

# Records Management Policy

## Introduction

Cuxton Parish Council holds a large amount of information. This information may relate to specific topics or individuals as well as records of decisions made by the Council, actions taken and the rationale behind these decisions. The Council recognises that its records are an important public asset, and are a key resource to effective operation, policy-making and accountability. Like any asset, records require careful management and this policy sets out the Council's responsibilities and activities in respect to this.

## Scope

All employees of Cuxton Parish Council have a responsibility to effectively manage Council records in accordance with specified legislation and guidelines (**see appendix 1**).

A record is defined as any information held by the Council regardless of medium (including paper, microfilm, electronic, audio-visual and record copies of publications), which is created, collected, processed, used, stored and/or disposed of by Cuxton Parish Council organisations, employees, as well as those acting as its agents.

## Objectives

The aim of this policy is to define a framework for managing the Parish Council's records to ensure that the Council.

- Creates and captures accurate, authentic and reliable records
- Maintains records to meet the authority's business needs
- Disposes of records that are no longer required in an appropriate manner
- Protects vital records
- Conforms to any legal and statutory requirements relating to record-keeping
- Complies with government directives.

## Identification of roles and responsibilities

The Clerk will be responsible for compliance with **Freedom of Information** legislation and will be responsible for Data Protection, the **publication scheme** and legal advice relating to any of the above. The Clerk will ensure that all staff are aware of record keeping issues.

All Cuxton Parish Council employees will be responsible for creating and maintaining records in relation to their work that are authentic and reliable. The Clerk has specific responsibilities for records management and this responsibility should be clearly defined in their job description.

## Training and Awareness

It is vital that all Cuxton Parish Council employees involved in creating, maintaining and using records, understand their record management responsibilities as set out in this policy. The Clerk will ensure that staff responsible for managing records are appropriately trained or experienced and that all staff understand the need for records management. A training programme will be established to ensure that all staff are aware of their obligations regarding Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Records Management.

## Records Creation and Record Keeping

The Parish Council should have in place a record keeping system (paper or electronic) that documents its activities and provides for quick and easy retrieval of information. It must also take into account the legal and regulatory environment specific to the area of work. This system will include:

- Records arranged and indexed in such a way that they can be retrieved quickly and efficiently.
- Records are linked with the Parish Council's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme.

## Record Maintenance

The record keeping system must be maintained so that the records are properly stored and protected, and can easily be located and retrieved. This will include:

- Ensuring that adequate storage accommodation is provided for the records.
- Tracking and monitoring the movement and location of records so that they can be easily retrieved (This provides an audit trail).
- Controlling access to the information.
- Identifying vital records and applying the appropriate protection, including a business recovery plan.
- Ensuring non-current records are transferred in a controlled manner to a designated records centre rather than stored in offices.

## Record Retention and Disposal

With increasing public access to our records, it is important that disposal of records happens as part of a managed process and is adequately documented. Therefore, the Parish Council must have in place clearly defined arrangements for the assessment and selection of records for disposal, and for documenting this work. The system should ensure that:

- The appropriate records are reviewed and disposed of /transferred to the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre in accordance with the Retention Guidelines for Local Authorities produced by the Records Management Society of Great Britain.

- Documentation of the disposal/transfer of records is completed and retained.
- Records selected for permanent preservation are transferred to Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.
- An intended disposal/review date must be captured when creating electronic records.
- Records subject to a Freedom of Information request are not destroyed.

## **Access**

The Parish Council needs to ensure that any decisions regarding access to the records are documented so that they are consistent, and can be explained and referred to. The Clerk must ensure that:

- All staff are aware of the arrangements for allowing access to certain types of information.
- Procedures are in place to document decisions concerning access.

## **Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed in conjunction with the Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme on an annual basis.

## **Appendix 1: Standards and Legislation**

- Public Records Act 1958 and 1967
  - Local Government (Records) Act 1962
  - Local Government Act 1972
  - Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
  - Data Protection Act 1998
  - Freedom of Information Act 2000
  - Records Management Society of Great Britain - Retention Guidelines for Local Authorities 2003:1
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