

Astley Parish Council Records Retention Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how long the Parish Council keeps its records and how they are securely disposed of when no longer required. It ensures compliance with:

- Local Government Act 1972
- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR
- Audit requirements

2. Scope

This policy applies to **all Parish Council records**, whether:

- Paper-based
- Electronic (stored on the council laptop or backup media)

3. Responsibility

- The **Clerk** is responsible for maintaining records and applying this policy.
- The **Council** is responsible for approving and reviewing the policy.

4. Storage and Security

- Paper records are stored securely (locked cabinet if available).
- Electronic records are stored on the council laptop and backed up to a secure external drive or encrypted cloud storage.
- Personal data is only accessed by authorised persons.

5. Retention Periods

Core Parish Council Records

Record Type	Retention Period	Reason
Council Minutes (signed)	Permanent	Legal requirement
Agendas	2 years	Reference and audit
Supporting papers for minutes	6 years	Audit evidence
Bank statements	6 years	Audit and HMRC
Invoices and receipts	6 years	Audit and HMRC

Record Type	Retention Period	Reason
Cash books / accounting records	6 years	Audit
Annual accounts / AGAR	6 years	Audit
Budget and precept records	6 years	Financial accountability
Insurance policies	6 years after expiry	Legal claims
Asset register	Life of asset + 6 years	Accountability
Correspondence (general)	2 years	Reference
Correspondence (legal or contractual)	6 years	Legal protection
Grant applications and awards	6 years	Audit
Electoral records supplied by returning officer	As instructed	Statutory

Note: If a document relates to a legal dispute, it must be kept until the matter is fully resolved, even if this exceeds the stated retention period.

6. Disposal of Records

- Paper records are disposed of by **cross-cut shredding**.
- Electronic records are permanently deleted.
- Disposal is carried out annually by the Clerk.
- A brief **record of disposal** should be kept (date, record type, method).

7. Data Protection

Records containing personal data are:

- Kept only as long as necessary
- Stored securely
- Destroyed confidentially

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed every **3 years** or earlier if legislation changes.

Adoption

Adopted by the Parish Council on: _____

Minute reference: _____

Signed (Chair): _____

Signed (Clerk): _____