Document Retention Policy for Great Canfield Parish Council

Prime objectives

Great Canfield Parish Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with legal and regulatory obligations and to allow for its effective management. This policy has been created to detail how the records maintained by the parish council are kept and when they should be destroyed.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all records created, received, or maintained by the parish council in the course of carrying out its functions. A small number of the parish council's records may be selected for permanent preservation as part of the council's archives and for historical research.

Responsibilities

Great Canfield Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records in line with regulatory requirements. The person with overall responsibility for managing this is the Parish Clerk. They are 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

Individual Councillors may hold records in hard copy format or electronically and are expected to carry out regular 'housekeeping'. If a Councillor considers that some of these documents are important in the context of the Parish Council's records, they should ensure that the Clerk receives a copy for the official record. When a parish councillor leaves office they should delete electronic records they hold and destroy hard copy documents.

Relationship with existing policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the parish council's

- Freedom of Information policy
- General data protection regulation policy

Retention schedule

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the parish council is required to maintain a retention schedule which lays down the length of time certain record sets need to be retained. Great Canfield Parish Council has adopted a policy in line with the National Association of Local Council's legal topic note LTN40 (Local Councils' documents and records'), and as set out below.

Records that are required to be retained indefinitely, and items of social and historic interest are held on behalf of the parish council by Essex Records Office.

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Minute Books	Indefinite	Archive / Historical Record
Annual Accounts (Report only)	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)	Indefinite	Archive
Asset Register	Indefinite	Archive
Accounting records	6 years	Audit / The Limitations Act 1980.
Insurance policies	As long as it is possible for a claim to be made under it	Management and legal proceedings
Certificates for Insurance against liability for employees	Indefinite	Future claims
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit and Management
Cllrs Declarations of Acceptance of Office and co-option papers	Term of Office + 1 year	Management
Correspondence and emails sent as routine or for information	1 year or for a long as they are useful	Management
Clerks meeting notes	Until minutes have been approved	Management

To note planning application information and decision notices are available online or from the archive of Uttlesford District Council, there is no requirement to retain local copies.

This policy was adopted by Great Canfield Parish Council on 8th April 2024 and will be reviewed annually as part of the policy review process.

Date of policy: April 2024
Approving committee: Parish Council meeting on 8th April 2024
Reviewed date: 20th April 2026
Date for next review: 20th April 2027