Document Control & Records Management Policy

Document Control

ITEM	DETAILS
Policy Number	GP13
Policy Title	Document Control & Records Management Policy
Policy Owner	Board of Directors
Approved By	Board of Directors
Version	1.0
Approval Date	May 2026
Review Date	May 2028
Applies To	Board of Directors, Volunteers and anyone creating, maintaining or accessing organisational records on behalf of Gravesham Pride CIC
Related Policies	Confidentiality & Data Protection Policy, Financial Management Policy, Risk Management Policy, Governance Handbook
Related Legislation	Companies Act 2006, Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), Freedom of Information Act 2000 (where applicable through public authorities only – included as good governance reference)

1. Purpose

Gravesham Pride CIC recognises that effective document control and records management are essential to good governance.

Accurate, secure and well-managed records help the organisation:

- demonstrate accountability
- support effective decision-making
- comply with legal and regulatory obligations
- protect organisational knowledge
- provide continuity when volunteers or Directors change
- maintain public confidence

The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent approach to the creation, approval, storage, review, retention and disposal of organisational documents and records.

Good records management ensures that important information is:

- accurate
- current
- secure
- accessible to authorised individuals
- retained for appropriate periods
- disposed of responsibly when no longer required

2. Scope

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained on behalf of Gravesham Pride CIC. This includes:

- governance documents
- policies and procedures
- Board papers
- meeting agendas and minutes
- financial records
- volunteer records
- safeguarding records
- event documentation
- contracts and agreements
- correspondence
- photographs and digital media where retained as organisational records
- electronic and paper records

The policy applies regardless of the format in which the information is stored.

3. Definitions

Document

A document is any recorded information produced or received by Gravesham Pride CIC.

Examples include:

- policies
- procedures
- forms
- reports
- meeting papers

- guidance documents.

Record
A record is evidence of an activity, decision or transaction undertaken by Gravesham Pride CIC.

Unlike a working draft, a record provides evidence of what occurred.

Examples include:
- approved meeting minutes
- signed agreements
- financial records
- completed forms
- safeguarding reports
- volunteer applications

Document Control
Document control is the process of ensuring that organisational documents are:
- approved
- version controlled
- reviewed
- updated
- distributed appropriately
- withdrawn when obsolete

Records Management
Records management is the process of creating, storing, accessing, retaining and securely disposing of organisational records throughout their lifecycle.

Version Control
Version control ensures that only the current approved version of a document is used.

It enables changes to be tracked and reduces the risk of outdated documents remaining in circulation.

4. Our Commitment
Gravesham Pride CIC is committed to maintaining accurate and reliable organisational records.

We will:
- maintain appropriate document control arrangements
- ensure governance documents are reviewed regularly
- store records securely
- protect confidential information
- maintain appropriate version control
- retain records for appropriate periods
- dispose of records securely when no longer required
- comply with relevant legal obligations

Effective records management supports transparency, accountability and organisational resilience.

5. Policy
5.1 General Principles
All organisational documents and records should be managed consistently.

Information should be:

- accurate
- complete
- legible
- appropriately authorised
- stored securely
- accessible to authorised individuals when required

Working documents should be clearly distinguished from approved organisational records.

5.2 Creating Organisational Documents

Documents created on behalf of Gravesham Pride CIC should:

- have a clear title
- include a version number where appropriate
- identify the document owner
- include approval and review dates where appropriate
- be written in plain English
- reflect the values of the organisation
- be consistent with the Governance Handbook

Where templates exist, they should be used to promote consistency across the organisation.

5.3 Document Approval

Governance documents, including policies, should be approved by the Board of Directors before being issued.

Draft documents should not be treated as approved organisational policy.

Where amendments are made following approval:

- the version number should be updated
- the amendment should be recorded
- the review date should be revised where appropriate
- previous versions should be archived or withdrawn

Only the current approved version should be used operationally.

5.4 Version Control

All governance documents should include document control information.
This should normally include:

- policy number
- document title
- version number
- approval date
- review date
- policy owner
- approving body

Version numbers should increase sequentially following approved amendments.

Historic versions should be retained only where there is a legitimate governance, legal or historical reason to do so.

5.5 Storage of Organisational Records
Gravesham Pride CIC will maintain secure and organised arrangements for storing organisational records.

Records may be stored:
- electronically
- in cloud-based storage approved by the Board
- in secure paper files where appropriate

Storage arrangements should ensure that records are:
- protected against loss or damage
- organised logically
- easily retrievable by authorised individuals
- protected from unauthorised access

Where records are held electronically, appropriate backup arrangements should be maintained wherever reasonably practicable.

5.6 Electronic Records
Electronic records form an important part of the organisation's governance.

Electronic records should:
- be stored in approved organisational locations
- use consistent file names where appropriate
- be protected by appropriate passwords or access controls
- not be stored unnecessarily on personal devices
- be backed up where reasonably practicable

Where volunteers or Directors cease their involvement with Gravesham Pride CIC, reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that organisational records remain accessible to the organisation.

Organisational records should not become dependent upon a single individual's personal device or personal email account.

5.7 Paper Records
Where paper records are maintained, they should be stored securely.

Paper records containing confidential or personal information should:
- be kept in secure storage
- only be accessed by authorised individuals
- be protected from damage or unauthorised disclosure

Original signed documents should be retained where there is a legal, contractual or governance requirement to do so.

5.8 Access to Organisational Records
Access to records should be based upon legitimate organisational need.

Individuals should only have access to records that are necessary for them to fulfil their role.

Access arrangements should take account of:

- confidentiality
- data protection
- safeguarding
- legal requirements
- organisational governance

Where access is no longer required, permissions should be removed promptly.

5.9 Meeting Agendas and Minutes

Accurate records of Board meetings are an essential part of good governance.

Meeting minutes should normally include:

- the date, time and location of the meeting
- those present and any apologies
- declarations of conflict of interest
- key discussions
- decisions made
- actions agreed
- the person responsible for each action
- target completion dates where appropriate

Minutes should provide an accurate record of decisions rather than a verbatim transcript of discussions. Once approved, meeting minutes become an official organisational record.

5.10 Record Retention

Gravesham Pride CIC will retain records only for as long as there is a legitimate legal, regulatory, operational or governance reason to do so.

Retention periods will vary depending upon the type of record. Examples include:

- financial records
- governance records
- safeguarding records
- volunteer records
- contracts
- insurance documentation

The organisation will maintain a Record Retention Schedule setting out the minimum retention periods for different categories of records.

Records should not be retained indefinitely unless there is an identified legal or organisational reason.

5.11 Archiving

Some documents may no longer be required for day-to-day use but remain important for historical or governance purposes.
Examples include:

- previous versions of governing documents
- historic event documentation
- annual reports
- Board-approved policies that have since been replaced

Archived documents should:

- be clearly identified as archived
- not be used operationally
- remain accessible where there is a legitimate organisational reason

Archived records should be protected from accidental amendment or deletion.

5.12 Secure Disposal

When records reach the end of their retention period, they should be disposed of securely.

The method of disposal should reflect the sensitivity of the information.
Examples include:

- confidential shredding of paper records
- secure deletion of electronic records
- destruction of storage media where appropriate

Records containing personal, confidential or safeguarding information must never be disposed of in a manner that could lead to unauthorised access.

Where disposal takes place, the organisation should ensure that any legal or regulatory retention requirements have first been met.

5.13 Business Continuity

Effective document management supports organisational resilience.

Gravesham Pride CIC will seek to ensure that essential governance documents remain available during periods of organisational change.

This includes:

- maintaining central storage arrangements
- ensuring more than one authorised person can access essential records
- protecting key governance documents
- maintaining appropriate backups where reasonably practicable

The organisation should avoid situations where critical information is held solely by one individual.

5.14 Confidentiality

All organisational records should be handled in accordance with the Confidentiality & Data Protection Policy.

Individuals with access to organisational records must:

- respect confidentiality
- only access information required for their role
- avoid unnecessary sharing of information
- report any loss or unauthorised disclosure immediately

Confidentiality responsibilities continue after an individual ceases volunteering with Gravesham Pride CIC.

5.15 Information Accuracy

Organisational records should be accurate and maintained promptly.

Where errors are identified:
- corrections should be made without unnecessary delay
- original records should not be altered in a misleading manner
- amendments should remain transparent where appropriate

Knowingly creating false, misleading or incomplete organisational records may constitute a breach of organisational policies and could result in further action.

5.16 Organisational Knowledge
Gravesham Pride CIC recognises that its knowledge and experience are valuable organisational assets.

Where appropriate, key learning should be recorded and retained.

Examples include:
- lessons learned following events
- improvements identified during debriefs
- guidance developed through experience
- templates
- operational procedures

Capturing organisational knowledge helps maintain continuity and supports future volunteers and Directors.

6. Roles and Responsibilities
6.1 Board of Directors
The Board of Directors is responsible for:
- approving governance documents
- ensuring effective document control arrangements
- overseeing organisational record keeping
- ensuring compliance with legal requirements
- approving document retention arrangements

6.2 Directors
Directors are expected to:
- maintain accurate organisational records
- ensure documents remain current
- support effective version control
- ensure records within their area of responsibility are managed appropriately
- report any significant records management concerns

6.3 Volunteers
Volunteers who create or manage organisational documents should:
- use approved templates where available
- maintain accurate records
- store documents appropriately
- protect confidential information
- report any loss of organisational records promptly

Volunteers should not destroy or permanently delete organisational records without appropriate authority.
7. Monitoring and Compliance

The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that appropriate document control and records management arrangements are maintained throughout Gravesham Pride CIC.

Compliance with this policy will be monitored through:

- periodic review of governance documents
- review of document version control
- monitoring policy review dates
- review of meeting minutes and governance records
- monitoring the secure storage of organisational records
- review of record retention arrangement
- review of any records management incidents or data breaches
- feedback from Directors and volunteers

Where improvements are identified, appropriate action will be agreed and implemented.

Document control is an ongoing governance responsibility that supports transparency, accountability and organisational resilience.

8. Equality Statement

Gravesham Pride CIC is committed to ensuring that organisational information is managed fairly, securely and accessibly.

Where reasonably practicable, documents and records will be:

- written in clear and inclusive language
- made available in accessible formats where required
- stored securely
- shared only with those who have a legitimate organisational need

Records management arrangements will be applied fairly and without discrimination on the grounds of

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The organisation recognises that effective records management supports inclusion by ensuring that information is reliable, accessible and appropriately protected.

9. Policy Review

This policy will normally be reviewed every two years. An earlier review may take place where:

- legislation changes
- information governance requirements change
- organisational learning identifies opportunities for improvement
- significant records management issues arise
- changes are made to the organisation's governance arrangements
- the Board determines that revisions are required

The Board of Directors is responsible for approving any amendments to this policy.

Appendix GP13-A

Practical Examples

The following examples demonstrate how this policy should be applied in practice.

Example 1 – Policy Version Control

Situation

A Director updates the Volunteer Code of Conduct following Board approval.

Expected Practice

The version number, approval date and review date are updated. The previous version is archived and only the new approved version is circulated.

Inappropriate Practice

Making changes without updating the version number or continuing to use multiple versions of the same document.

Example 2 – Meeting Minutes

Situation

The Board approves a new event budget and agrees several actions during a meeting.

Expected Practice

The decisions, actions, responsible individuals and agreed timescales are recorded in the meeting minutes, which are approved at the next Board meeting.

Inappropriate Practice

Relying on individual memory instead of maintaining an official record.

Example 3 – Volunteer Access

Situation

A volunteer who previously coordinated fundraising leaves the organisation.

Expected Practice

Access to organisational records and shared storage is reviewed and removed where no longer required, while ensuring that all relevant documents remain accessible to the organisation.

Inappropriate Practice

Leaving access permissions unchanged indefinitely.

Example 4 – Secure Disposal

Situation

Volunteer application forms have reached the end of their retention period.

Expected Practice

The records are securely destroyed in accordance with the Record Retention Schedule and relevant legal requirements.

Inappropriate Practice

Disposing of confidential documents in ordinary household or public waste.

Example 5 – Document Storage

Situation
A Director creates a new governance document for Board approval.

Expected Practice
The draft is stored in the organisation's approved document storage location so that other authorised Directors can review it and the organisation retains ownership of the document.

Inappropriate Practice
Keeping the only copy on a personal computer with no organisational backup.

Example 6 – Historical Records
Situation
A previous version of the Event Management Policy is replaced following Board approval.

Expected Practice
The previous version is marked as archived and retained only where there is a legitimate governance or historical reason.

Inappropriate Practice
Deleting all previous versions without considering whether they should be retained.

Example 7 – Information Accuracy
Situation
A Director notices that an approved Board minute contains an incorrect meeting date.

Expected Practice
The error is corrected transparently through the appropriate approval process, ensuring the integrity of the official record is maintained.

Inappropriate Practice
Altering the approved minutes without recording the amendment or obtaining appropriate approval.

Good Records Management Principles
Everyone creating or managing organisational records should remember:
- Create clear and accurate records.
- Store documents securely.
- Use the current approved version.
- Record decisions promptly.
- Protect confidential information.
- Retain records only for as long as necessary.
- Dispose of records securely.
- Preserve organisational knowledge for future volunteers and Directors.

Good records management protects both the organisation and the people who volunteer within it.

Appendix GP13-B

Related Legislation and Governance Documents

Primary Legislation

This policy should be read alongside relevant legislation, including:

- Companies Act 2006;
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR);
- Limitation Act 1980 (where relevant to record retention);
- Electronic Communications Act 2000 (where applicable to electronic records).

Related Gravesham Pride CIC Governance Documents

This policy should be read alongside the following Gravesham Pride CIC governance documents:

- Articles of Association
- Governance Handbook
- GP01 – Code of Conduct
- GP02 – Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility (EDIA) Policy
- GP03 – Safeguarding Policy
- GP04 – Conflict of Interest Policy
- GP05 – Confidentiality & Data Protection Policy
- GP06 – Speaking Up (Whistleblowing) Policy
- GP07 – Complaints & Concerns Policy
- GP08 – Volunteer Management Policy
- GP09 – Volunteer Code of Conduct
- GP10 – Health, Safety & Safe Working Policy
- GP11 – Risk Management Policy
- GP12 – Financial Management Policy
- GP14 – Communications, Branding & Social Media Policy
- GP15 – Environmental Sustainability Policy
- GP16 – Event Governance & Delivery Policy

Good Governance Principles

This policy supports Gravesham Pride CIC's commitment to:

- transparency
- accountability
- consistency
- organisational resilience
- secure information management
- effective decision-making
- legal and regulatory compliance
- continuous improvement

Review and Version Control

This appendix will be reviewed whenever there are significant changes to legislation, recognised good practice or related Gravesham Pride CIC governance documents.

Our Commitment to Good Governance

Gravesham Pride CIC recognises that effective governance depends upon accurate information, reliable records and clear accountability.

By maintaining well-managed documents and records, we preserve the knowledge of our organisation, support informed decision-making and demonstrate our commitment to openness, integrity and good governance.

We will continue to ensure that our organisational records are accurate, secure and accessible to those who need them, while protecting confidential information and meeting our legal responsibilities. Together, we will maintain a governance framework that supports the long-term sustainability, resilience and success of Gravesham Pride CIC.