

Norfolk Records Office Document Retention Guidance for Parish Councils:

Records generated by the parish council and parish meeting

Records to retain permanently

These should be preferably deposited in the Norfolk Records Office (NRO).

- Parish council minute books
- Parish meeting minute books
- Minute books of committees, such as:
 - Jubilee and coronation celebrations
 - Charities
 - Allotments
 - Planning
 - Playing field
 - Burial ground, etc
- Books of declarations on acceptance of office
- Orders establishing the parish council or parish meeting or authorising mergers of parishes
- Title deeds and leases
- Agreements and contracts
- Investment documents
- Receipt and payment account books
- Annual financial statements
- Allotments (registers and plans)
- Burial grounds (burial registers, purchased graves registers, memorial registers and plans)
- Footpaths (survey of footpaths in parish, closure orders)
- Commons (Commons Commissioner's decisions)
- War memorial (subscription lists, plans)
- War records, including:
 - Survey of accommodation available for evacuees
 - Air Raid Precaution papers
 - Minutes of invasion committee

- Correspondence with rural district councils, county council, etc
- Insurance properties relating to parish council properties
- Photographs and programmes of events organised by the parish council
- Newsletters and other publications (such as parish guides, parish histories) issued by the parish council
- Surveys of parish facilities

Items to retain indefinitely for legal reasons

These do not necessarily have to be deposited in the NRO.

- Quotations and tenders
- Burial grounds records:
 - Registers of fees collected
 - Applications for interment
 - Applications for right to erect memorials
 - Disposal certificates
 - Copy certificates of grant of exclusive right of burial

Items to retain for at least 12 years

- Wages books

Items to retain for at least six years

- Bank statements, including deposit and savings accounts
- Receipt books of all kinds
- Paid invoices
- Paid cheques
- VAT records
- Petty cash, postage and telephone books
- Members' allowances registers
- Halls, centres, recreation grounds:
 - Applications to hire
 - Lettings diaries
 - Copies of bills to hirers
 - Record of tickets issued

Items to retain for at least five years

- Scales of fees and charges

Items to retain for at least the last completed audit year

- Bank paying-in books
- Cheque book stubs
- Timesheets

Other records

Planning

- For successful applications keep the application, plans and decision notice until the development has been completed
- For unsuccessful applications keep papers until the period within which an appeal can be made has expired (ie, six months from the date of the planning decision)
- For controversial applications (whether successful or unsuccessful) the parish council may wish to retain the papers indefinitely

Circulars, etc, from other bodies

- County Association, National Association of Local Councils, etc: retain as long as useful and relevant

Magazines and journals

- Keep Local Council Review for at least five years, others as long as useful and relevant

Correspondence

- If related to audit matters, keep for the appropriate period specified in the previous chapter.
- If related to planning matters, keep for the same period as suggested for planning applications
- For other correspondence, contact NRO for advice

Records inherited by the parish council

These should all be kept permanently and preferably should be deposited in the NRO. They include the following.

Parliamentary Inclosure

- Inclosure Award and Map – often the root of title to land owned by the parish council (such as surveyor's allotments, poor's allotments, fuel allotments and the parish staithe)
- Inclosure Act
- Statement of claims made to Inclosure Commissioners
- Minutes of proceedings of Commissioners
- Commissioners' accounts
- Commissioners' printed extracts from the inclosure award

The Overseers of the Poor

- Overseers' account books
- Poor rate books
- Parish valuations for rating purposes
- Inventories of furniture and fittings of the workhouse
- Removal orders
- Settlement certificates
- Settlement examinations
- JP's certificates of appointment of overseer
- Appointments and contracts of assistant overseer, master of workhouse, surgeon to the parish poor, etc

The surveyor of the highways

- Surveyors' account books
- Highway rate books
- Plans of parish gravel, sand and clay pits and public watering places

Charities

- Founder's will or foundation deed (but note that this often does not exist)
- Account books and lists of recipients

- Papers relating to legal disputes
- Public notices (inviting applications, advertising auction of lettings etc)
- Charity Commission scheme

Fire brigade

- Minute books of association for preservation of property from loss by fire
- Firemen's contracts
- Bills for purchase of fire engine
- Contracts with neighbouring fire brigades for fire cover

Street lighting

- Lighting Commissioners' minute books
- Lamplighters' contracts
- Contracts with gas companies for supply

Burial grounds

- Burial Board minute books
- Burial registers
- Bills for purchase of parish hearse

(See also the list of records generated by the Parish Council)

Miscellaneous

- Dikereeves' account books
- Adjustment books
- Surveys and plans of the parish