doubt, advice should be sought from the Clerk.



Horley Town Council

Appendix A

List of Documents for Retention or Disposal

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Minutes	Indefinite	Archive	Original signed paper copies of Council minutes of meetings must be kept indefinitely in safe storage. At regular intervals of not more than 5 years they will be archived and deposited with the Surrey Archive Centre, Woking.
Agenda	5 years	Management	Dispose (shred confidential waste).
Accident/incident reports	20 years	Potential claims	Confidential waste A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Scales of fees and charges	6 years	Management	Dispose.
Receipt and payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive	N/A
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT	Dispose.
Bank statements including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste.
Bank paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste.
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste.
Quotations and tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
			meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT	Confidential waste
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste
VAT records	6 years generally but 20 years for VAT on rents	VAT	Confidential waste
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste
Timesheets	Last completed audit year 3 years	Audit (requirement) Personal injury (best practice)	Dispose
Wages books/payroll	12 years	Superannuation	Confidential waste
Insurance policies	While valid (but see next two items below)	Management	Dispose
Insurance company names and policy numbers	Indefinite	Management	N/A
Certificates for insurance against liability for employees	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI 2753) Management	Dispose
Playground and equipment inspection reports	21 years		
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management	N/A
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management	N/A
Members' allowances register	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
			meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Information from other bodies e.g. circulars from county associations, NALC, principal authorities	Retained for as long as it is useful and relevant		Dispose
Local/historical information	Indefinite – to be securely kept for benefit of the Parish	Councils may acquire records of local interest and accept gifts or records of general and local interest in order to promote the use for such records (defined as materials in written or other form setting out facts or events or otherwise recording information).	N/A
Magazines and journals	Council may wish to keep its own publications For others retain for as long as they are useful and relevant.	The Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 (the 2003 Act) requires a local council which after 1 st February 2004 has published works in print (this includes a pamphlet, magazine or newspaper, a map, plan, chart or table) to deliver, at its own expense, a copy of them to the British Library Board (which manages and controls the British Library). Printed works as defined by the 2003 Act	Dispose if applicable.

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
		published by a local council therefore constitute materials which the British Library holds.	
<p>To ensure records are easily accessible it is necessary to comply with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of files stored in cabinets will be kept • Electronic files will be saved using relevant file names 	<p>The electronic files will be backed up periodically on a portable hard drive and also in the cloud-based programme supplied by the Council's IT company.</p>	Management	<p>Documentation no longer required will be disposed of, ensuring any confidential documents are destroyed as confidential waste.</p> <p>A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.</p>
General correspondence	<p>Unless it relates to specific categories outlined in the policy, correspondence, both paper and electronic, should be kept.</p> <p>Records should be kept for as long as they are needed for reference or accountability purposes, to comply with regulatory requirements or to protect legal and other rights and interests.</p>	Management	<p>Dispose (shred confidential waste).</p> <p>A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.</p>

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Correspondence relating to staff	<p>If related to Audit, see relevant sections above.</p> <p>Should be kept securely and personal data in relation to staff should not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose it was held. Likely time limits for tribunal claims between 3–6 months</p> <p>Recommend this period be for 3 years</p>	<p>After an employment relationship has ended, a council may need to retain and access staff records for former staff for the purpose of giving references, payment of tax, national insurance contributions and pensions, and in respect of any related legal claims made against the Council.</p>	<p>Confidential waste</p> <p>A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.</p>
Negligence	6 years		Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Defamation	1 year		Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Contract	6 years		Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Leases	12 years		Confidential waste.
Sums recoverable by statute	6 years		Confidential waste.
Personal injury	3 years		Confidential waste.
To recover land	12 years		Confidential waste.
Rent	6 years		Confidential waste.
Breach of trust	None		Confidential waste.
Trust deeds	Indefinite		N/A

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
For Halls, Centres, Recreation Grounds			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application to hire • Invoices • Record of tickets issued 	6 years	VAT	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Lettings diaries	Electronic files linked to accounts	VAT	N/A
Terms and Conditions	6 years	Management	Dispose
Event Monitoring Forms	6 years unless required for claims, insurance or legal purposes	Management	Dispose. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.
Register and plans	Indefinite	Audit, Management	N/A
Minutes	Indefinite	Audit, Management	N/A
Legal papers	Indefinite	Audit, Management	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of fees collected • Register of burials • Register of purchased graves • Register/plan of grave spaces • Register of memorials • Applications for interment • Applications for right to erect memorials • Disposal certificates • Copy certificates of grant of exclusive right of burial 	Indefinite	Archives, Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI 204)	N/A
Applications	1 year	Management	Dispose
Appeals	1 year unless significant development	Management	Dispose
Trees	1 year	Management	Dispose

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Local Development Plans	Retained as long as in force	Reference	Dispose
Local Plans	Retained as long as in force	Reference	Dispose
Town/Neighbourhood Plans	Indefinite – final adopted plans	Historical purposes	N/A
Daily notes	Daily	Data protection	Confidential waste
Radio rotas	1 week	Management	Confidential waste
Work rotas	1 month	Management	Confidential waste
Observation sheets	3 years	Data protection	Confidential waste
Stats	3 years	Data protection	Confidential waste
Signing in sheets	3 years	Management	Confidential waste
Review requests	3 years	Data protection	Confidential waste
Discs – master and working	For as long as required	Data protection	Confidential waste
Internal Operations Procedure Manual	Destroy on renewal Review annually	Management	Confidential waste
Code of Practice	Destroy on renewal Review annually	Management	Confidential waste
Photographs/digital prints	31 days	Data protection	Confidential waste