

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Retention and Disposal Policy

Adopted: 11 March 2026 | Next review date: May 2028 | Last review date: 11 March 2026

Replaces Retention Guidelines 2022 document

Introduction

Toller Porcorum Parish Council (“the council”) accumulates a vast amount of information and data during the course of its everyday activities. This includes data generated internally in addition to information obtained from individuals and external organisations. This information is recorded in various different types of documents.

Records created and maintained by the council are an important asset and as such measures need to be undertaken to safeguard this information. Properly managed records provide authentic and reliable evidence of the council’s transactions and are necessary to ensure it can demonstrate accountability.

Documents may be retained in either ‘hard’ paper form or in electronic digital form. For the purpose of this policy, ‘document’ and ‘record’ refers to both hard copy and digital records.

It is imperative that documents are retained for an adequate period of time. If documents are destroyed prematurely the council and individual officers concerned could face prosecution for not complying with legislation and it could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the council.

In contrast to the above the council should not retain documents longer than is necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) so that information and personal information is not retained longer than necessary. This will also ensure the most efficient use of limited storage space.

This policy operates in conjunction with the council’s Privacy Notice, Freedom of Information Policy and Data Protection Policy documents. All documents are available at www.tollerporcorumparish.org > [Policies and Procedures](#).

Scope and Objectives

1. The aim of this policy is to provide a working framework to determine which records are to be retained and for how long, and how such documents are to be disposed of and by what method.
2. The Retention and Disposal Schedule, at the end of this policy, is the working framework.
3. Records that do not need to be kept at all or that may be routinely destroyed in the course of business are not listed in this policy.

Roles and Responsibilities for Document Retention and Disposal

4. The council is responsible for determining whether to retain or dispose of documents and aims to undertake an annual review of documentation to ensure any unnecessary documentation being held is disposed of in accordance with the Retention and Disposal Schedule.
5. The council will ensure all employees are aware of this policy and the Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Document Retention

6. Records of the council’s activities each should be complete and accurate enough to allow employees and their successors to undertake appropriate actions in the context of their responsibilities to:

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- a. Facilitate an audit or examination of the council's business by anyone so authorised.
 - b. Protect the legal and other rights of the council, its clients and any other persons affected by its actions.
 - c. Verify individual consent to record, manage and record disposal of their personal data.
 - d. Provide authenticity of the records so that the evidence derived from them is shown to be credible and authoritative.
7. To facilitate this the following principles should be adopted:
- a. Records created and maintained should be arranged in a record-keeping system that will enable quick and easy retrieval of information.
 - b. Documents that are no longer required for operational purposes but need retaining should be placed at the Dorset History Centre (DHC).
8. The Retention and Disposal Schedule provides guidance on the recommended minimum retention periods for specific classes of documents and records. The schedule has been compiled from recommended best practice from the Public Records Office and in accordance with relevant legislation.
9. Whenever there is a possibility of litigation, the records and information that are likely to be affected should not be amended or disposed of until the threat of litigation has been removed.

Document Disposal

10. When documents are scheduled for disposal the method of disposal will be appropriate to the nature and sensitivity of the documents concerned.
11. All records containing personal or confidential information should be destroyed at the end of the retention period. Failure to do so could lead to the council being prosecuted under UK GDPR and FOIA.
12. Documents and any backup copies can be disposed of by any of the following methods:
- a. Bin: non-confidential records can be disposed of by placing in waste or recycling bins regardless of ownership of said bins.
 - b. Shredded confidential waste: confidential and personal information records can be disposed of by shredding and depositing with a licensed confidential waste operator.
 - c. Delete: non-confidential, confidential and personal information records of a digital nature can be disposed of by deleting from devices and cloud and hard drives in a manner that is 'virtually impossible to retrieve' as advised by the Information Commissioner.
 - d. Transfer to DHC: documents requiring permanent archiving and those of historical interest can be disposed of by transferring to DHC.
13. Records should be maintained of disposals of confidential and personal information records. These records should contain the following information:
- a. The name of the document.
 - b. The date the document was disposed of.
 - c. The method of disposal.

This policy is based on model template Document Retention and Disposal Policy from SLCC. Members may use and adapt these documents within their own councils on the understanding that the copyright remains with the SLCC.
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Retention and Disposal Schedule

Administration

| Document | Minimum retention period | Reason | Disposal |
|--|--|---------------------|---|
| 1. Minutes of council/committee meetings (signed) | Indefinitely | Archive | Transfer to DHC as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement |
| 2. Agendas | 5 years | Management | Bin; delete |
| | Indefinitely if minutes of meetings do not survive | Archive | Transfer to DHC as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement |
| 3. Reports, appendices and other documents circulated with agendas | 5 years | Management | Bin; delete |
| | Indefinitely | Historical interest | Transfer to DHC for review and selection |
| | Indefinitely if copies included with minutes | Archive | Transfer to DHC as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement |
| 4. Councillors' declarations of office | Indefinitely | Archive | Transfer to DHC upon expiry of term of office |
| 5. Register of Interests | Indefinitely | Archive | Held by Dorset Council |
| 6. Nominations forms for parish council elections | 1 year from polling day | Legal | Shredded confidential waste; delete |
| 7. Policy documents | Until replaced | Management | Bin; delete |
| | Indefinitely | Historical interest | Transfer to DHC for review and selection if historical interest identified |
| 8. Village/parish appraisals and plans | Indefinitely | Archive | Transfer to DHC as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement |
| 9. Correspondence and papers on important local issues or activities | Indefinitely | Historical interest | Transfer to DHC for review and selection if historical interest identified |
| 10. Insurance policies | 6 years after expiry | Management | Bin; delete |
| 11. Insurance company names and policy numbers | Indefinitely | Management | n/a |

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| Document | Minimum retention period | Reason | Disposal |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| 12. Employer's Liability Certificates | 40 years from insurance commencement/renewal | Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 | Bin; delete |
| 13. Accident/incident reports | 20 years | Potential claims | Shredded confidential waste; delete |
| 14. Complaints including resolutions | 6 years | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) | Shredded confidential waste; delete |

Finance

| Document | Minimum retention period | Reason | Disposal |
|---|--|---|---|
| 15. Receipts and Payments accounts | Indefinitely | Archive | n/a |
| 16. Receipts and Payments books | 6 years | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) VAT | Transfer to DHC as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement |
| 17. Bank statements of all accounts | Last completed Audit year | Audit | Shredded confidential waste; delete |
| 18. Paid invoices | 6 years | VAT | Shredded confidential waste; delete |
| 19. VAT records | 6 years | VAT | Shredded confidential waste; delete |
| 20. Timesheets | Last completed Audit year | Audit | Bin; delete |
| 21. Payroll | 12 years | Superannuation Pension requirements | Shredded confidential waste; delete |
| 22. Precept demand forms | 6 years | VAT | Shredded confidential waste; delete |
| 23. Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR) | 6 years | Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) | Shredded confidential waste; delete |
| 24. Grant applications | 6 years | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) | Shredded confidential waste; delete |
| 25. Quotations and tenders (successful) and references | 6 years after end of contract | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) | Shredded confidential waste; delete |
| 26. Quotations and tenders (unsuccessful) | 6 years after end of successful contract | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) | Shredded confidential waste; delete |

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| 27. Quotations and tenders (unsuccessful) references | 1 year after successful contract start | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) | Shredded confidential waste; delete |
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Staffing

| Document | Minimum retention period | Reason | Disposal |
|---|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 28. Staff files including appraisals, performance plans, disciplinary and grievance reports | 6 years after leaving. Keep until person is 65 if leaving due to ill-health or industrial tribunal case. | Limitation Act 1980 (as amended) | Shredded confidential waste; delete |

Information management

| Document | Minimum retention period | Reason | Disposal |
|--|--------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|
| 29. Freedom of Information request records | 3 years | Audit | Shredded confidential waste; delete |
| 30. Subject Access Request records | 3 years | Audit | Shredded confidential waste; delete |

Property and assets

| Document | Minimum retention period | Reason | Disposal |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 31. Title deeds | Indefinitely | Archive | Transfer to DHC as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement |
| 32. Property registers and terriers incl. registers of allotments | Indefinitely | Archive | Transfer to DHC as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement |
| 33. Maps, plans and surveys of property owned by TPPC | Indefinitely | Archive | Transfer to DHC as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement |
| 34. Leases, agreements, contracts and wayleaves | Indefinitely | Historical interest | Transfer to DHC for review and selection |
| 35. Playground equipment inspection reports | 21 years | Potential claims | Bin; delete |