



HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL

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 3 years	Audit (requirement) 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 (Sl. 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)