

WINDERMERE & BOWNESS TOWN COUNCIL

RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS POLICY

Adopted by Council on: 11th September 2024

Review Date: September 2026

Introduction

1. The Town Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations. This policy provides a framework through which this effective management and retention of public records can be achieved and properly audited.

Scope

2. This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Town Council. Records are defined as all those documents which relate to the business carried out by the Town Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its communications, transactions and activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically. Some of the Town Council's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical research.

Responsibilities

3. The Town Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory requirements. The person with overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Town 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. The Clerk must ensure that records are accurate, and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with this policy.
4. Individual Councillors may hold records in hard copy format or electronically at home or on their home computers. If a Councillor considers that some of these documents are important in the context of the Town Council's records, they should ensure that the Clerk retain a copy for the official record. Individual Councillors are strongly advised to undertake "weeding" and "housekeeping" on a regular basis. On resigning from the Council, Councillors should delete electronic records they hold and destroy hard copy documents. Councillors should be aware that records that they hold may be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998; the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

Retention Schedule

5. The retention schedule lays down the length of time the record needs to be retained for, after which they will be destroyed by a professional confidential waste provider. The Clerk will undertake full records weeding every 3 years. The retention schedule refers to all the Parish Council's records, irrespective of the media in which they are stored.

Document Type	Retention Period	Reason
Minutes (Council, sub-committees and Advisory Groups).	Indefinite	Historical Importance
Correspondence/Papers on important local issues	Indefinite	Historical Importance
Routine Correspondence, papers, reports & emails	1 year (longer if clerk deems necessary)	Management
Cash Books & financial records (bank statements, cheque books, invoices)	7 years	Legal requirement
Grant Applications (successful)	7 years	In line with finance regs
Grant applications (unsuccessful)	1 year	Management
Annual Return/audited accounts	7 years	Legal requirement
Quotations & contracts	7 years	Legal requirement
Budgets and Precept	7 years	Legal requirement
Budget Monitoring	2 years	Management
VAT records	7 years	Legal requirement
Payroll, NI & PAYE records	7 years	Legal requirement
Insurance Policies/Claims	7 years	Legal requirement
Asset Registers	Indefinite	Historical record
Deeds & Leases	Indefinite	Historical record
Allotments - plot holder agreements & details	Period of holding plot + 2 years	Management
Allotments waiting list	Review every 3 years. Delete if no contact.	Management
Risk assessments	3 years	Management of Council
Declaration of Members' Interests	18 months after individual has ceased to be Councillor	Management
Declaration of acceptance of office	1 civic year	Management
Employment Application forms (unsuccessful)	6 months	Management
Employment Application forms (successful)	Period of employment + 6 months	Management
Employment records (including appraisal or disciplinary)	Period of employment + 6 months	Management
Complaints (under policy)	2 years after closure	Management
Information requests (under FoI)	2 years after request	Management
Public consultations	5 years after completion	Management
Health & Safety (inc inspection records of Ellera Wood & Langrigge Play area)	7 years	Management/Prudence
Windermere in Bloom sponsors sign up forms	2 years	Management