

OWSTON FERRY PARISH COUNCIL

RECORD RETENTION POLICY

Name of Organisation	Owston Ferry Parish Council
Date Policy Approved	May 2026
Date of Next Review	May 2027

Documents and records should be retained until they are no longer needed. The Annex to this policy contains a table containing the appropriate minimum retention periods for the most important documents for audit and other purposes such as staff management, tax liabilities, cemetery management and the possibility of legal disputes and legal proceedings. If in doubt, document(s) should be retained until legal advice has been received.

Planning Papers

Where planning permission is granted the planning application, any plans and the decision letter should normally be retained until the development has been completed. Where planning permission is granted on appeal, a copy of the appeal decision should also be retained. It may sometimes be sensible to retain an appeal decision indefinitely because of wider implications (e.g. the decision may set a precedent for other developments in the locality). Where planning permission is refused, the papers should be retained until the appeal period has expired. If an appeal is made, and dismissed, the decision letter may be worth retaining against further applications relating to the same site. Copies of local plans and similar documents should be retained as long as they are in force. Councils are encouraged to use electronic copies of planning documents, which are widely accessible and available via the planning portal or their local planning authority's website

Magazines, Journals and other publications

A council may want to keep its own publications (e.g. newsletters) permanently for archive purposes. Journals published by others (e.g. local government news journals and magazines) should be retained as long as they are useful and relevant.

Correspondence

If related to audit matters, correspondence should be kept for the appropriate period specified in the Annex. In planning matters, correspondence should be retained for the same period as suggested for other planning papers. For other correspondence (unless relating to staff), no firm guidelines can be laid down.

Retention of Documents for Legal Purposes

Most legal proceedings are governed by the Limitation Act 1980 (as amended). The 1980 Act provides that legal claims may not be commenced after a specified period. The specified period varies depending on the type of claim in question.

Annex

Document	Min Retention Period	Reason
Minute Books	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, and Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Time Sheets	Last Completed Audit year 3 Years	Management and legal proceedings
Wage Books	12 Years	Superannuation
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	Indefinitely	Future Claims
Investments	Indefinite	Audit and Management
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit and Management
Members allowances register	6 Years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
For Halls, Centre, and Recreation Grounds:		
Application to hire lettings diaries copies of bills to hires record of tickets issued	6 Years	VAT
Allotments		
Register and plans	Indefinite	Audit and Management
For Burial Grounds:		
Register of fees collected, register of burials, register of purchased graves, register/plan of grave spaces, register of memorials, applications for interment, applications for right to erect memorials, disposal certificates, and copy certificates of grant of exclusive right of burial	Indefinite	Archives and Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (Sl. 204)