

The time required to keep documents depends on what the document is, its legal status and how much storage space there is available.

Minutes and burial records need to be kept forever because they are legal documents that must not be destroyed.

Deeds, leases etc. also need to be kept during the Town Council's occupancy of property or land. It is also worth keeping correspondence relating to land and buildings in the Council's ownership for as long as the Council owns these assets.

**Insurance policies** - all insurance policies should be kept for as long as it is possible for a claim to be made under them. Irrespective of how long policies and correspondence are retained, it is advisable to keep a permanent record of insurance company names and policy numbers for all insured risks.

Article 4 of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI. 2753) requires local councils, as employers, to retain certificates of insurance against liability for injury or disease to their employees arising out of their employment (this insurance is mandatory pursuant to the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969) for a period of 40 years from the date on which the insurance is commenced or renewed.

There is no requirement for local councils to keep planning documents, particularly since these take up a large amount of storage. However, for ease of reference, it is useful to keep them for two or three years although there may be some benefit in keeping controversial plans for a while longer. Local Plans and similar documents should be kept for as long as they are in force. If members of the public wish to view any planning applications, they should be referred to the planning department at Shropshire Council. (Hard copies of planning documents are being phased out and can be viewed online.)



**Magazines and Journals** – a council may want to keep its own publications (e.g. newsletters). **The Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 (the 2003 Act) requires a local council, which after 1 February 2004 has published works in print (this includes a pamphlet, magazine or newspaper, a map, plan, chart or table), to deliver, at its own expense, a copy of them to the British Library Board (which manages and controls the British Library).** The British Library holds books, periodicals, manuscripts and other publications for reference, study and information. Printed works as defined by the 2003 Act published by a local council therefore constitute materials which the British Library holds.

There is no hard and fast rule how long other material should be kept although it should be reviewed on a regular basis to see whether any of it is worth keeping. However, it is prudent to hold on to any controversial material until the issue is resolved.

Archived material should be clearly labeled and stored safely where it will not become a fire hazard.



**RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR THE AUDIT OF PARISH COUNCILS**

DOCUMENT	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD	REASON
Minutes books	Indefinite	Archive
Scales of fees and charges	5 years	Management
Receipt and payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT
Bank statements, including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Quotations and tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
VAT records	6 years	VAT
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit
Wages books	12 years	Superannuation
Insurance policies	While valid	Management
Certificates for Insurance against liability for employees	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI. 2753) Management
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Members allowances register	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Planning applications	Minimum of 3 years	Only significant and or contentious
<b>For Halls, Centre, Recreation Grounds</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Applications to hire</li> <li>● Lettings diaries</li> <li>● Copies of bills to hirers</li> <li>● Record of tickets issued</li> </ul>	6 years	VAT
<b>For Allotments</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Register and plans</li> </ul>	Indefinite	Audit, Management
<b>For Burial Grounds</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Register of fees collected</li> <li>● Register of burials</li> <li>● Register of purchased graves</li> <li>● Register/plan of grave spaces</li> <li>● Register of memorials</li> <li>● Applications for interment</li> <li>● Applications for right to erect memorials</li> <li>● Disposal certificates</li> <li>● Copy certificates of grant of exclusive right of burial</li> </ul>	Indefinite	Archives, Cemeteries Orders, Cremations Regulations

