

Staploe Parish Council Retention Policy

Retention and disposal

Staploe Parish Council use the following guidelines to determine how long to keep records:

1. Is the issue current? If so we keep it. Eg. if someone has responded to a consultation on street lights and we have not made a decision or implemented / evaluated it we will keep the responses. Once the decision has been implemented and evaluated there is no longer any need to keep the responses.
2. If it is likely to become an issue again in the near future then we keep it.
3. If it is no longer current then we determine whether it may be of use in the future for historical or legal reasons:
 - Examples are shown below:
 - Risk assessments are kept for 25 years in case of historic claims
 - A plan of street lighting should be kept for as long as it is current, until replaced by a new plan. However, if there was a particular campaign to improve or reduce street lighting the file and plan may contain information about attitudes to light pollution, road safety and budgets that would be useful in explaining the history of our village so should be sent to the archives service.
 - Files on issues such as mineral extraction, bypasses, school closures etc., should be kept until it is judged that their interest has become historic rather than day-to-day and then be sent to the archives service.
 - Financial material must be kept for a statutory period to allow auditing. Keep all financial records for the current year plus six years based on a financial year beginning on 1st April; so, an invoice for provision of a new shredder received on 21 July 2018 will be kept until 31 March 2019 then a further six years - meaning it can be destroyed on 1 April 2025.
 - Literature from various local, regional and national bodies. This material should be kept for as long as it is relevant to business then destroyed.
 - Legal agreements and deeds for property owned by the Council are kept as long as they are valid and then archived or destroyed as appropriate
 - Correspondence relating to informal agreements eg with a sports club using the playing field or with BPHA regarding Duloe Common or with an individual relating to maintenance of a piece of land are kept as long as they are valid and then archived or destroyed as appropriate.
 - General correspondence files including e-mails are kept for two years after the matter has been closed except where the file contains information relating to an issue which is still current or likely to become current or where the e-mail gives consent to process data which is still current eg. consent to use their e-mail to contact them on matters relating to the parish of Staploe. We may keep correspondence that gives substantial information such as background to a minuted council decision if the minutes do not cover it and pass these to the Bedfordshire Archives Service.
 - Planning applications are kept for two years by the Clerk and then disposed of. They are retained indefinitely by the Borough Council.

- Contracts for most Parish Council matters, such as grass cutting, would normally be considered minor contracts and these should be kept for six years following termination of the contract then disposed of.
- Signed minutes are kept forever. They are passed to Bedfordshire Archive Service after 10 years.
- Audited annual accounts are kept forever and passed to Bedfordshire Archive Service after 10 years.

When disposing of records, we take care to prevent such things as identity theft and breach of confidentiality by shredding paper records and securely deleting electronic records using Windows cipher. Computers and hard drives are password protected.