

Hermitage Parish Council
Document Retention & Disposal Policy

Last reviewed	20th of August 2020	Last update	June 2026
Next review date	June 2028	Owner	

1. Purpose

This policy sets out Hermitage Parish Council's approach to the retention, secure storage, and disposal of documents, both paper and electronic, in accordance with:

- National Association of Local Councils (NALC) guidance
- Berkshire Association of Local Councils (BALC) best practice
- UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018
- Local Government Act 1972
- Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015
- Limitation Act 1980
- Relevant employment, insurance, and cemeteries legislation

The policy applies to all councillors, employees, contractors, and volunteers handling council information.

2. Principles

Hermitage Parish Council will:

- Retain documents only for as long as necessary
- Store records securely with controlled access
- Ensure personal data is processed lawfully and disposed of confidentially
- Maintain clear audit trails for financial and governance records
- Use digital storage where appropriate, with regular backups
- Review retention & disposal policy every two-years

3. Planning Documents

- **Neighbourhood Development Plans and policy documents:** Retain while in force.

4. Insurance Documents

- **Insurance policies:** Retain for the life of the policy + 6 years.
 - **Employers' Liability Insurance certificates:** Retain for 40 years (legal requirement).
 - **Claims correspondence:** Retain 6 years after closure.
 - A permanent record of **policy numbers and insurers** must be kept indefinitely.
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5. Information from External Bodies

Circulars, newsletters, and guidance from NALC, BALC, West Berkshire Council, and other bodies should be retained only while relevant.

6. Staff Records (UK GDPR Compliant)

- **Staff files:** 6 years after employment ends.
- **Payroll, tax, NI, pension records:** 6 years (HMRC).
- **Recruitment records, if applicable (unsuccessful applicants):** 12 months.
- **Training records:** 6 years.
- **Disciplinary records:** Retain as per outcome, normally 1–6 years.

Where litigation is possible, retention may be extended in line with the Limitation Act 1980.

7. Legal Claims & Limitation Periods

Category	Limitation Period
Negligence / tort	6 years
Defamation	1 year
Contract	6 years
Leases	12 years
Sums recoverable by statute	6 years
Personal injury	3 years
Recovery of land	12 years
Rent	6 years
Breach of trust	No limitation

Trust deeds, schemes, and land ownership documents must never be destroyed.

Where limitation periods may be extended (e.g., fraud, concealed damage, minors), the Council will assess risk before disposal.

8. Disposal of Documents

All disposal must:

- Be authorised by the Clerk and sitting Chair
- Be documented in a Disposal Log
- Use secure shredding for personal or confidential data
- Ensure electronic files are permanently deleted from all backups where feasible

9. Retention Schedule (Updated 2026)

Governance & Administration

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason
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Minutes (signed)	Permanent	Archive / legal record
Draft minutes	Until approved	Administrative
Agendas	5 years	Good practice
Councillor declarations of acceptance	Term of office + 1 year	Governance
Register of Interests	While current + 1 year	Governance
Policies & procedures	Until superseded + 1 year	Governance

Financial Records

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason
AGAR	Permanent	Audit archive
Receipt & payment accounts	Permanent	Audit archive
Bank statements	6 years	Audit
Paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Invoices	6 years	VAT / audit
VAT records	6 years (20 years for VAT on rents)	HMRC
Quotations & tenders	6 years	Audit
Payroll records	6 years	HMRC
Timesheets	3 years	Best practice
Insurance policies	Life of policy + 6 years	Audit
Employers' Liability certificates	40 years	Legal requirement
Grants received/awarded	6 years	Audit

Land & Property

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason
Title deeds, leases, contracts	Permanent	Legal
Asset register	Permanent	Audit
Maintenance records	6 years	Audit / insurance

Recreation Grounds & Facilities

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason
Hire agreements	6 years	VAT
Lettings diaries	6 years	VAT
Tickets / booking records	6 years	VAT

Burial Ground Records

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason
Burial registers	Permanent	Statutory
Register of purchased graves	Permanent	Statutory

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Grave plans	Permanent	Statutory
Memorial applications	Permanent	Statutory
Interment applications	Permanent	Statutory
Exclusive Right of Burial certificates	Permanent	Statutory

Data Protection

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason
Data breach logs	6 years	ICO guidance
Subject Access Requests	2 years	ICO
Consent forms	Until withdrawn or no longer needed	UK GDPR

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation or NALC/BALC guidance changes.

Adopted by Hermitage Parish Council: 24th June 2026