

Documents, Records and Correspondence Policy

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to ensure that records are stored safely, documents are filed and kept for the time required and correspondence is circulated or replied to as soon as is practicable.

Records

Records refer to official records such as Full Council Minutes and Land Ownership deeds. All minute records prior to 2004 are filed in the Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone, Kent. Records since then are stored in the Parish Council Office.

Documents

Documents refer to other papers such as on the attached list. Horsmonden Parish Council (HPC) uses the guidelines for document retention as set out by the National Association of Councils (NALC) refer LTN40.

Correspondence

Emails have changed the way organisations and people correspond and the volume has increased inordinately. Content of emails varies from direct enquiries to circulars, but the majority are from organisations such as County and Borough Councils who circulate information, not all of which is relevant to us.

Consequently, all emails have to be reviewed and a decision made on whether an immediate reply is warranted, an acknowledgement sent or whether it is pertinent to circulate for Councillors to read. The time it takes to respond to a resident can vary depending on the urgency of the enquiry and if advice is required. If advice is needed, then an acknowledgement should be sent and the relevant Committee Chairman will normally be copied in.

All emails are digitally filed, with the exception of circulars.

All decisions on the above are at the Clerk's discretion.

RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR THE AUDIT OF PARISH COUNCILS

| DOCUMENT | | MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD | REASON |
|----------|--|---|--|
| • | Approved minutes | Indefinite | Archive |
| • | Scales of fees and charges | 6 years | Management |
| • | Receipt and payment account(s) | Indefinite | Archive |
| • | Receipt books of all kinds | 6 years | VAT |
| • | Bank statements, including deposit/savings accounts | Last completed audit year | Audit |
| • | Bank paying-in books | Last completed audit year | Audit |
| • | Cheque book stubs | Last completed audit year | Audit |
| • | Quotations and tenders | 6 years | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) |
| • | Paid invoices | 6 years | VAT |
| • | Paid cheques | 6 years | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) |
| • | VAT records | 6 years generally but 20 years for VAT on rents | VAT |
| • | Petty cash, postage and telephone books | 6 years | Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) |
| • | Timesheets | Last completed audit year | Audit (requirement) |
| | | 3 years | Personal injury (best practice) |
| • | Wages books | 12 years | Superannuation |
| • | Insurance policies | While valid | Management |
| • | Certificates for insurance against liability for employees | 40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed | The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI. 2753), Management |

| • | Investments | Indefinite | Audit, Management |
|---|---|------------|--|
| • | Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts | Indefinite | Audit, Management |
| • | Members allowances register | 6 years | Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) |

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