

Oxfordshire History Centre: Guidelines for ecclesiastical parishes on retention and deposit of records

This guidance is for incumbents and other parochial officers wishing to transfer their parish's records to Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC) for long-term preservation of and general access to the documents. It assumes that the records under consideration are no longer required by the parish for legal or administrative purposes.

Due to factors of available storage space and staff time, documents in the schedule marked 'destroy' should be disposed of by the parish itself. Material earmarked for deposit at the History Centre should be box-listed prior to being brought in, so that staff are aware of the potential quantity and types. Please keep the records together to reflect the way they were created, as far as possible, but do not re-package items (e.g. in plastic wallets) or use additional paper clips or staples.

The Parochial Church Council retains ownership of the records; any items which following appraisal by OHC staff are deemed unsuitable for permanent preservation will be offered back to the PCC or destroyed securely, depending on what was agreed at time of deposit.

OHC is happy to accept born digital material, but please indicate the types of digital material you have prior to deposit. For any records not covered by the schedule below, please ask History Centre staff for specific advice.

Church Services

| Type of record | Action | Notes |
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| Baptism, marriage, banns and burial registers | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | Any registers with entries over 100 years old should be transferred |
| Service Registers | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Confirmation registers | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Orders of Service | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Baptism certificate counterfoils; marriage certificate counterfoils | Destroy | |

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| Burial certificates; applications for baptisms or banns | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
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Church Buildings and Property

[see also Legal Documents]

| Type of record | Action | Notes |
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| <i>Church, furnishing and contents</i> | | |
| Faculties | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Terrier and inventory, logbook | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Architects' Quinquennial reports | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Minutes, accounts, specifications, tenders, contracts, plans, photographs, drawings and other papers relating to major works to the church | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Contracts, tenders and specifications for minor works | Destroy | |
| <i>Parsonage House</i> | | |
| Plans, photographs, drawings | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Minutes, accounts, specifications, tenders, contracts, plans, photographs, drawings and other papers relating to major works to the parsonage house | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Contracts, tenders and specifications for minor works | Destroy | |
| <i>Churchyard</i> | | |
| Plans, registers of graves, faculties, citations and accompanying records | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |

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| Agreements concerning maintenance of churchyard, graves and memorials | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Minutes, accounts, specifications, tenders, contracts, plans, photographs, drawings and other papers relating to major works to the churchyard | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Contracts, tenders and specifications for minor works | Destroy | |
| <i>Church Hall</i> | | |
| Plans, architects' reports | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Music, dancing and P.R.S. licences | Destroy | |
| Agreements for use of hall | Destroy | |
| Minutes, accounts, specifications, tenders, contracts, plans, photographs, drawings and other papers relating to major works to the church hall | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Contracts, tenders and specifications for minor works | Destroy | |

Parish Administration

| Type of record | Action | Notes |
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| <i>Incumbent and other ministers</i> | | |
| Institutions, admissions, licences | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Correspondence concerning appointments | Destroy | |
| Union of Benefice papers, pastoral schemes and orders, plurality orders, documents establishing team or group councils, Joint PCCs or District Church Councils | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Ministers' papers relating to major parish developments or parish audits | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Ministers' correspondence and other papers on routine administration | Destroy | |

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| Maps of parish boundaries, street lists | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | OHC may already hold these |
| Copies of replies to questionnaires or important circulars | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| <i>Parochial Church Councils, Churchwardens and other parish officers</i> | | |
| Minutes of Council and Committees, Parochial Church Meetings, Vestry Meetings and Meetings of Parishioners for Appointment of Churchwardens | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Churchwardens' accounts | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Electoral Rolls | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Visitation papers | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Copies of replies to Articles of Enquiry | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Accounts and other papers of overseers of the poor, surveyors of the highways, and other C16th-C20th parish officials | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Parish magazines | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | OHC may already have copies of some issues |
| Parish histories, scrapbooks, newspaper cuttings, record of gifts, photographs | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Promotional brochures | Destroy | |
| Sequestration records | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |

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| Visitors' books | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Routine correspondence | Destroy | |
| Copies of circulars sent by other organisations, non-local material | Destroy | |
| <i>Parish Finance</i> (records more than 7 years old) | | |
| Annual audited accounts | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Cash books | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Receipts and vouchers (19 th century or older) | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Receipts and vouchers (20 th century or newer) | Destroy | |
| Invoices | Destroy | |
| Bank statements | Destroy | |
| Cheques and cheque book stubs | Destroy | |
| Planned giving schemes | Destroy | |
| Insurance policies | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |

Parish Organisations

| Type of record | Action | Notes |
|---|--|-------|
| <i>Parish organisations – Mothers' Union, Youth Clubs, choir, bell-ringers etc</i> | | |
| Minutes, reports, accounts | Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation | |
| Membership lists | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Correspondence and contracts | Destroy | |

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| Choir register | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
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Legal Documents

| Type of record | Action | Notes |
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| Deeds, statutory documents etc; title deeds, other documents relating to title, acquisition, disposal, or rights over a property; statutory notices, orders etc, including Orders in Council for closure of churchyard; and relevant correspondence | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |
| Charities: deeds, schemes, orders, minutes, accounts, distribution lists, benefactions | Transfer to OHC for appraisal | |

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