

# 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