



Records Retention Policy

Adopted:

Minute Reference:

1. Introduction

This Records Retention Policy sets out how Salehurst & Robertsbridge Parish Council (“the Council”) manages, stores, and disposes of its records in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and recognised local government best practice.

The Council is committed to ensuring that records are retained for an appropriate length of time, are accessible when required, and are securely destroyed when no longer needed.

This policy should be read alongside the Council’s Data Protection Policy, Website Privacy Notice, and IT Policy.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements
- Support effective governance and accountability
- Promote efficient administration and information management
- Protect the rights of individuals whose personal data the Council holds
- Provide clear guidance on retention periods and disposal procedures

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All records created, received, or maintained by the Council
 - Records in any format, including paper, electronic files, emails, photographs, audio, and CCTV
 - Councillors, employees, volunteers, and contractors acting on behalf of the Council
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4. Definitions

- **Record:** Any information created, received, or maintained as evidence of Council activities, decisions, or transactions.
 - **Retention period:** The length of time a record must be kept before it is reviewed or destroyed.
 - **Disposal:** Secure destruction or permanent deletion of a record once it is no longer required.
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5. Roles and Responsibilities

- **The Council** is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.
- **The Clerk** manages day-to-day implementation, maintains the retention schedule, and oversees secure disposal.
- **Councillors and staff** must follow this policy when creating, storing, or disposing of records.

The Council does **not** appoint a Data Protection Officer but will seek external advice where necessary.

6. Retention Schedule

The Council maintains a Records Retention Schedule that specifies how long each category of record must be kept. The schedule forms **Appendix A** to this policy and includes retention periods for:

- Governance and administration
- Financial management
- Employment and staffing
- Contracts and asset management
- Planning and development
- Cemetery
- Communications and correspondence
- Data protection records
- Health and safety
- CCTV (if/when in use)

Retention periods are based on statutory requirements, recognised local government guidance, and operational need.

7. Storage and Security

Records must be stored securely to protect confidentiality, integrity, and availability. The Council will ensure:

- Paper records are kept in locked cabinets or secure storage
 - Electronic records are password-protected and backed up
 - Access is restricted to authorised individuals
 - Sensitive personal data is handled in accordance with UK GDPR
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8. Disposal of Records

8.1 Methods of Disposal

When a record reaches the end of its retention period, it must be disposed of securely:

- **Paper records:** cross-cut shredding or approved confidential waste service
- **Electronic records:** permanent deletion from all devices, servers, and backups
- **CCTV:** automatic overwrite unless required for investigation

8.2 Disposal Log

The Clerk will maintain a disposal log recording:

- Record type
 - Date of disposal
 - Method of disposal
 - Authorising officer
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9. Archiving

Records of historical, legal, or administrative value may be preserved permanently. These include:

- Signed minutes
- Burial registers
- Asset registers
- Key governance documents

Where appropriate, records may be transferred to a local archive or records office.

10. Data Subject Rights

Where a record contains personal data, the Council will ensure that retention and disposal comply with individuals' rights under UK GDPR, including:

- Right of access
- Right to rectification
- Right to erasure (where applicable)
- Right to restriction

Retention periods may be extended where necessary to respond to a statutory request.

11. Review and Amendment

This policy will be reviewed **annually** or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- Best practice guidance is updated
- The Council's operational needs change

Any amendments must be approved by the Council.

Appendix A – Records Retention Schedule

1. Governance & Administration

Record Type	Retention Period	Notes
Minutes (signed)	Permanent	Legal record
Draft minutes	Until approved	Destroy after approval
Agendas	5 years	
Reports to Council/Committees	5 years	
Policies & Procedures	Current version + 3 years	Keep superseded versions
Declarations of Acceptance of Office	Term of office + 1 year	
Register of Members' Interests	As long as current + 1 year	
Unsuccessful Co-option candidate records	6 months	Remove from website immediately

2. Financial Records

Record Type	Retention Period	Notes
Annual Accounts (final)	Permanent	
AGAR (Annual Return)	Permanent	
Bank statements, reconciliations, cheque books	6 years	
Borrowing / Loans	6 years	
Financial ledgers & cashbooks	6 years	
Invoices, receipts, purchase orders	6 years	
VAT records	6 years	HMRC requirement
Grants received	6 years	
Grants awarded	6 years	Longer if conditions apply

3. Employment & Staffing

Record Type	Retention Period	Notes
Personnel files	6 years after employment ends	
Payroll records	6 years	
HMRC tax & NI records	6 years	
Pension records	12 years	
Sickness & absence records	6 years	
Annual Leave Records	6 years	
Recruitment (unsuccessful applicants)	6 months	
Disciplinary & grievance records	6 years after closure	

4. Contracts & Asset Management

Record Type	Retention Period	Notes
Contracts	6 years after end	12 years if sealed
Asset register	Permanent	
Leases	12 years after termination	

5. Planning & Development

Record Type	Retention Period	Notes
Planning applications (Council copies)	1 year	Originals held by planning authority
Planning responses/comments	3 years	
Neighbourhood Plan documents	Permanent	

6. Cemetery/Burial Records

Record Type	Retention Period	Notes
Burial registers	Permanent	
Grave purchase records	Permanent	
Exclusive Rights of Burial	15 years after expiry	
Cemetery maps	Permanent	

7. Communications & Correspondence

Record Type	Retention Period	Notes
General correspondence	2 years	Unless part of a case file
Complaints (resolved)	3 years	
Complaints (serious/ongoing)	6 years	
Newsletters, publicity	2 years	

8. Data Protection Records

Record Type	Retention Period	Notes
Subject Access Requests	3 years	
Data breach records	6 years	
Consent forms	Until withdrawn + 2 years	

9. Insurance & Health & Safety

Record Type	Retention Period	Notes
Employers' Liability Insurance Certificates	40 years	
Insurance policies (including Public Liability)	6 years after expiry	
Insurance claims	6 years after settlement	
Risk assessments	3 years	Keep updated versions
Accident/incident reports	3 years	25 years if involving a child

10. CCTV

Record Type	Retention Period	Notes
CCTV footage	31 days	Longer if needed for investigation
CCTV system logs	1 year	

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