



LONG SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL - DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

Adopted: 3 March 2026 - Minute Ref: 25/191 (c)

Review date: March 2029

1. Purpose

Long Sutton Parish Council (“the Council”) requires a wide range of documents to carry out its statutory and administrative functions. This Document Retention Policy sets out the principles governing the retention, storage and disposal of Council records.

The policy ensures that the Council:

- Meets its statutory and regulatory obligations
- Maintains transparency and accountability
- Protects personal data and individual privacy
- Retains records for as long as they are needed and no longer
- Disposes of records securely and appropriately

This policy is informed by guidance issued by the **National Association of Local Councils (NALC)** and reflects good practice in local council governance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to **all records created, received or maintained by the Council**, regardless of format. This includes:

- Paper records
- Electronic records, including emails
- Records held by Councillors and officers acting on behalf of the Council

The policy applies to all Councillors, the Clerk, and any employees or contractors working for the Council.

3. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy takes account of, but is not limited to, the following legislation:

- Local Government Act 1972
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Limitation Act 1980
- VAT Act 1994
- Employment, health and safety and pensions legislation

4. Responsibility for Records Management

- The **Clerk to the Council** has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy.
- Councillors and employees are responsible for ensuring that records they create or hold are managed in accordance with this policy.

5. Storage, Security and Access

- Records may be stored in paper and/or electronic form.
- Appropriate security measures will be applied to protect records against loss, unauthorised access or disclosure.
- Personal and sensitive data will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised persons.
- Where appropriate, records may be backed up or stored off-site or in secure cloud storage.

6. Retention Periods

Retention periods for different categories of records are set out in **Appendix A** to this policy.

Records must **not** be destroyed if they are:

- Subject to a Freedom of Information request
- Required for audit or legal proceedings
- Relevant to an ongoing complaint, investigation or insurance claim

7. Disposal of Records

- Records that have reached the end of their retention period will be disposed of in a timely and secure manner.
- Paper records containing personal or confidential data will be shredded.
- Electronic records will be permanently deleted.
- Where appropriate, a record of destruction may be retained.

Documents must never be destroyed in a manner that could be perceived as an attempt to conceal information or avoid accountability.

8. Archiving

- Records of historical, legal or administrative significance (including signed minutes and legal agreements) will be retained indefinitely.
- Archived records will be clearly identified and stored securely.

9. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically, and at least every three years, to ensure it remains effective and compliant with legislation and best practice.

Appendix A – Document Retention Schedule

A. General Council Records

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Signed minutes of Council meetings (hard copy)	Indefinite	Local Government Act 1972
Draft minutes and meeting notes	Until minutes approved	Management
Receipt and payment accounts	6 years (supporting papers); account spreadsheets indefinitely	Audit
Bank statements	Until completion of audit year	Audit
Quotations and tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT / Limitation Act
VAT records	6 years	VAT Act
Insurance policies	2 years after expiry	Management
Employer's liability insurance certificates	40 years	Statutory
Investments	Indefinite	Audit / Management
Contracts, leases, title deeds	Indefinite	Legal
Risk assessments	3 years from last assessment	Management
Register of Members' Interests	18 months after individual ceases to be a Member	Management
Complaints	5 years after closure	Management
Correspondence (including email)	6–12 months	Management

B. Planning Records

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Planning applications (granted)	Until decision published online	Planning
Planning applications (refused)	Until appeal period expires	Planning
Appeal decision notices	Until development completed or longer if precedent	Planning
Local and structure plans	While in force	Planning

C. Legal Records

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Negligence claims	6 years	Limitation Act 1980
Defamation	1 year	Limitation Act 1980
Contract claims	6 years	Limitation Act 1980
Personal injury claims	3 years	Limitation Act 1980
Leases	12 years	Limitation Act 1980
Rent and tenancy records (including allotments)	6 years	Limitation Act 1980