

Guidance to Cambridgeshire Parish Councils on Keeping Archives

Introduction

Records are a vital part of your council's business. Your council is required by law to keep certain records, to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and to comply with current GDPR regulations.

It is important that you look after your records to ensure they can be accessed when needed and that they do not deteriorate over time.

This guidance note offers advice to Cambridgeshire Parish Councils on which records should be kept and for how long, and about how to transfer selected types of records to Cambridgeshire Archives Service when they are no longer needed for regular use by your council.

Looking after your records

Know what you have

It is important that you have a policy and procedure concerning the preservation and security of your records.

- Identify what records your council creates, what form they are kept in, who needs access and how long they need to be kept for
- make a list of your records so you can find the ones you need quickly.

Paper documents

- Paper documents should be stored ~~them~~ in a cool, clean, dry and stable environment, and away from direct sunlight
- do not place documents at floor level or where leaking water pipes could cause damage

- avoid using metal clips, rubber bands or adhesive tape - all these will decay over time and cause damage to paper
- try to use good quality acid-free paper for important records that you know will be kept permanently, such as minutes
- store papers in proper storage boxes rather than in plastic bags - plastic bags prevent air circulation and can also give off gases harmful to paper
- keep your store locked
- don't loan or give records out to a third party or someone who is not a Parish Council officer – if someone needs to consult a document, then either provide them with a copy, or supervise them while they consult the document on your premises.

Electronic documents

- Keep them secure (e.g. password protected)
- don't store vital records just on a single USB stick or disk, but create backups and check they can be recovered
- migrate data when you change software and hardware systems so that you can still access older records
- keep important records in PDF format so that their wording cannot easily be changed later.

If you need further information about storing records then please contact CAS. We can visit your organisation and provide professional advice.

Depositing Records

At the end of this guidance note you will find a “retention schedule” for common types of records. Unless a specific period is shown in the schedule, all records should be kept by you until they are of no further administrative use to your council.

When records are of no further use, or if their retention period has expired, then you should either destroy them or transfer them to Cambridgeshire Archives. Where the final action noted in the retention schedule is ‘preserve’ we recommend that the records are deposited with Cambridgeshire Archives as soon as is practical.

We will then preserve them as part of your Parish Council archive. We will store the records in our purpose-built archives accommodation, we will schedule them for cataloguing, and we will make the records available to researchers in our supervised searchroom, subject to GDPR rules.

We run two record offices where original historical documents are made available to the public. These are at **Huntingdon Library and Archives**, where we store archives relating to the area covered by the historic county of Huntingdonshire, which is largely the same as the modern HDC area; and (from autumn 2019) at **Cambridgeshire Archives** in Ely, where we store records for all other areas of Cambridgeshire.

If you have material that you think should be deposited with the Archives Service, please telephone us on 01223 699399 (City, South Cambs, East Cambs and Fenland area records) or 01480 372738 (Huntingdonshire area records) to discuss this with our team, or email us at cals@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

When you bring your records for deposit, you will be asked to complete a deposit form on which the terms of the transfer and issues such as preservation needs and any access restrictions will be recorded. A receipt including our terms of deposit will be given to you later, once CAS staff have itemised the accession.

If you intend to transfer a large series of records then please discuss this with CAS staff before bringing them in.

Copies of records may be supplied to members of the public, on payment of an appropriate charge, for use in private study. Depositors may negotiate restrictions on reproduction.

Retention Guidelines for Local Authority Records

Notes on Actions

- **Preserve:** offer to Cambridgeshire Archives
- **Destroy:** the Archives Service will not accept these records. You must destroy these records at the end of their retention period
- **Review:** an archivist will review the collection and may select documents to preserve. Those records not selected may be destroyed by the Parish Clerk, or retained locally.

Records	Retention period	Action
Administrative		
Signed council and committee minutes	Transfer to CAS after 6 years or once they become inactive	Preserve
Draft minutes	Until the date of confirmation of the minutes	Destroy
Agendas	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Destroy
Reports and other documents circulated with agendas	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement. Destroy these reports if copies are already included with signed minutes	Review
Councillors' declarations of office	4 years or until they vacate office	Destroy
Byelaws and orders	Preserve one of each copy and transfer to CALS once they become inactive	Preserve
Policy documents	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review
Title deeds more than 100 years old	Transfer to CAS once they become inactive.	Preserve
Title deeds less than 100 years old	Transfer to CAS for review once they become inactive.	Review
Property registers	Transfer to CAS once	Preserve

and terriers	they become inactive	
Maps, plans, and surveys of property owned by the council or meetings	Transfer to CAS once they become inactive	Preserve
Correspondence and papers on important local issues or activities	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review
Village/parish appraisals, plans, millennium projects and supporting papers	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review
Planning applications and related papers for major controversial developments	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review with the view to destroy
Planning applications for minor works where permission is refused	6 years	Destroy
Leases, agreements, contracts and wayleaves	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review
Quotations and tenders (successful)	12 years	Destroy
Quotations and tenders (unsuccessful)	2 years	Destroy
Routine correspondence and papers	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review with the view to destroy
Scale of fees and charges	Until superseded by new charges	Destroy
Employers' liability insurance policies	40 years after expiry date	Destroy
Risk assessments	Once superseded by a new risk assessment or once inactive	Destroy
Personnel files	6 Years plus 6 Years for summary for non-management staff; 12 Years after termination of service for management staff	Destroy

Personnel files – annual leave	2 years	Destroy
Financial		
Receipt and payment books	Transfer to CALS once they become inactive	Preserve
Rate books	Transfer to CALS. CALS may make a selection (eg one year in every ten years)	Preserve
Annual audited accounts	6 years.	Destroy, but preserve if the receipt and payment books have not survived.
Accounts and statements	6 years	Destroy
Vouchers before 1950	6 years	Destroy
Cash and petty cash books and rent books	6 years	Destroy
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	Destroy
Postage and telephone books	6 years	Destroy
Bank statements including deposit/saving accounts	6 years	Destroy
Bank paying-in books	Last completed Audit year	Destroy
Cheque book stubs	Last completed Audit year	Destroy
Paid invoices	6 years	Destroy
Paid cheques	6 years	Destroy
VAT records	6 years	Destroy
VAT claims	6 years	Destroy
Time sheets	Last completed Audit year	Destroy
Wage books	12 years	Destroy
Members' allowances register	6 years	Destroy
Records relating to parish halls, centres and recreation grounds, applications to hire, letting diaries, copies of bills to	6 years	Review with the view to destroy

hirers and records of tickets issued		
Miscellaneous		
Maps created as part of the authority's official business	Transfer to CAS once they become inactive	Preserve
Papers concerning Rights of Way	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review
Community magazines or newsletters	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement. CALS may transfer these records to the local studies collections	Review
Photographs	Until there is no longer an administrative requirement	Review
Any records created by predecessor authorities, eg poor law, surveyors of the highway, tithe maps and apportionments, enclosure awards etc.	Contact CAS as soon as possible with view to transfer	Preserve
Records of other bodies such as burial boards, charities, fire brigades, Home Guard unit, local society or ad hoc committee	Transfer to CAS once they become inactive	Preserve

Contact details

Cambridgeshire Archives: cambs.archives@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
01223 699399

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01480 372738