

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
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	

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
<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	

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	
Church Hall		
Plans, architects' reports	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
Music, dancing and P.R.S. licences	Destroy	
Agreements for use of hall	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
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
<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	

Maps of parish boundaries, street lists	Transfer to OHC for permanent preservation	
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 permanent preservation	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	
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	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	
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	
Choir register	Transfer to OHC for appraisal	

Legal Documents

Type of record	Action	Notes
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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