Everton Parish Council

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Data Retention Policy

1. Introduction

Everton Parish Council recognises the importance of maintaining accurate records and retaining them for appropriate periods in accordance with legal, financial, audit, and operational requirements.

This policy sets out how long documents and records should be retained and how they are securely stored and disposed of. It applies to both paper and electronic records.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all documents created, received, or held by the council, including:

- Financial and audit records
- Council governance documents
- Staff and employment records
- Planning and correspondence records
- Insurance and legal documents
- Electronic records and emails

3. General Principles

Records are retained only as long as necessary.

Where there is doubt, records will be retained until legal advice is obtained.

Electronic records are subject to the same retention rules as paper records.

Personal data is handled in accordance with data protection legislation.

4. Storage and Security

Records are stored securely in paper or electronic form with access restricted to the Clerk and Councillors where necessary.

5. Councillor Email Accounts and Correspondence

All correspondence relating to parish council business, including emails sent or received by councillors using official council email accounts, forms part of the council's records.

Councillors must not remove emails relevant to council business from official accounts or use deletion as a means of avoiding disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act or Data Protection legislation.

Routine mailbox maintenance is permitted, provided that:

• Emails of a transient or administrative nature (for example meeting acknowledgements, duplicate copies, delivery notifications, or spam) may be deleted after 6 months

• Emails forming part of council business, decisions, or correspondence must be retained in accordance with this Data Retention Policy

• No emails may be deleted where they relate to an ongoing matter, including audits, complaints, legal issues, or a current or anticipated Freedom of Information or data subject access request

6. Planning Records

Planning records are retained in line with NALC guidance depending on whether permission is granted, refused, or appealed.

7. Insurance Records

Insurance policies are retained for as long as a claim may be made. Employers' liability certificates are retained indefinitely.

8. Staff Records

Staff records are retained securely and in accordance with statutory requirements and limitation periods.

9. Local and Historical Records

Documents of local or historical importance may be retained permanently or offered to the County Record Office.

10. Review and Disposal

Records are reviewed periodically and disposed of securely.

Adopted by Everton Parish Council on ________________________________ .

Appendix 1: NALC Guidance on Retention of Key Documents.

Document	**Minimum Retention Period**	**Reason**
Minute books	Indefinite	Archive
Scales of fees and charges	Six years	Management
Receipt and payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books	Six years	VAT
Bank statements	Last completed audit year	Audit
Quotations and tenders	Six years	Limitation Act 1980
Paid invoices and cheques	Six years	VAT / Limitation Act
VAT records	Six years (20 years for VAT on rents)	VAT
Petty cash records	Six years	Tax and audit
Timesheets	Three years	Audit / personal injury
Wages and salary records	12 years	Superannuation
Insurance policies	As long as a claim may be made	Legal
Employers’ liability certificates	Indefinite	Future claims
Investments	Indefinite	Audit and management
Title deeds, leases, contracts	Indefinite	Legal
Members’ allowances register	Six years	Tax