**Claxton Parish Council**

**Retention of Documents and Records Management Policy**

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| **Document Control** | | |
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**Introduction**

Claxton 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

**Legal position**

Most legal proceedings are governed by the Limitation Act 1980 (as amended). The 1980 Act provides that legal claims may not be commenced after a specific period. Where the limitation periods are longer than other periods specified the documentation should be kept for the longer period specified. Some types of legal proceedings may fall within two or more categories. If in doubt, keep for the longest of the three limitation periods.

**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, who is required to manage the Council’s records in such a way as to promote compliance with this policy so that information can be retrieved easily, appropriately and in a timely manner.

Parish Councillors are required to pass all documents and records whether received electronically or in a hard copy to the Parish Clerk for retention in accordance with this policy and in the event of a Parish Councillor resigning or failing to retain their post as a result of an election, it is the Parish Councillor’s responsibility to ensure anything that remains within their possession but is related to the business of the Parish Council is passed to the Parish Clerk within 10 working days of ceasing to hold the position of a Parish Councillor.

Documents and records are retained by the Parish Clerk in secure conditions.

**Relationship with existing policies**

This policy has been drawn up within the context of the Council’s existing Freedom of Information/Publication Scheme and Data Protection Policies.

**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.

Not all the areas listed below are relevant in Claxton.

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| **Document/File** | **Minimum retention period** | **Reason** |
| **Allotments** | | |
| Register and plans | Indefinite | Audit, Management |
| **Burial Grounds** | | |
| Register of burials | Indefinite | Archives, Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI. 204) |
| Register of fees collected |
| Register of purchased graves |
| Applications for internment |
| Applications for right to erect memorials |
| Register of reserved plots |
| Register of memorials |
| Register/plan of grave spaces |
| Disposal certificates |
| Copy certification of grant of exclusive right of burial |
| **Contractors** | | |
| Timesheets | Last completed audit year | Audit, Legal |
| **Councillor Information** | | |
| Declaration of Acceptance of Office | Term of Office + 1 year | Legal |
| Declarations of Interest | Indefinite | Legal |
| Register of Members interests | Duration of Office + 1 year | Legal |
| Contact details | Duration of Office | Management |
| Members allowances register | 6 years | Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended), Audit |
| **Finance and Payroll** | | |
| Annual Accounts | Indefinite | Archives |
| Annual Return (Audit) | Indefinite | Archives |
| Asset register | Indefinite | Archives |
| Bank statements | Last completed audit year | Audit |
| Cheque book stubs | Last completed audit year | Audit |
| Quotation and tenders | 6 years | Audit, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) |
| Paid invoices | 6 years | Audit, VAT |
| Sent invoices | 6 years | Audit, VAT |
| Bank paying in books | Last completed audit year | Audit |
| Purchase Orders | 6 years | Audit/VAT |
| Paid cheques | 6 years | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended), Audit |
| Receipt books of all kinds | 6 years | VAT |
| Investments | Indefinite | Audit, Management |
| Receipt & Payment Accounts (or Income & Expenditure) | Indefinite | Archives |
| Payroll, wages books, Tax and NI Records | 12 years | Audit, HMRC, Superannuation |
| Petty cash, postage and telephone books | 6 years | Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) |
| Scale of fees and charges | 6 years | Management |
| VAT Records | 6 years generally but 20 years for VAT on rents | Audit, VAT |
| **Halls, Centres and Recreation Grounds** | | |
| Application to hire | 6 years | VAT |
| Lettings diaries |
| Copies of bills to hirers |
| Record of tickets issued |
| **Health and Safety** | | |
| Accident/incident reports | 20 years | Potential claims, Legal, Management |
| Risk Assessment | 3 years from last assessment | Management |
| Playground Inspections | 21 years | Legal, insurance |
| Premises inspection records | 25 years | Management |
| **Insurance** | | |
| Certificate for insurance against liability for employees | 40 years | The Employers’ Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI.2753), Management |
| Insurance policies/schedules | While valid | Management |
| Insurance company names and policy numbers | Indefinite | Management |
| Insurance Claim Records | 7 years after closure (allowing for claimant to reach age of 25) | Legal, Management |
| **Legal** | | |
| Deeds, conveyances, leases, agreements and contracts | Indefinite | Audit, Management, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) |
| Documents for legal purposes   * Breach of Trust * Contract * Defamation * Leases * Negligence * Personal injury * Rent * Sums recoverable by statute * To recover land | Category Limitation period   * None * 6 years * 1 year * 12 years * 6 years * 3 years * 6 years * 6 years * 12 years | Legal |
| Trust documents | Indefinite | Audit, VAT |
| **Minutes and Correspondence** | | |
| Minute Books | Indefinite | Archives |
| Notes of minutes taken at meetings | Until minutes are approved | Management |
| Agendas | 5 years | Management |
| Emails/general correspondence and information (those not covered within the retention policy) | 6 months or for as long as relevant/useful | Management |
| **Other Information** | | |
| Complaints | 2 years after conclusion | Management |
| FOI requests | 2 years after conclusion | Management |
| Documents, plans, maps or articles having local or historic interest | For as long as relevant/useful | Archives |
| Magazines, journals, advertising material published by or on behalf of the Parish Council | For as long as relevant/useful | Management |
| Reports and Newsletters | For as long as relevant/useful | Management |
| Press Releases | 6 years | Management |
| Public Consultation: surveys/questionnaires | 5 years | Management |
| **Personnel** | | |
| Application Forms (unsuccessful) | 6 months | Management, Discrimination Acts |
| Application Forms (successful) | 6 years after ceasing employment | Management, Discrimination Acts |
| Personnel Records, Contracts | 6 years after ceasing employment | Management |
| Training Records | Term of Office or period of employment plus 6 months | Management |
| Staff appraisals | 6 years after ceasing employment | Management |
| Pension investment policies | 12 years after benefit ends | Management, Legal |
| Records of ex-pensioners | 6 years after benefit ends | Management, Legal |
| Timesheets | Last completed audit year | Audit |
| **Planning** | | |
| Planning application correspondence received from residents | 1 year | Management |
| Planning applications | All planning applications and relevant documents and decision notices are retained by and available from (depending on application authority) either South Norfolk Council or Broads Authority | |
| Parish and Neighbourhood Plans and similar documents | For as long as they are in force plus 2 years | Management |

General correspondence will be retained for as long as is relevant, the minimum period is 1 year. An annual review of all documentation should be carried out and the items that have reached their deletion or destruction date being deleted/destroyed and the remainder being considered for archiving.

**Disposal Procedures**

All documents that are no longer required for administration purposes will be shredded and disposed of.