



Bishop Middleham
& Mainsforth

Bishop Middleham Parish Council

Document Retention & Destruction Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
Version Number	V3-2026
Adopted on	11 March 2026
Reviewed	
Next Review	March 2028

1. Introduction

Bishop Middleham Parish Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with legal and regulatory obligations and to support effective governance. This policy provides the framework for managing, retaining, and securely disposing of records in all formats.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all records created, received, or maintained by the Council in the course of its business. Records may be held electronically or in hard copy. A small percentage may be preserved permanently for historical or archival purposes.

3. Responsibilities

The Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records in accordance with the regulatory environment. The Clerk is responsible for implementing this policy, providing guidance, and ensuring information can be retrieved easily and securely. The Council will only keep data for as long as necessary in line with UK GDPR.

4. Relationship with Existing Policies

This policy should be read alongside the Council's:

- Freedom of Information Policy
- General Privacy Notice
- Publication Scheme
- Data Protection Policy
- IT Policy (Assertion 10 compliant)

5. Storage of Electronic Records

Electronic records are stored securely using Microsoft OneDrive, which provides encrypted storage, version control, and secure access. Councillors must not store council documents permanently on personal devices.

6. Secure Disposal of Records

Electronic files will be securely deleted using appropriate deletion methods to ensure they cannot be recovered. Paper records will be shredded or disposed of via confidential waste. A log will be kept of all destroyed documents.

7. Retention Schedule

The Council maintains a detailed retention schedule covering all record types. Retention periods reflect statutory requirements, UK GDPR lawful bases, audit needs, and best practice. Records will be reviewed regularly and disposed of securely when no longer required.

8. Planning Applications

Planning applications and decision notices are available from Durham County Council. Parish Council recommendations are recorded in minutes and retained indefinitely. Correspondence relating to planning applications is retained in accordance with the retention schedule.

9. Retention Schedule Tables

See next page.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or Council activities change.

End of policy.

Retention Schedule Table

Minutes and Correspondence

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Location Retained	Disposal Method
Signed Minutes	Indefinite	Archive, Public Inspection	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	N/A
Agendas	5 Years	Management	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Shred / recycled waste
General emails and correspondence	Retained for as long as document is needed and to a maximum of 3 years	Management	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	IT deletion, shred / recycled waste / confidential waste
Information from other bodies (eg CDALC, SLCC)	Retain for as long as document is useful	Management	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	IT deletion, shred / recycled waste
Local / historical information	Indefinite	Archive, public interest, benefit of the Parish	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	N/A
Press cuttings	Retain for as long as document is useful (maybe indefinite if historical interest)	Archive, public interest, historical	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Recycled waste
Magazines and journals	Retained for as long as document is useful	The Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Recycled waste

Insurance

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Location Retained	Disposal Method
Accident / incident reports	20 years	Potential claims	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Insurance certificates	40 years	Employers Liability Act 1969 Employers Liability Regulations 1998	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Insurance claims	7 years after obligations are concluded or child reaches age of 25	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Insurance policies	While valid	Management	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Risk Assessments	Until superseded by a new risk assessment or once inactive	Common practice	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Health and Safety Inspection records	6 years	Management	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Recycled waste

Finance and Payroll

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Location Retained	Disposal Method
Audited accounts	Indefinite	Audit	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	N/A
Receipt and Payment accounts	Indefinite	Audit / Archive	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	N/A
Receipts books	Current year + 6 years	VAT	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Location Retained	Disposal Method
Bank statements	Current year + 6 years	Audit	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Cheque book stubs	Current year + 6 years	Audit	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Paid invoices	Current year + 6 years	Audit	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Purchase orders	Current year + 6 years	Audit	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Paid cheques	Current year + 6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
VAT records	Current year + 6 years	Audit	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Petty cash, postage records	Current year + 6 years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Quotations and tenders	Current year + 6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Timesheets	2 years after end of audit year	Audit	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Wages / payroll	6 years from the end of employment	Audit	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Budget	Current year + 6 years	Audit	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Asset Register	Indefinite / constantly updated	Audit	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	N/A

Human Resources

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Location Retained	Disposal Method
Staff files	6 years from end of employment	Audit	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Job applications (unsuccessful)	6 months from date of interview	Management	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste

Miscellaneous

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Location Retained	Disposal Method
Strategic plans	Until superseded	Common practice	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Recycled waste
Policies and Operational Procedures	Until superseded (policies reviewed annually)	Common practice	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Recycled waste
Declarations of Office	Term of office	Management	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Members register of interests	Term of office	Management	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Complaints	2 years from date of resolution	Management	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Investments	Indefinite	Audit / Management	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	N/A
Title Deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit / Management	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	N/A
Members allowances register	Current year + 6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste
Legal / Litigation Files	6 years	Common practice	Parish Clerk location 2024 Village Hall	Confidential waste

A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet GDPR requirements

All confidential waste will be disposed of securely.