



DATCHET PARISH COUNCIL

Document Retention & Management Policy

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Next Review Date (Review every 3 years or sooner should legislation dictate.)	October 2028
Version 1	

Document Revised on	Revision Tracking



1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Datchet Parish Council manages, stores, and disposes of documents and records in accordance with statutory requirements, transparency obligations, and good governance practice. It also sets out how Dropbox and digital recordings will be used for both public access and councillor-only confidential access.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all records created, received, or maintained by the Datchet Parish Council in the course of its business, including:

- Paper documents
- Electronic files
- Dropbox files (public and confidential)
- Audio and video recordings of meetings

3. Legal Framework

The Council will manage its records in compliance with the following legislation and regulations:

- **Local Government Act 1972** – requires minutes of proceedings to be kept indefinitely and made available for public inspection.
- **Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)** – provides public rights of access to information, subject to exemptions.
- **Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (2015)** – requires publication of agendas, minutes, and supporting papers.
- **Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR** – governs the storage, processing, and retention of personal data.
- **Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015** – requires accounting records to be retained for a minimum of 6 years.
- **Limitation Act 1980** – sets statutory time limits for legal claims.
- **Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012** – requires certain meeting papers to be accessible to the public.

4. General Principles

- Records will be retained for no longer than necessary, in line with statutory and best-practice retention periods.



- Signed minutes of council meetings will be kept permanently (Local Government Act 1972).
- Confidential and personal data will be securely stored and only accessed by those who need it (UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018).
- Financial and audit records will be kept in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
- The Council will ensure information is made available to the public in line with FOIA and the Transparency Code.

5. Dropbox Use

The Datchet Parish Council will use two separate Dropbox folders:

1. **Public Dropbox**

- Contains agendas, unapproved minutes, reports, and supporting meeting papers that are not confidential.
- A link to the Public Dropbox will be included on each meeting agenda (Transparency Code 2015).
- Access is open to the public without login.
- Files will be removed from the Public Dropbox six months after the meeting date.

2. **Councillor (Confidential) Dropbox**

- Contains draft minutes, confidential reports, and papers not for public circulation.
- A secure link will be emailed to all councillors for each meeting.
- Councillors must not share this link or any confidential documents with third parties (UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018).
- Files will be removed from the Councillor Dropbox six months after the meeting date.

6. Audio and Video Recordings

- **Audio Recordings:** Datchet Parish Council meetings may be recorded for public transparency. Recordings posted to the council website will remain available for 6 months, with a secure copy retained on the Datchet Parish Council server for 2 years for reference, audit, or historical purposes.



- **Video Recordings (if introduced in the future):** Will follow the same principles as audio recordings.
- Any recordings containing confidential or exempt items must not be published publicly.

7. Retention Schedule

Document Type	Where Stored	Retention Period	Notes / Legal Basis
Signed Minutes (hard copy)	Council archive	Permanent	Local Government Act 1972
Agendas & public meeting papers	Council archive / electronic	5 years	FOIA, Transparency Code 2015
Dropbox meeting papers (public/confidential)	Dropbox	6 months	Council Policy
Policies & procedures	Council archive	Current + 1 previous	Good practice
Councillor confidential papers (local copies)	Council archive	2 years unless ongoing	UK GDPR, Limitation Act 1980
Financial records (invoices, receipts, bank statements)	Council archive / electronic	7 years	Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015
Insurance policies & certificates	Council archive	Permanent	Good practice
Correspondence (routine)	Council archive / electronic	2 years	Good practice
Planning applications / decisions	Council archive / electronic	6 years	Limitation Act 1980
Audio recordings of meetings	Council website, Council server	Website: 6 months; Server: 2 years	Transparency / FOIA
Video recordings of meetings (future)	Council website, Council server	Website: 6 months; Server: 2 years	Transparency / FOIA

8. Review & Disposal

- The Clerk/RFO will review records annually and arrange for secure disposal (shredding for paper, permanent deletion for electronic files).



- Dropbox folders will be cleared **six months after each meeting** and will not be used as a permanent archive.
- Copies of all records that must be kept (as per the retention schedule) will be stored securely outside Dropbox.

9. Roles & Responsibilities

- **Clerk/RFO** – Responsible for implementing this policy, maintaining records, and reviewing retention schedules.
- **Councillors** – Responsible for respecting confidentiality and ensuring proper use of Dropbox.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by law or changes in best practice.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. J.', written over a light blue horizontal line.

The Clerk

Date: 10.11.2025