

Lifton Parish Council

Data Retention and Disposal Policy

1. Purpose

Information is one of Lifton Parish Council's corporate assets; in the course of carrying out its business, Lifton Parish Council accumulates information from both individuals and external organisations. Lifton Parish Council also generates a wide range of data, which is recorded in documents and records.

- a) These documents and records are in several different formats, examples of which include, (but are not limited to) communications such as letters, emails and attendance notes;
 - i) Financial information including invoices, statements and reports;
 - ii) Legal documents such as contracts, deeds and finance agreements;
 - iii) Information relating to various types of financial transactions, including bank statements, asset registers, tax records, payroll information and insurance policies.
- b) For the purposes of this Policy, the terms 'Documents' and 'Records' include information in both hard copy and electronic form.
- c) Premature destruction of documents could result in inability to defend litigious claims, operational difficulties and potential failure to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and also the Data Protection Act 2018.
- d) The retention of all documents and records is impractical. Documents and records should be retained until they are no longer needed. Disposal allows Lifton Parish Council to maintain sufficient electronic and office storage space and will de-clutter office accommodation, resulting in a more desirable working environment. It also ensures that Lifton Parish Council complies with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation.
- e) It is important for the above reasons that Lifton Parish Council has in place systems for the timely and secure disposal of documents and records that are no longer required for business or statutory purposes.

2. Aims and Objectives

- a) The key objective of this Policy is to provide Lifton Parish Council with a simple framework which will govern decisions on whether a particular document should be retained or disposed of. In the case of documents which are to be retained by

Lifton Parish Council, the Policy includes guidance on the format in which they should be retained and appropriate retention periods.

- b) Implementation of the Policy should save Lifton Parish Council's time when retrieving information, in particular by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily.
- c) It is envisaged that this Policy will assist Lifton Parish Council in securing compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2005, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Code of Practice on the Management of Records under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and General Data Protection Regulation 2018. In addition, it will assist Lifton Parish Council and the Clerk in their day-to-day business. This should also ensure that searches for information requested under the Freedom of Information legislation are as quick as possible.
- d) Additionally, the Policy should help to ensure that Lifton Parish Council archives records and documents that are of historical value appropriately for the benefit of future generations.

3. Scope

- a) This Data Retention & Disposal Policy applies to all information owned by Lifton Parish Council and any external service providers in the event that such an organisation is processing information on Lifton Parish Council's behalf.

4. Policy Statement

- a) Lifton Parish Council will ensure that information is not kept longer than is necessary and will retain the minimum amount of information that it requires to carry out its' statutory functions and the provision of its auditing services.

5. Retention and Disposal Policy

- a) Decisions relating to the retention and disposal of documentation should be taken in accordance with this Policy, in particular the document retention schedules in Appendix A, and any additional information provided by NALC (under relevant Legal Topic Notes).
- b) In circumstances where a retention period of a specific document has expired, a review should always be carried out prior to a decision being made to dispose of it. This review should not be particularly time consuming and should be straightforward. If the decision to dispose of a document is taken, then that document will be disposed of securely by shredding and subsequent destruction in relation to paper documents or deleted from electronic storage using a permanent delete application.

6. **Roles and Responsibilities**

- a) The Clerk will be responsible for determining (in accordance with this Policy) whether to retain or dispose of specific documents within the remit of their service area.
- b) The Clerk should seek legal advice if they are uncertain as to whether minimum retention periods are prescribed by law, or whether the retention of a document is necessary to protect Lifton Parish Council's position where a potential evidentiality issue has been identified.
- c) The Clerk should ensure that the Schedule in Appendix A which is relevant to Lifton Parish Council's services is kept up to date.
- d) On leaving office, Councillors should delete electronic records they hold and destroy hard copy documents.
- e) Councillors on leaving office will be asked to confirm, in writing, that they have destroyed all relevant information whether electronic or hard copy in a secure manner.
- f) When a Councillor leaves office, the Clerk will be responsible for deleting their Council email address.

7. **Disposal**

- a) Hard copies of confidential waste documents should be shredded. These are any documents that may contain confidential or personal data.
- b) Disposal of documents other than those containing confidential or personal data may be disposed of by binning, recycling, and permanent deletion (in the case of electronic documents), or the transfer of documents to external bodies. Transfer of documents to external bodies will be unusual but could be relevant where documents are of evidentiality interest and may therefore be sent to the investigating authority, e.g. the Police or HMRC.
- c) Records of disposal should be maintained by the Clerk and should detail the document disposed of and the date of its disposal as well as the method of disposal.

APPENDIX A - Document Retention Schedules

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Minutes & Correspondence			
Minute books	Indefinite	Archive	Original signed copies must be kept indefinitely. At intervals of not more than 5 years they must be archived and deposited in the Devon Records Office/Heritage Centre archive.
Agendas	5 years	Management	Bin/Delete/Shred if confidential waste
Correspondence/papers on important local issues/activities	Indefinite	Archive	N/A
Routine correspondence, paper & emails	1 year	Management	Shred/Delete
Finance & payroll			
Receipts & payments books	6 years	Management/VAT	N/A
Annual Return & audited accounts	Indefinite	Archive	N/A
Correspondence relating to Audit	Last completed audit year	Audit/Management	Shred/Delete
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit/Management	Shred
Paying in books	Last completed audit year	Audit/Management	Shred
Petty cash	6 years	Tax/VAT	Shred
Budgetary control papers	2 years + current year	Audit	Shred
Bank statements (paper)	6 years	Audit	Shred/Delete
Quotations and tenders	6 years	Audit	Shred. A list will be kept of documents disposed of to meet GDPR requirements.
Paid invoices	6 years	Audit/VAT	Shred/Delete

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason	Disposal
VAT records	6 years	Audit/VAT	Shred/Delete
Payroll	12 years	Superannuation	Shred/Delete
Tax & NI records	12 years	Superannuation	Shred
Insurance policies			
Insurance policies	As long as it is possible for a claim to be made under it.	Audit/Management/Legal	Shred/Delete
Insurance company names + policy numbers	Indefinite	Management	N/A
Certificates for insurance against liability for employees	Indefinite	Audit/Legal	N/A
Insurance claim records	7 years after conclusion	Legal	Shred/Delete
Policy renewal records	Whilst valid	Management	Shred/Delete
General Management			
Assets register	Indefinite	Audit	N/A
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit/Management	N/A
Health & Safety			
Equipment/Premises inspection reports	21 years	Management	Shred/Delete
Risk Assessments	3 years from last	Management	Shred/Delete
Accident reports	20 years	Legal (Potential claims)	Shred. A list will be kept of documents disposed of to meet GDPR regulations requirements
Members			
Register of members' interests	Members' term of office	Management	Shred/Delete
Declarations of acceptance	Members' term of office	Management	Shred
Human Resources			
Application forms (<i>unsuccessful</i>)	6 months	Management	Shred/Delete
Application forms (<i>successful</i>)	Period of employment + 6 months	Management	Shred/Delete

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason	Disposal
Disciplinary records	Period of employment + 6 months	Management	Shred/Delete
Personal files (appraisals/pay reviews etc.)	Period of employment + 6 months	Management	Shred/Delete
For halls, recreation grounds etc.			
Application to hire lettings diaries copies of bills to hires record of tickets issued	6 years	VAT	Shred/Delete
For burial grounds			
Register of fees collected, register of burials, register of purchased graves, register/plan of grave spaces, register of memorials, applications for interment, applications for right to erect memorials, disposal certificates, and copy certificates of grant of exclusive right of burial	Indefinite	Archives and The Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI. 204)	N/A
Miscellaneous			
Complaints	2 years after closure	Management	Shred/Delete
Information requests	2 years after closure	Management	Shred/Delete
Reports, Newsletters	As long as is useful	Management	Shred/Delete

Planning application documents and relevant decision notices are not retained by Lifton Parish Council. Planning applications and relevant decisions are available on West Devon Borough Council's Website: [West Devon | West Devon Borough Council](#)
All Parish Council decisions in relation to planning applications are recorded in the meeting Minutes.

Reviewed and adopted: 28th March 2024
Next review: March 2026