

St Austell Town Council



Document Retention and Disposal Policy

Introduction

The Council accumulates a large quantity 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 formats and different types of document.

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 forms. For the purpose of this policy, 'document' and 'record' refers to both hard copy and electronic 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 General Data Protection Regulation so that personal information is not retained longer than necessary. This will also ensure the most efficient use of limited storage space.

Scope and Objectives of the Policy

The aim of this document is to provide a working framework to determine which documents are:

- Retained – and for how long; or
- Disposed of – and if so by what method.

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There are some records that do not need to be kept at all or that are routinely destroyed. This usually applies to information that is duplicated, unimportant or only of a short-term value. Unimportant records include:

- Compliment slips
- Catalogues and trade journals
- Non-acceptance of invitations
- Trivial electronic mail messages that are not related to Council business
- Requests for information such as maps, plans or advertising material.
- Out of date distribution lists

Duplicated and superseded material such as stationery, manuals, drafts, forms, address books and reference copies of annual reports may be destroyed.

Records should not be destroyed if the information can be used as evidence to prove that something has happened. If destroyed the disposal needs to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Computer software

The Town Council is licenced to use the following computer software:

St Austell Town Council - Microsoft 365 Sharepoint Account
St Austell Town Council – Office Laptop storage accounts
St Austell Town Council – Xero Account

Categories of paper files and electronic files held by the Town Council

1. Achievements
2. Administration
3. Allotment contracts
4. Allotment waiting list
5. Anti-social Behaviour
6. Assets
7. Bus Shelters
8. Car park season tickets
9. Committees agendas/minutes
10. Complaints
11. Consultations
12. Correspondence
13. Devolution of services
14. Environment
15. Equality Impact Assessments
16. Events
17. File Notes
18. Financial Management

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19. Financial Regulations
20. Governance
21. Human Resources
22. Information Management
23. Initiatives
24. Library
25. Licensing
26. Mayor
27. Members
28. Neighbourhood Plan
29. Open Government
30. Partners
31. Planning documents
32. Pondhu House
33. Press Releases
34. Projects
35. Reference Library
36. Risk Management
37. Safer St Austell
38. Services
39. Signage
40. South West in Bloom
41. Stable Block
42. Standing Orders
43. The House
44. Town plan
45. Website
46. Working Groups

The general principles that will be adopted in terms of the management, retention and disposal of the Town Council's files are as follows:

1. General Governance

- 1.1 Minutes and Committee Agendas to be kept indefinitely.
- 1.2 Strategies which form part of the policy framework and are generated by the Town Council will be retained twelve months past their review date if superseded by a subsequent edition.
- 1.3 The same will apply to associated protocols, service level agreements, etc.
- 1.4 Documents and policies which contain personal data generated by partners or other agencies will be held for a minimum of three months and a maximum of 12 months.
- 1.5 Correspondence will be held for a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of two years with the opportunity to determine exceptions for further retention. In particular, correspondence required to defend claims or

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relate to warranties, contracts etc may be maintained longer if considered necessary.

1.6 Working Group notes will be kept for 2 years.

2. Finance

2.1 Finance records will be kept for the current year plus 6 years.

2.2 Audit reports will be kept for 6 years.

3. Councillors

3.1 Councillor Declarations of Interest and Hospitality Registers will be kept for a minimum of 4 years and reviewed annually.

4. Staff

4.1 Staff Declarations of Interest and Hospitality Registers will be kept for a minimum of 4 years and reviewed annually.

4.2 Staff records (including individual sickness records and Staff Development Reviews) will be held for the duration of the employment plus 6 years.

4.3 Wages/Payroll records will be kept for 12 years.

4.4 Performance management information including staff overtime and sickness records will be maintained for no more than two years.

4.5 Pension calculations and correspondence will be held for 12 months after the retirement of each officer.

5. Insurance

5.1 Insurance company names and policy numbers will be kept indefinitely.

5.2 Certificates for insurance against liability for employees will be kept for 40 years from the date on which the insurance commenced or was renewed.

6. Legal

6.1 Town park equipment inspection reports will be kept for 21 years.

6.2 Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts will be kept indefinitely.

6.3 Accidents/Incident reports will be kept for 20 years.

A list will be maintained of the files destroyed.

All records will be disposed of by re-cycling if possible and, if of a sensitive nature, will be shredded and/or disposed of through a confidential waste recycling facility.

David Pooley
Town Clerk

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