



West Meon Parish Council

Data Retention Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how long West Meon Parish Council retains documents and records to ensure compliance with legal, regulatory and operational requirements.

Records will only be kept for as long as necessary and will then be securely destroyed or archived.

2. General Principles

- Records will be retained only for as long as necessary for their purpose.
- Retention periods may be extended where required for legal claims.
- Secure destruction methods will be used (shredding or secure deletion).
- Historical records may be archived where appropriate.

3. Retention Schedule

Record Type	Retention Period	Notes / Authority
Minutes (signed)	Indefinite	Permanent legal record
Agendas	Indefinite	Supporting record
Asset Register	Indefinite	Governance record
Title deeds, leases, contracts	Indefinite	Property / legal record
Trust deeds and conveyances	Indefinite	Never destroy
Insurance policies	6 years after expiry	Limitation Act
Financial records	6 years + current year	Audit requirements
VAT records	6 years	HMRC requirement
Planning applications (copies)	As required for reference	Originals held by LPA
Correspondence (general)	5 years	Unless legal matter
Legal correspondence	6–12 years depending on matter	Limitation Act 1980
Personnel records (staff)	6 years after employment ends	Employment limitation period
Salary records	6 years	Tax and employment claims
Complaints records	6 years	Legal defence
Publications (Council)	Indefinite (archival copy)	Historical record

4. Legal Limitation Periods (Guidance)

Retention periods reflect the Limitation Act 1980:

- Contract claims: 6 years
- Negligence (non-personal injury): 6 years
- Personal injury: 3 years
- Leases and deeds: 12 years
- Recovery of land: 12 years
- Rent arrears: 6 years
- Breach of trust: No statutory limitation

Where matters may fall under more than one category, records should be retained for the longer applicable period.

5. Historical Records

Records of local or historical importance may be preserved indefinitely and may be transferred to an appropriate archive in accordance with the Local Government (Records) Act 1962 and Local Government Act 1972.

6. Disposal

At the end of the retention period:

- Paper records will be securely shredded.
- Electronic records will be permanently deleted.

Destruction should be documented where appropriate.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years or earlier if legislation changes.

8. Revision History

Adopted:	Reviewed:	Amendments
3 rd March 2026 (minute ref. 2603-10)		