

WIGMORE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

Data retention schedule

Adopted 11 January 2021

This document is based on guidance from Herefordshire Archives and Records Service (HARC), designed to help parish clerks and other officers responsible for looking after Herefordshire's parish and town councils to manage their records.

The current guidance from HARC will be the basis for the Parish Council's approach to records management, including the creation, storage, retention or destruction of records. This includes depositing archive records with HARC on long-term loan.

The following schedule lists, for each record type, how long records will be kept and why, and at the end of that period whether records will be securely destroyed or deposited with HARC.

Records identified for permanent preservation

Records in this category have been identified by the Archive Service for permanent retention. These should be deposited with the Archive Service once there is no longer an administrative need for them to be kept locally.

Documents earmarked for permanent preservation are usually identifiable if they have been stored as discrete groups. When no organised filing system is employed this process can be challenging. Other record series are complicated regardless of their filing, e.g. correspondence and planning files. In these cases clerks are often best placed to evaluate which documents relate to significant local issues. Such records should be identified prior to their transfer to the Archive Service.

Typically the only financial records recommended for deposit are the payment and receipt books or the annual audited accounts if the former has not survived. These are often filed with receipts and payments that are not necessary for preservation and should be weeded prior to their transfer to the Archive Service.

Records to be reviewed by Herefordshire Archive Service

Records in this category should be transferred to the Archive Service after the minimum retention period or once they become inactive. An archivist will then review the collection and select documents to preserve. Those records not selected may be safely destroyed by the parish or town clerk, or retained locally.

Records to be destroyed by the parish clerk

A large number of parish and town council records can be destroyed once they become inactive or the minimum retention period expires. Financial records account for the majority of this category. Typically these must be kept for a minimum of 6 years after the last entry (Limitation Act 1980, VAT Act 1994 etc.), but may be retained for longer depending on local circumstances. Records not given a minimum retention period can be destroyed once there is no longer an administrative requirement for their custody. If you are unsure whether a document or series of records should be destroyed then please contact the Archive Service for further guidance.

To protect confidential information, all records assigned for disposal should be securely destroyed. Paper records containing confidential information should be shredded or pulped, and not simply thrown out with other classes of records. Electronic or machine-readable records will require a two-step process for assured confidential destruction: deletion of the contents of digital files, and the use of commercially available software applications to remove all residual data from the storage device. These processes may be outsourced to credible commercial companies who specialise in confidential destruction of records.

Records	Retention period	Action	Reason
Administrative			
Signed council and committee minutes	Transfer to HARC after 6 years.	Preserve	Common practice
Draft minutes	Until the date of confirmation of the minutes	Destroy	Operational
Agendas	Retained in Minute Book	Review	Operational
Reports and other documents circulated with agendas	Retained in Minute Book	Review	Common practice
Councillors' declarations of office	4 years or until they vacate office	Destroy	Operational
Register of electors	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Destroy	Copies already in existence
Grouping orders	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Destroy	Operational
Byelaws and orders	Preserve one of each copy and transfer to HARC once they become inactive	Preserve	Common practice
Policy documents	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational
Title deeds more than 100 years old	Transfer to HARC once they become inactive. HARC will not accept deeds still needed to prove title	Preserve	Common practice
Title deeds less than 100 years old	Transfer to HARC for review once they become inactive. HARC will not accept deeds still needed to prove title	Review	Common practice
Property registers and terriers	Transfer to HARC once they become inactive	Preserve	Common practice
Maps, plans, and surveys of property owned by the council or meeting	Transfer to HARC once they become inactive	Preserve	Common practice
General correspondence	6 Years after correspondence ends	Destroy	Operational
Complaints	6 Years after resolution of complaint	Destroy	Operational
Information Requests	6 Years after resolution of request	Destroy	Operational
Parish or Neighbourhood Plans and supporting papers	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational
Planning applications and related papers	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review with the view to destroy	Operational
Other Planning applications for minor works where permission is refused	6 years	Destroy	Limitation Act 1980
Leases, agreements, contracts and wayleaves	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational
Parish council newsletter	Transfer one copy to HARC	Preserve	Common practice

Records	Retention period	Action	Reason
Newsletter mailing list	Retain until consent withdrawn or following regular review consent no longer provided	Destroy	Operational
Quotations and tenders (successful)	6 years after contract ends	Destroy	Limitation Act 1980
Quotations and tenders (unsuccessful)	2 years	Destroy	Operational
Routine internal correspondence and papers	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review with the view to destroy	Operational
Scale of fees and charges	Until superseded by new charges	Destroy	Operational
Employers' liability insurance policies	40 years after expiry date	Destroy	Employers' Liability Act 1969 Employers' Liability Regulations 1998
Risk assessments	Once superseded by a new risk assessment or once inactive	Destroy	Operational
Personnel files (inc recruitment data)	6 Years after termination of service	Destroy	Risk of investigation regarding any future litigation
Personnel files – annual leave	2 years	Destroy	Operational
Recruitment data: unsuccessful	6 months after recruitment finalised plus current year	Destroy	Equalities Act
Financial			
Receipt and payment books	Transfer to HARC after 6 years.	Preserve	Council financial regulations
Annual audited accounts	Transfer to HARC after 6 years.	Preserve	Council financial regulations
Rate books	Transfer to HARC after 6 years.	Preserve	Common practice
Accounts and statements	6 years	Destroy	Council financial regulations
Vouchers	6 years	Destroy	Council financial regulations
Cash and petty cash books and rent books	6 years	Destroy	Council financial regulations
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	Destroy	Council financial regulations
Postage and telephone books	6 years	Destroy	Council financial regulations
Bank statements including deposit/saving accounts	6 years	Destroy	Council financial regulations
Bank paying-in books	Last completed Audit year	Destroy	Council financial regulations
Cheque book stubs	Last completed Audit year	Destroy	Council financial regulations
Paid invoices	6 years	Destroy	Council financial regulations

Records	Retention period	Action	Reason
Paid cheques	6 years	Destroy	Council financial regulations
VAT records	6 years	Destroy	VAT Act 1994
VAT claims	6 years	Destroy	VAT Act 1994
Time sheets	Last completed Audit year	Destroy	Council financial regulations
Wage books	12 years	Destroy	Statute of Limitation
Members' allowances register	6 years	Destroy	Statute of Limitation
Records relating to parish halls, centres and recreation grounds, applications to hire, letting diaries, copies of bills to hirers and records of tickets issued	6 years	Review with the view to destroy	Council financial regulations
Miscellaneous			
Maps created under the provision of the Rights of Way Act 1932	Transfer to HARC once they become inactive	Preserve	Common practice
Papers concerning Rights of Way	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Destroy	Operational
Community magazines or newsletters(not created by the parish council)	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational
Charity papers	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational
Press cuttings book	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational
Photographs	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational
Any records predating the establishment of Parish Councils (1894), e.g. poor law, surveyors of the highway, tithe maps and apportionments, enclosure awards etc.	Transfer to HARC immediately	Preserve	Common practice
Records of other bodies such as burial boards, charities, fire brigades, Home Guard unit, local society or ad hoc committee	Transfer to HARC once they become inactive	Preserve	Common practice
Reports, guides, handbooks etc received from other organisations	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review	Operational