STISTED PARISH COUNCIL

Retention of Documents Policy



Adopted on:	May 2018
Reviewed on:	8 July 2026
Next review due:	June 2027

The Parish Council recognises 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 may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.

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 the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council, and he/she 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.

Relationship with existing policies

This policy has been drawn up within the context of:

- Freedom of Information policy
- Data Protection policy

And with other legislation or regulations (including audit and Statute of Limitations) affecting the Parish Council.

Retention Schedule

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. 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 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.

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

RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason	Storage or Disposal
FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS			
Minute Book	Indefinite	Archive	PO / CRO
Annual Accounts	Indefinite	Archive	PO / CRO
Annual Return	Indefinite	Archive	PO / CRO
Bank Statements	Last completed audit	Audit	PO / S
Cheque Book stubs	Last completed audit	Audit	PO / S
Paying-in Books	Last completed audit	Audit	PO / S
Contracts	7 years after completion of project	Audit	PO / S
Quotations/Tenders	6 years	Audit	PO / S
Paid Invoices	6 years	Audit / VAT	PO / S
VAT Records	6 years	Audit/ VAT	PO / S
Salary Records	7 years	Audit	PO / S
Tax & NI Records	7 years	Audit	PO / S
Insurance Policy	While valid	Audit	PO / S
Cert of Employers' Liability	40 years	Audit	PO / S
Cert of Public Liability	40 years	Audit	PO / S
Investments	Indefinite	Audit	PO / CRO
Asset Register	Indefinite	Audit	PO / CRO
Deeds/Leases/ Licenses	Indefinite	Audit	PO/B/CRO
Playground Inspection Reports	40 years	Insurance	PO / S
PLANNING APPLICATIONS			
All planning applications and relevant decision notices are available on the Braintree District Council website. There is no requirement to retain duplicates locally. All Parish Council recommendations in connection with these applications are recorded in the council minutes and are retained indefinitely. Correspondence received in connection with applications will be retained as stated below (see Correspondence)			
STAFF AND COUNCILLORS INFORMATION			
Declarations of Acceptance of Office	Term of Office + 1 year	Management	PO / S
Register of Interests	Term of Office + 1 year	Management	PO / S
Employee Records	Employment + 3 years	Superannuation	PO /S
CORRESPONDENCE			
Complaints	Resolution + 1 year	Management	PO / S
General information	3 months	Management	PO / R
Correspondence and emails	6 months after relevant issue is completed	Management	PO / S

KEY: PO = Parish Office/File, CRO = County Records Office, R = Recycle, S = Shred, B = Bank or other arranged

Disposal procedures: All documents that are no longer required for administrative reasons should be shredded and disposed of.