Flitwick Town Council

MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS POLICY

Revised July 2026

INTRODUCTION

'Arnold Baker on Local Council Administration' contains information about local council documentation. This policy updates and supplements that information, with reference to the length of time documents should be retained by the council. Flitwick Town Council holds many documents in electronic form only. The same arrangements for keeping records and Copies apply to electronic documents and paper documents alike.

LEGAL POSITION

Flitwick Town Council's Financial Regulations contain information on council audit and accounting requirements.

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 table below sets out the limitation periods for the different categories of claim.

Category	Limitation Period
Negligence	6 years
Defamation	1 year
Contract	6 years
Leases	12 years
Sums recoverable by Statute	6 years
Personal Injury	3 years
To recover land	12 years
Rent	6 years
Breach of trust	0 years

Where the limitation periods above are longer than other periods specified in this Policy, the documentation should be kept for the longer period specified. If the legal proceedings fall into more than one category, the longest limitation period should be used.

There is no limitation period in respect of trusts, all documentation should be kept.

Some limitation periods can be extended. In such circumstances Flitwick Town Council will weigh the costs of storing relevant documents and the risks. Wherever possible, such documents will be stored electronically to reduce costs of storage space. The council will also ensure the council's insurance terms for document storage, if any, are complied with.

Under GDPR the council has a policy in place setting standard retention periods for new (as opposed to historic or archived) personal documentation.

COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT

Flitwick Town Council is clear of the need to retain documentation for audit purposes, staff management, tax liabilities and the eventuality of legal disputes and legal proceedings.

Subject to these reasons for retaining documents and as a basic starting point, papers and records may be destroyed confidentially if they are no longer of use or relevant.

Document	Retention Period	Reason	Location
Council Official Records:			
Signed Minutes	Indefinite	Audit - Legal	Electronic Copies
Acceptance of Office	Duration of Term	Legal	Electronic & Hard Copies
Declarations of Interest	Term of Office	Legal	Electronic, Online at CBC
Dispensations	Term of Office	Legal	Electronic Copies
Mayors Allowance	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act, Audit	Electronic Copies
Scale of Fees and Charges	6 years	Management, Audit.	Electronic Copies
Quotations, Tenders & Contracts	6 years	Limitation Act, Audit	Electronic & Hard Copies
Asset Register	Indefinite	Management, Audit	Electronic Copies
Title Deeds, Leases, Agreements	Indefinite	Management, Audit	Electronic & Hard Copies
Insurance:			
Insurance Company Name & Policy Number	Indefinite	Management	Electronic Copies
Public Liability Statement	Current + 1	Management Audit	Hard Copies
Liability Statement Employees	While valid	Management, Audit	Hard Copies
Accident/ Incident Reports	6 years	Legal	Hard Copies
Correspondence:			
NALC	To no longer relevant	Management	Hard Copies
SLCC	To no longer relevant	Management	Hard Copies
Complaints	To no longer relevant	Management	Electronic Copies
Public Correspondence	To no longer relevant	Management	Electronic Copies
Property Receipts:			
Architect, Builder Agreements	6 years at end of contract	Legal	Hard Copies
Leases	12 years after lease ends	Legal	Electronic & Hard Copies
FTC Planning Permissions	12 years	Legal	Online and Hard Copies
Planning:			
Planning Applications for comment	Not Stored	Management	Online, CBC
Local Plans and Similar Documents	While valid	Management	Online CBC, Hard Copies FTC office

Document	Retention Period	Reason	Location
Allotments:			
Register and Plans	Indefinite	Management, Audit	Hard Copies, Electronic
Tenancy Agreements	While valid + 12 years	Management, Audit	Hard Copies
Employee Records:			
Accident Reports	3 years	Legal	Hard Copies
Actuarial Valuation Reports	Indefinite	Legal	Electronic Copies
Amended Tax Code Number Notice	6 years	Legal	Electronic Copies
Contribution Records	Indefinite	Legal	Electronic Copies
Expenses Receipts	7 years	Legal	Electronic and Hard Copies
HMRC Approval Checks	Indefinite	Legal	Electronic Copies
Payment of Salary Changes	6 years	Legal	Electronic & hard Copies
Pension Investment Policies	12 years after benefit ends	Legal	Electronic Copies
Pension Records Ex-employees.	6 years after benefit ends	Legal	Electronic & Hard Copies
Redundancy/Compromise Agreements	7 years	Legal	Hard Copies
Overtime & Additional Hours	6 years	Legal	Electronic & Hard Copies
Staff Personnel Records on Leaving	7 years	Reference	Electronic & Hard Copies
Timesheets	6 years	Legal	Hard Copies
Personal Injury claims	3 years	Best Practice	Electronic & Hard Copies
Annual Earnings Summary	Current + 12 years	Legal	Electronic Copies
Income Tax/Pay Details	6 years	Legal	Electronic Copies
P45, P6, P11D, P60	6 years	Legal	Electronic Copies
Pay Advice / Payslips	6 years	Legal	Electronic Copies
Payroll	Current + 6	Audit	Electronic Copies
Scheduled of Deductions	6 years	Audit	Electronic Copies
Contractors:			
Timesheets	6 years	Legal	Hard Copies

Document	Retention Period	Reason	Location
Centres and Recreation Grounds:			
Applications to Hire	6 years	VAT	Hard Copies
Lettings Diary	6 years	VAT	Electronic Copies
Playground Inspections	21 years	Legal	Hard Copies, Electronic Copies
Playground maintenance/repairs (including proof of purchase)	21 Years	Legal	Hard Copies, Electronic Copies
Financial Records:			
Bank Account Statements	6 years	Audit	Electronic & Signed Hard Copies
Bank Paying in Slips	Last completed year	Audit	Hard Copies
Bank Reconciliations	6 years	Legal	Electronic & Signed Hard Copies
Paid Cheques	6 years	Audit	Hard Copies
Remittance Advice	Last completed audit year	Audit	Electronic Copies
Cash Book	6 years	Legal	Electronic Copies
Investments	Indefinite	Management, Audit	Electronic Copies
Paid Invoices	6 years	Vat, Audit	Electronic & Hard Copies
Sales Invoices	6 years	VAT, Audit	Electronic & Hard Copies
Annual Accounts	Indefinite	Archive, Audit	Electronic & Hard Copies
Pension Fund details	Indefinite	Legal	Electronic Copies
Petty Cash Slips & Receipts	6 years	Tax, VAT, Audit	Hard Copies
Purchase Orders	2 years	Audit	Electronic Copies
Receipt Books	6 years	VAT, Audit	Electronic Copies
Unpresented Cheques	6 years	Legal	Hard Copies
VAT Records	6 years	VAT, Audit	Electronic Copies
Daybooks and Schedules	6 years	VAT, Audit	Electronic Copies

Document	Retention Period	Reason	Location
Burial Grounds:			
Register of Fees	Indefinite	Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977	Hard Copies
Register of Burials	Indefinite	Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977	Hard Copies, Electronic
Register of Purchased Graves	Indefinite	Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977	Hard Copies, Electronic
Register of Grave Spaces	Indefinite	Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977	Hard Copies, Electronic
Register of Memorials	Indefinite	Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977	Hard Copies, Electronic
Application for Internment	Indefinite	Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977	Hard Copies
Disposal Certificates	Indefinite	Local Authorities Cemeteries Order	Hard Copies
Copies of Exclusive Rights of Burial	Indefinite	Local Authorities Cemeteries Order	Hard Copies, Electronic
Tree Inspections	Until superseded	Management	Hard Copies, Electronic
Memorial Inspections	Until superseded	Management	Hard Copies, Electronic

Flitwick Town Council's own publications:

The Council may wish to keep its own publications. Currently Flitwick Town Council produces a quarterly printed magazine, Flitwick Papers. Electronic and hard Copies are retained for a minimum of 5 years.

The Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 and the Legal Deposit Libraries (Non-Print Works) Regulations 2013 require the council to deliver, at its own expense, a copy of published works in print or published electronic works offline, to the British Library Board. Printed and electronic works are defined as a pamphlet, magazine, newspaper, map, plan, chart or table.

DOCUMENTATION RELATING to STAFF (including correspondence).

The council retains documentation relating to staff in accordance with the eight data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 1998. Personal data is not kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose it was held.

After an employment relationship has ended, the council may retain and access staff records for former staff for the purpose of giving references, payment of tax, national insurance contributions and pensions, and in respect of any legal claims made against the council (see time limitations listed under 'LEGAL POSITION').

The time limits within a claim (and any appeal) may be lodged against the employer are set out in the legislation that contains the employment right in question or failing that, by reference to the Limitation Act 1980 (see time limitations listed under 'LEGAL POSITION').

The time for lodging a claim at an Employment Tribunal is usually measured from the date that the employment relationship ended, or the date of the act complained of.

There is provision in the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 for the council to acquire records of local or historical interest.

STORAGE LIMITATION AND GDPR

GDPR treats storage limitation in a similar way to the fifth principle (retention) of the 1998 Data Protection Act. Personal data must not be kept for longer than the council needs it.

The council can keep personal data for longer for public interest archiving, scientific or historical research, or statistical purposes with appropriate safeguards in place.

The Council will need to ensure that all data (hard copy or electronic) is kept securely, and access only available to authorised personnel.

Councillors will need to assess how they manage the data they receive or generate on behalf of the Council and take steps to identify and address any potential weaknesses. e.g., access to emails/contact details by a 3rd party.

DISPOSAL

All documents that are no longer required for administrative reasons should be stored in boxes labelled with relevant destruction dates.

When documents are disposed of, the method of disposal should be appropriate to the nature and sensitivity of the documents concerned.

This policy is cross-referenced to the following Council's adopted policies and procedures:

Financial Regulations, Publication Scheme, Information & Data Protection Policy, Freedom of Information Policy, Digital & ICT Policy, Officer Code of Conduct, Councillor Code of Conduct and Standing Orders.

This policy is to be reviewed in July 2030.