

LITTLE GLEMHAM PARISH COUNCIL RECORDS RETENTION POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

A Parish Council is statutorily required to make adequate provision for the preservation of documents, books and papers belonging to the Parish under the Local Government Act 1972. Any orders made by the County Council for the preservation of such records must be complied with by the Parish Council.

It is good practice and probably essential for larger Councils to review the Council's documentation at least annually. Anything that is no longer of use or value can be destroyed, but if a Council is in doubt on this point it should seek advice from the County Association and retain the document(s) until that advice has been received. Documents of historical importance if not retained by the Council should be offered first to the County Record Office. The County Archivist there will always be willing to advise on which records should be permanently preserved.

2 RETENTION PERIODS FOR DOCUMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE ETC. DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH THEM

(a) Indefinitely

- (i) Parish Council minute books (council, committees and sub-committees)
- (ii) Account books and ledgers
- (iii) Tithe apportionments
- (iv) Parochial agreements
- (v) Inclosure awards
- (vi) Manor rolls, terriers and court rolls
- (vii) Allotment registers and plans
- (viii) All documents relating to Burial Grounds
- (ix) Private Acts of Parliament
- (x) Local Acts conferring special powers upon a local council or its predecessors
- (xi) Statutory Instruments
- (xii) Agreements and arbitration awards arising out of boundary alterations
- (xiii) Orders of the County and District Council on the constitution and functions of the parish council
- (xiv) Orders and schemes made by the Charity Commissioners or central Government in relation to parochial charities
- (xv) Trust Instruments
- (xvi) Deeds, leases and conveyances
- (xvii) Mortgages and mortgage register
- (xviii) Written contracts
- (xix) Copies of statutory reports and returns
- (xx) Insurance Policies

- (xxi) Court, tribunal or similar arbitration papers
- b) Twelve years
 - (i) Quotations and tenders
 - (ii) Wage books
- c) Six years
 - (i) Receipt books of all kinds
 - (ii) Paid cheques
 - (iii) VAT records
 - (iv) Petty cash, postage and telephone books
 - (v) Members allowances record
 - (vi) Invoices
- d) Last completed audit year
 - (i) Bank Statements (including deposit/savings accounts)
 - (ii) Bank paying-in books
 - (iii) Cheque book stubs
 - (iv) Time sheets
- e) Six months
 - Election documents (following election)

Periodicals, journals, obsolete forms and law books and any other such miscellaneous books or papers may be destroyed.

3 OTHER DOCUMENTS

Other documents not mentioned above and not covered in Chapter 12 of Local Council Administration may be treated as follows:-

- (i) Planning Papers
 - (a) Where planning permissions granted, the planning application, any plans and the decision letter should normally be retained until the development has been completed so that, if required, the Council can check that the development proceeds in accordance with the terms and conditions of the permission. Where planning permission is granted on appeal, a copy of the appeal decision should also be retained likewise. It may sometimes be sensible to retain an appeal decision indefinitely because of wider implications (e.g. the decision may set a precedent for other development in the locality).
 - (b) Where planning permission is refused, the papers should be retained until the period within which an appeal can be made has expired. If an appeal is made, and dismissed, the decision letter may, as in (a) above, be worth retaining against further applications relating to the same site.
 - (c) Where a substantial number of planning applications come before the council it may well be advisable to keep a card index or similar system of record.

- (d) Copies of Structure Plans, Local Plans and similar documents should be retained as long as they are in force.
- (ii) Information from other bodies (e.g. circulars etc from county association, NALC and other bodies too numerous to mention) – such information should be retained as long as it is useful and relevant.
- (iii) Magazines and journals
The Local Council Review and The Local Councillor are worth keeping for at least five years; other regular publications received may merit similar treatment.
- (iv) Correspondence
If related to audit matters, correspondence should be kept for the appropriate period specified in 2(c) above. In planning matters, correspondence should be retained for the same period as suggested for other planning papers. For other correspondence see attached list from County Archives.

4 PUBLIC INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

Any local government elector of the parish council has the right to inspect free of charge the parish council minutes which have been signed and may make a copy thereof. This also applies to any order for the payment of money made by the council and the council's accounts. These and other documents detailed in each council's statutory scheme approved under the Freedom of Information Act once the Act is fully in force must be available at all reasonable hours.

5 PHOTOCOPIES

Any statutory requirement relating to the retention of a document by a parish council is satisfied by the keeping of a photographic copy except in a case where a colour is relevant to an interpretation of a document when it would be necessary for the copy to be coloured up for distinguishment.

7 PRESERVATION OF RECORDS

Not recommended for use with permanent records:

- Biro or water based ink
- Non-water soluble adhesives
- Sellotape or double-sided tape
- Rubber bands
- Silver/plastic paper clips
- Newsprint and paper made from wood pulp
- Fax copies

To ensure the safe preservation of records, they should be kept in a secure place, preferably not exposed to sunlight, and not subject to extremes of cold or heat, or to damp. Further advice on this is also available from any branch of the Record Office.

COUNTY RECORD OFFICES:

Ipswich – Gatacre Road, Ipswich IP1 2LQ 01473 584541

Bury St Edmunds – 77 Raingate Street, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR

Tel: 01284 352352

Lowestoft – Central Library, Clapham Road, Lowestoft NR32 1DR

Tel: 01502 405357

Civil parishes

KEEP/ACCEPT	DON'T KEEP/ACCEPT
Minutes – Parish Council, Parish Meeting, committees, special events	
Receipts and payments account books	Precept counterfoil books
Annual statements of accounts	
Audit papers to 1900; weed post-1900 papers	
Councillors' declarations of acceptance of office	Nomination papers
Declarations of interest	
Standing Orders	
Deeds of parish properties	Mortgages
Leases	Insurance policies
Bye-laws	
Correspondence about rights of way, public footpaths, village greens, common lands	General correspondence
Planning registers	
Papers re contentious planning matters	Planning applications, unless relating to contentious matters or listed buildings
Street lighting agreements	
Papers re activities during First and Second World Wars	
Papers re parish fire brigades	
Papers re war memorials	
Village appraisal papers	
Allotments: rules, registers, accounts	
Cemetery: plans, deeds, consecration papers, Burial Board minutes and accounts, tables of fees, registers of burials and graves, counterfoils of grants of exclusive grants of burial	Burial certificates; permits to erect memorials
Charities administered by Parish Councils	General circulars from County Council, District Council and Suffolk association of Local Councils
Village Hall: minutes of management body, deeds, receipts and payments account books, balance sheets	
Any 'inherited' pre-1894 records	