

KINGSTON SEYMOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Records Retention Policy

1. Purpose

This Records Retention Policy is designed to ensure that Kingston Seymour Parish Council retains essential records, manages information efficiently, and disposes of records that are no longer required.

This policy helps the council comply with legal requirements, supports efficient administration, and maintains transparency.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all types of records held by the council, including but not limited to:

- paper documents,
- electronic files and emails,
- audio recordings and digital media, regardless of format.

The policy covers retention and for how long and disposal and by which method.

It applies to councillors, council employees, and any contractors or volunteers managing records on behalf of the council.

3. Legal Framework

The policy aligns with relevant legislation, including:

- The Local Government Act 1972
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- The Limitation Act 1980

4. General Principles of Record Retention

- **Necessity:** Records should be retained only as long as necessary to comply with legal obligations, council needs, and public interest.
- **Confidentiality:** Records containing personal or sensitive information must be stored securely and disposed of securely when no longer needed. Paper records should be disposed of using a cross-cut shredder. Council documents must never be disposed of via household refuse collections.
- **Accountability:** The Clerk is responsible for implementing and overseeing this policy. Councillors and other staff must ensure compliance with retention schedules.

KINGSTON SEYMOUR PARISH COUNCIL

5. Record Retention Schedule

The attached Appendix covers the retention periods for all of the council's records.

6. Record Storage and Security

- **Physical Records:** Paper records should be stored securely at the clerk's home or a designated secure location. Access should be restricted to authorised personnel.
- **Electronic Records:** Digital files should be stored in secure, backed-up locations. Password protection and encryption should be used for sensitive data.
- **Archiving:** Historical records (e.g., council minutes, financial statements) should be archived with proper indexing for easy retrieval. They should follow storage guidelines for Physical/Electronic records in the Appendix as per type of record being archived.

7. Disposal of Records

- **Destruction:** Once records reach the end of their retention period and are not needed for archival, legal, or historical purposes, they should be destroyed securely. Paper records should be shredded using a cross cut shredder, and electronic files should be permanently deleted ensuring that all versions applicable are captured and deleted.
- **Review:** The Clerk will conduct periodic reviews to identify records for disposal or retention, consulting with legal or archival experts when needed.
- **Documentation:** A log of all records disposed of will be maintained, noting the record type, retention period, and date of destruction.

8. Access and Retrieval

Records must be stored in an organised, accessible manner. The Clerk is responsible for ensuring records can be retrieved promptly when needed, especially in response to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests or audit requirements.

9. Review and Policy Updates

This policy will be reviewed every two years or as needed to reflect legislative or operational changes.

This policy was adopted by Kingston Seymour Parish Council on Wednesday 7th May 2025