THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON

Archives & Records Management Advice for Parishes

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This following information is, with permission, drawn largely from the RCAOS Archies & Records Management Advice for Parishes authored by Jenny Delves, the Diocesan Archivist for the Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark (v.13 2024).

1 Introduction

This document gives professional advice and guidance on how parishes should care for their paper and electronic records. It relates to records in use by the parish for their everyday work and also to historical records that are no longer in current use. It is hoped that the paper will be helpful to parish priests, parish staff and volunteers, diocesan officials and administrators and others concerned with issues surrounding the administration of Catholic parish records.

1.1 What are parish records and archives?

Parishes create, process, store and provide access to records that capture evidence of the work to promote faith and evangelisation in the Catholic Church.

Parish records are all documents, electronic or paper, historic or current, produced, processed and stored by a parish. Parish 'archives' are the small proportion of these parish records which have been identified as having long-term historical value and have therefore been selected to be kept permanently in the parish archive.

Canon law explicitly mentions the keeping of certain types of records:

- baptism, marriage and death registers (Canon 535 §1 and 895)
- register of foundation Masses and other obligations (Canon 1307 §2)
- parish account books (Canon 1284 §7)
- register of catechumens (Canon 788 §1)
- title deeds, insurance policies and other papers relating to temporal goods (Canon 1284 §9)
- papers relating to marriage preparation (Canon 1066-1070)

Other records that might be held by a parish include:

- Parish correspondence
- Parish committee records
- Parish statistics
- Priests' official correspondence
- Priests' personal correspondence
- Priests' writings and sermon notes
- Records documenting parish events
- Audio & visual recordings of parish events
- Records of parish organisations

- Photographs
- Parish publicity material
- Parish magazine/ newsletter
- Service sheets and liturgies
- Notice books
- Newspaper cuttings
- Property records
- Architectural plans and drawings
- Documents relating to the parish's foundation
- Finance records
- Annual account books
- Records relating to bequests, legacies etc
- Parish staff personnel records
- Records of religious orders in the parish
- Records relating to schools
- Marriage paperwork

The Diocesan Archive does not hold parish records, except in very rare instances.

1.2 The importance of good records management

Records are an important and valuable parish asset. The priest and the parish, as custodians under Canon Law, have a duty of care for the records and are responsible for their safekeeping and good management.

Below are some benefits of managing parish archives and records well:

- Enables the creation of records which are adequate, consistent and necessary for statutory, legal and business requirements.
- Ensures systematic, orderly and consistent creation, retention, appraisal and disposal procedures for records throughout their life cycle.
- Provides systems which maintain appropriate confidentiality, security and integrity for records in their storage and use
- Without proper organisation the sheer volume of records (paper and electronic) can become overwhelming. Well managed records ensure that the right information is available to the right people at the right time.
- Many areas of parish activity are subject to external regulation, for example, child protection and finance, which makes it essential to maintain proper records.
- Good record keeping increases the parish's accountability to its parishioners, the Diocese, and the wider community.
- Good management of records ensures that records that will have archival or historical value in future are identified and preserved. Such records are part of a parish's cultural heritage.
- Records help tell the story of the parish and community, and also of individuals and families involved in the church.
- "In the mind of the Church, archives are places of memory of the Christian community and storehouses of culture for the new evangelization."[1]
- "The registers and other personal documents contain sacramental details and thus from the theological viewpoint can be seen as evidence of God's grace working in individuals and in the local community. Parish records are also essentially evidence of church administration, while in the wider context they show the part played by the parish in the life of the community."[2]
- "Often informal and ostensibly ephemeral records such as parish magazines and notices books can be of crucial importance in describing the social, cultural and institutional milieu of particular parishes."[3]

[1] "The Pastoral Function of Church Archives."

[2] The Care and Administration of Parish Records, p.7, Paul Shaw, 2007.

[3] *Ibid*, p.7.

2 Caring for parish records

"All documents which regard the diocese or parishes must be protected with the greatest care." (Canon 486 § 1)

2.1 Paper records

Paper records are those records created (either handwritten or printed) to be used in paper format. If official, they are signed by hand. Paper records are distributed and used in paper format regardless of how they are produced, for example newsletters printed once-off and circulated by hand; and typed and printed correspondence sent by post.

2.1.1 Storage for paper records in current and semi-current use

Parish paper records should be stored on church premises and not in private homes. They should be kept in boxes or filing cabinets. The storage area should be as fireproof as possible; free from damp and mould; well ventilated; and unlikely to be affected by flooding, insect or rodent activity. Therefore, attics, basements, garages and outhouses are not suitable. All records should be kept where they are safeguarded against unauthorised access. Confidential, sensitive or important records should be stored in locked filing cabinets or safes and must be disposed of in a secure manner e.g. through shredding. Parish registers should be kept in locked, fireproof cabinets or safes.

2.1.2 Long-term preservation for paper records of archival value

For paper records that are to be kept long-term as archives, some simple preservation measures should be taken:

- Ideally all archive records should be kept in archival, acid free boxes or folders (see Section 5: Further advice and resources for information on where such equipment can be purchased).
- Brass or plastic paperclips should be used rather than metal paper clips and staples which corrode and cause damage to documents.
- Do not use rubber bands on documents as these perish and cause damage to paper. Bundles may be tied with white archival tape.
- Storing documents in plastic wallets/ folders should be avoided as the plastic can cause a reaction which results in the ink sticking and lifting off the documents.
- Biros should not be used when completing registers, since the ink is unstable and fades over time. Registrar's black ink is ideal (for example; www.registrarsink.co.uk/registrars_ink.html).
- Registers should not be covered with brown paper or sticky-back plastic, both of which are highly acidic and will rot the covers over time.
- Registers and other documents should not be repaired with Sellotape as this will not last and will leave a sticky residue. A professional bookbinder or conservator should be consulted if repairs are required.
- Keep all items unfolded and as flat as possible; folding weakens paper.
- Files with metal fastenings such as lever arch folders should be avoided.
- Photo albums and scrapbooks where items are permanently glued down or laminated should not be used.

- Photographs should ideally be stored in archival standards polyester pockets.
- Newspaper disintegrates quickly and can damage the paper around it. Newspaper cuttings should go into their own folder or be separated by a blank sheet of paper from the papers around them.
- Handling of documents should be kept to a minimum. However, there is no need to wear gloves when handling them. Clean glove-free hands are best.

2.1.3 Dealing with damage to records

Despite the best care, occasionally an emergency such as a flood, pest outbreak or fire can affect parish records. Having a plan in place and knowing how to respond, can help minimise the damage caused. Parishes should ensure they include their records in any emergency, salvage or business continuity plans that they may have. Further information on how to deal damaged records can be found in Appendix 4: Dealing with damaged records and Appendix: 1 Further information and resources.

2.1.4 Digitisation of paper records

Digitisation can be used to enable easier access to, and sharing of, records held in physical form. Digitisation is also used as a means of preservation to limit handling of fragile records. Typically, this involves using a scanner or digital camera to create digital copies of physical records. Digitised copies are NOT original records.

Some considerations include:

- The digitisation process can cause damage to records. Fragile records must be handled with care and might require professional digitisation.
- When digitising, an appropriate format should be selected. An image format such as JPEG or TIFF should be selected for visual materials such as photographs or diagrams, while PDF may be more appropriate for documents and reports.
- Appropriate metadata must be recorded for the digitised records.
- Digitised copies should be treated and managed in the same way as other parish electronic records.
- Digitisation can be a time-consuming and expensive exercise. Ensure that there are clear benefits to digitising a set of records before committing to a digitisation project.
- Digital copies should not be seen as a replacement for the physical original. The physical copy should be retained especially if it has long-term or archival value.

2.2 Digital records

Digital records are those records created to be used in a digital format or environment. Official digital records are signed electronically. Digital records are distributed and used digitally. Examples include online newsletters, bulletins, website pages and email correspondence. Digitised copies of paper records are NOT original digital records.

2.2.1 Storage

All files should be stored in a OneDrive or SharePoint site provided by the Diocese. These are protected and backed up by the Diocese centrally. USB flash drives should not be used due to the high probability of either failure or loss.

Ensure all computers, laptops, and mobile phones used to create, process and store parish information are kept secure with strong passwords and end-point protection. This is provided by the Diocese for all Diocesan and Parish owned computers.

Please contact IT Support for assistance (itsupport@abdiocese.org.uk).

2.2.2 Management

Electronic records should be managed in the same way as paper records. They should be saved into an organised filing system and subject to retention and disposal. It is important that electronic records are given titles that are understandable, describe what the record is and include its creation date. The record's title and date should be recorded within the document (for example, as a header or footer) so that they can still be identified when printed. As electronic records are easily altered it is helpful to identify different versions of a document by including version numbers or 'draft', 'copy' etc in the title and in the document itself.

2.2.3 Email management

Emails are also electronic records and need to be managed and subject to the retention schedule. Transitory emails such as out-of-office replies should be deleted immediately; emails with short-term value such as notices of upcoming meetings should be kept in folders under the inbox and deleted when obsolete; records of value to the parish should be saved into the folder system alongside other electronic records and the email deleted from the inbox. Parishes should only use @abdiocese.org.uk email addresses for parish business.

2.2.4 Long-term preservation for electronic records of archival value

As a result of the risks outlined above, guaranteeing long-term access to electronic records requires more management, expertise and cost than guaranteeing long-term access to paper records. For this reason, it is recommended that all parishes consider carefully how they keep any electronic parish records that have been designated as archives.

It is recommended that parishes create an 'archive' folder in the parish SharePoint and store all electronic records that have been designated as archives there. This folder must be protected against accidental deletion and its contents protected against deletion or being altered in anyway (once they have been designated as part of the parish archive documents should not be changed in any way). This folder should be password protected and only key members of parish personnel should have access. Files in this folder should be given meaningful names, unique reference numbers and included on the archive catalogue or listing.

2.2.5 How to archive websites

The UK Web Archive (www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/) offers an easy way for parishes to archive their website. The Web Archive takes six monthly 'snapshots' of a website and makes them available via its website for free. For more information, contact the Web Archive using the form on their site.

2.3 Listing

"An inventory or catalogue is to be made of documents kept in the archive, with a short synopsis of each document." (Canon 486 § 3)

Having a list or catalogue, however simple, of the parish records is a very important tool in managing them. It will help the parish to know what records it holds and where to find them. It will help ensure that records are not kept for longer than required and enable parishes to be in control of their records.

It is not necessary to list every individual document. Rather the list may give one description for the contents of a folder, box or even filing cabinet drawer. For example, an entry might read "1 folder containing correspondence between the parish and Archbishop's House, 1990-1993." Ideally each item on the list should be given a unique reference number which should be written on the item (but not on the records themselves). The title, date, description and quantity of material should be listed.

For example, records listed on shelf A (where the shelves have been each clearly marked with their reference) might be listed as such:

Ref	Title/ description	Date	Quantity
A/1	Finance Committee minutes	1990-2000	3 folders
A/2	Audio cassette recordings of homilies	1982-1989	1 box – 20 cassettes
A/3	Large, framed photograph of Bishop Richard Moth	1996	1 framed photograph
A/4	General parish correspondence	1973-1976	1 box file

Archival cataloguing software, both freeware and commercial software, is available. It is also possible to use existing parish software such as Excel or Word for listing.

Parishes without an archivist should consider whether it would be of benefit to appoint a volunteer with an interest in archives or history to this role. Ideally, this person should be provided with training to assist them in this role and put in touch with the Diocesan Archivist as a means of support and advice.

2.4 Access to parish records

Parish archives are private archives and therefore there is no automatic right of access to them. However, the parish priest may, if he wishes, facilitate access to the parish's historic records. As a general rule, the Diocesan Archive does not allow researchers to access material less than 30 years old unless it was originally produced for public distribution. It is recommended that parishes follow this advice. While parishes may choose to allow access to their records, records must be consulted on parish premises and may not be loaned out to researchers. Researchers should be carefully supervised when using records.

Material contained in parish registers is subject to data protection legislation which ensures that no personal information about living individuals is revealed to a third party. To ensure that the Church works within this legislation, the Bishop's Conference has ruled that no information contained in parish registers is to be given out to researchers until it is 110 years' old. The exceptions to this rule are information requested by the person themselves, information required for any canonical purpose, and if it can be shown that the subject/s of the record is dead.

Data protection legislation should be borne in mind when allowing access to other archive material. However, historical archives are not the main concern of the legislation, which is intended primarily to regulate the use of relevant active data.

2.5 Suppression and mergers of parishes

Consideration must be given to the ongoing care and management of parish records and archives when a parish is suppressed or merged. If the new parish cannot take over management of the historical archives, the Diocesan Archivist should be contacted.

2.6 Parish archivist

"Where historical material continues to be held in the parishes, there is a strong argument for making a single individual… designated as 'parish archivist,' responsible for the care of the historic archive. This person would then be answerable to the parish priest, who is the responsible person under Canon Law, for the historical material."[4]

3 Record retention and disposal

3.1 Retention scheduling

A records retention schedule is a list of how long different sorts of records should be kept for and when and how they can be disposed of.

Retention schedules are important as they set out how long records must be kept for operational, legal, historical, fiscal and other purposes. Retention schedules identify records with archival value and help ensure that they are preserved for posterity. Retention schedules also identify when records can be disposed

[4] *The Care and Administration of Parish Records, p.15*

of, which helps prevent a build-up of obsolete records taking up valuable storage space and maintains compliance with GDPR.

3.2 How long should parish records be kept for?

A detailed retention schedule for parishes can be found in Appendix 1 of this guide. All parishes should aim to follow this advice which will enable parishes to know when they can dispose of obsolete records and help to ensure that important records are preserved.

3.3 Exceptions

A record may not be destroyed if any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or data protection request involving the record is initiated before the expiration of the retention period. The record must be retained until the completion of the action and the resolution of all issues that arise from it, or until the expiration of the retention period, whichever is later.

3.4 Secure shredding

Parishes are responsible for organising their own secure record shredding and are free to choose which company they wish to use and the time and method that best suits the parish.

When carrying out secure shredding, please adhere to Diocesan records management rules:

1. Please follow the record retention guidance in Appendix 1 when determining which records to dispose of.
2. Please complete a Record Disposal Form (see Appendix 2) for each group of records that are shredded. The Disposal Form must be kept permanently by the parish as evidence of which records were disposed of.
3. Please ensure that you receive a certificate of destruction from the shredding company. This certificate needs to be retained for six years after the date of destruction.

4 Data Protection and GDPR

Good records management is vital to good data governance and to ensure parishes comply with data protection legislation.

Clergy, parish staff and parish volunteers should take the time to familiarise themselves with the Data Protection Handbook and Privacy Notice, available on the Diocesan website, to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to GDPR when processing personal data, dealing with subject access requests and using diocesan IT and communications systems.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website also provides detailed information and guidance on the UK GDPR: ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/

4.1 Protection of parish archives

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection regulations make it clear that archives are to be protected. This means that personal data already in parish archives should not be removed, destroyed

or changed in any way and that personal data worthy of permanent preservation should be safeguarded and added to the parish archive rather than destroyed.

Data protection should not be used as an excuse to destroy material of potential archival value as retention of personal data for archival purposes is specifically permitted under section 33 of the Data Protection 1998 Act.

5 Diocesan Archive

The Diocesan Archive is housed in Pease Pottage, Crawley. There are no designated visitor opening hours or facilities, but visits may be arranged with the Diocesan Archivist.

5.1 Diocesan Archivist

The Diocesan archivist works a flexible 14-hour week and will respond to any enquiries as soon as possible. You can contact them here:

E: archive@abdiocese.org.uk

T: 01293 651142 (The St Philip Howard Centre, Crawley)

5.2 Role

One of the roles of the Diocesan Archive is to support and advise parishes in caring for their records. Parishes are most welcome to contact the Archive to ask for advice and guidance on managing their records.

5.3 Archive catalogue

Catalogue information can be requested from the Diocesan Archivist.

The Diocese is part of Networking Archives and Libraries of the Catholic Church (NALCC) with a presence on the Catholic Heritage website: www.catholic-heritage.net

5.4 What parish records are held in the Diocesan Archive?

The Diocesan Archive does not hold or collect parish records as these should all be held in the parish. However, in rare instances, some parish material has been transferred to the Diocesan Archive in the past.

The Diocesan Archive does have records that are of interest to parishes. For most parishes, the Diocesan Archive has at least one large box file of records relating to that parish. These contain records of the interaction between the Diocese and the parish and include correspondence, visitation forms and reports, statistical returns, possibly some financial, legal and canonical papers, and often some event papers, photographs and publications; these records can be very valuable resources for parish history research. The Diocesan Archive also keeps a collection of published Parish Histories in its Reference Library.

5.5 Church inventories

All churches should have an inventory of objects of artistic and historic interest that they hold. The reasons to have such an inventory include:

- It helps the parish to know where things are and find items quickly when they are needed.
- It enables a parish to provide a description of a lost or stolen item to insurers or the police and maximises the chances of tracing missing items.
- It assists the parish in proving legal ownership if there is a dispute about title.
- It shows that the parish cares for the objects in their care.
- Good documentation assists parishes in monitoring sensitive items that may be prone to deterioration and plan for restoration or conservation.

The Bishops' Conference Patrimony Committee has produced guidance on inventories which can be found on their website: cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2018/11/inventory-guidelines.pdf.

Further resources can be found in Appendix 1.

At a minimum, the essential elements that a church inventory should include for each object are:

1. A good photograph of the object;

2. The object's dimensions;

3. A description of the object's condition;

4. A record of the object's location;

5. Any provenance details known about the object.

Appendix 1: Retention schedule

Notes

- This retention schedule can be applied to both the records currently being produced and used in the parish and to historical records or archives which are no longer used for business purposes.
- "Key" correspondence or documents are records which help to tell the story of the parish, its work or its relationships; documents which contain historically significant information or official statements; documents expressing direction, support or approval for projects, contracts, policies, actions or a particular activity or decision, including dissenting views; documents which give information on a dispute or situation; correspondence with significant people.
- Records that are closed may be accessed by parish staff for work, pastoral or canonical purposes. Closed records may not be accessed by parishioners or members of the public.
- Records that are open may be accessed by anyone at the discretion of the parish priest.

Church Buildings and Property Records			
Type of record	**How long to keep it**	**What action to take after this time**	**Access**
Architectural drawings, photographs, and plans for property including church	Permanently	Transfer to parish archive	Open
Historic property papers e.g. pre-1900	Permanently	Transfer to parish archive	Open
Records documenting major maintenance and development works on property	End of works +15 years	Transfer key records to parish archive. Destroy the rest	Closed for 30 years
Records documenting minor maintenance and development works on property	End of works +6 years	Destroy	Closed

Type of record	How long to keep it	What action to take after this time	Access
Property Deeds	Keep for as long as the property is in parish ownership	Pass to new owner if property is sold	Open
Records documenting the purchase, disposal or leasing out of properties	Disposal of property/ end of tenancy + 12 years	Destroy	Open
General correspondence related to property	Last action on correspondence + 6 years	Destroy	Closed
Graveyard: Plans, registers of graves, and accompanying records	Permanently	Transfer to parish archive	Open
Parish Personnel Records			
Personnel records: *Please note that personnel records should not be kept in parishes. Rather they should be transferred securely to the Diocese centrally. The information below sets out how long personnel records will be kept by HR.*			
Records relating to the appointment of parish clergy	Not kept by parish.		
Personal papers and correspondence of clergy	Priest's personal property to manage as he sees fit	Priest's personal property to manage as he sees fit	Closed
Writings and sermon notes of clergy	Duration of appointment	Transfer a sample to the parish archive with priest's permission	At discretion of parish
Parish lay staff personnel records **Full staff records must be kept**	Termination of employment + 6 years	Destroy securely	Closed
Parish lay staff summary record of employment details (kept after the termination of employment. Employee's name, dates of employment, positions held).	Until age 100	Destroy securely	Closed

Type of record	How long to keep it	What action to take after this time	Access
Parish Financial Records			
Parish Finance Committee minutes and papers	Permanently	Transfer to parish archive	Closed for 30 years
Finance records including cash books, bills, bank statements, financial returns, budgets, accounting records and other subsidiary financial records	Current financial year + 6 years	Destroy securely	Closed
Insurance policies	Date of expiry + 6 years	Destroy securely	Closed
Records relating to bequests, legacies etc	Permanently	Transfer to parish archive	Closed for 30 years
Records documenting the negotiation, establishment, and alteration of contracts and agreements	End of contract + 6 years	Destroy securely	Closed
Gift aid records	Last payment + 6 years	Destroy	Closed
Mass intention envelopes – not gift aided	Do not keep	Destroy	Closed
Mass intention envelopes –gift aided [Gift Aid rules apply]	Last payment + 6 years	Destroy	Closed
Diocesan, Deanery, Parish and Civil Administration Records			
Documents relating to Parish's foundation and dedication	Permanently	Keep permanently in parish archive. Store in a safe	Open
Pastorals and Ad Clerum	Current year + 2 years	Destroy	Closed
Papers of Diocesan Commissions, Synods etc	Current year + 2 years	Destroy securely	Closed
Deanery Papers	Current year + 2 years	Destroy parish copies Deanery copies to be sent to Diocesan Archive	Closed

Type of record	How long to keep it	What action to take after this time	Access
Marriage paperwork	Permanently		Closed
Baptism applications	Baptism date + 1 year	Destroy	Closed
Holy Communion and Confirmation consent/ permission forms	Date of Holy Communion or Confirmation + 1 year	Destroy	Closed
Parish Administration Records			
General and routine correspondence (priest's and parish)	Last action on correspondence + 2 years	Destroy	Closed
Official/key correspondence (priest's and parish's)	Permanently	Transfer to parish archive	Closed for 30 years
Parish Committees minutes and papers	Permanently	Transfer to parish archive	Closed for 30 years
Databases, mailing and contact lists	Keep most up-to-date version	Destroy when no longer required	Closed
Pastoral Statistics and Parish Register Returns	Permanently	Transfer to parish archive	Closed for 30 years
Parish Profiles	Permanently	Transfer to parish archive	Closed for 30 years
Other organisations', churches' and diocesan publications, minutes and other material	Keep as long as required for working purposes	Destroy	Closed
Agreements for hire of hall	Termination of agreement + 6 years	Destroy	Closed
Sacramental and other Registers			
Sacramental and other registers (Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, Catechumens, Death, and any others kept by the parish).	Permanently	Transfer to parish archives	Entries are closed for 110 years

Type of record	How long to keep it	What action to take after this time	Access
Civil Marriage Registers and indexes (Due to legislative changes, these ceased to be added after May 2021)	Permanently	Transfer to parish archives	Open
Parishioner Records			
Status Animarum (parish family book)	Permanently	Transfer to parish archives	Closed for 30 years
Sick Call Books	Permanently	Transfer to parish archives	Closed for 110 years
School application church attendance forms	School application process complete + 1 year	Securely destroy	Closed
Church Services and Event Records			
Service sheets and liturgies	End of event + 1 year	Transfer one copy to parish archives	Open
Photographs, visual and audio recordings of parish activities, events, people and property (see below for specific closure periods)	End of the event/when no longer required for working purposes	Transfer to the parish archive Ensure that event, date, location and, if possible, those in the photographs/ recordings are noted.	The access details listed here are for consultation in the parish archive. Photographs and recordings of living people must not be used for any other purpose unless their consent has been obtained.

Type of record	How long to keep it	What action to take after this time	Access
Photographs, visual and audio recordings which: o contain no people; o are already in the public domain e.g. printed in newspaper; o contain people where consent has been obtained to use the photograph in this way; o contain unnamed adults			Open
Photographs, visual and audio recordings which: o contain named adults			Keep closed for 30 years after the event (unless already in public domain or consent has been obtained)
Photographs, visual and audio recordings which contain unnamed children			Keep closed for 30 years after the event (unless already in public domain or consent has been obtained)
Photographs, visual and audio recordings which contain named children			Keep closed for 100 years after the event (unless already in public domain or consent has been obtained)

Type of record	How long to keep it	What action to take after this time	Access
Records documenting parish events	End of the event + 2 years	Transfer key documents such as reports and programmes to parish archive. Destroy ephemeral records.	Open
Parish notice books	Permanently	Transfer to parish archives	Open
Parish Publications			
Parish magazines and newsletters	Permanently	Transfer 1 copy to parish archive	Open
Parish publications including parish histories	Permanently	Transfer 2 copies to parish archive. Transfer 1 copy to Diocesan archive	Open
Parish Organisation Records			
Minutes and papers	Permanently	Transfer to parish archive	Closed for 30 years
Correspondence	Current year + 2 years	Transfer key correspondence to parish archive. Destroy other correspondence.	Closed for 30 years
Religious Orders/ Schools in the Parish			
Correspondence and papers	Current year + 5 years	Transfer key records to parish archive. Destroy other records.	Closed for 30 years

Appendix 2: Record Disposal Form

Paper Records Disposal Form

Parish/Agency Name:	
Name of Person Completing Form: (please print clearly)	
Date:	

Record Title:	
Description of Records:	
Date Range (yyyy-yyyy):	
Reason for Disposal: (Refer to the Retention Schedule)	
Date of Disposal:	

DISPOSAL AUTHORITY DECLARATION:*

Authority: Name Signature		Date:	

*The manager or nominated deputy are the only authorities who can sign off on disposal

Appendix 3: Dealing with Damaged Archives

Wet documents

Immediate action needs to be taken with any wet documents, books or photographs to prevent mould growth and physical distortion of the paper. Although some damage may be irreversible, taking action gives items a good chance of survival. In the case of a small number of wet items, these can be treated easily and cheaply by air-drying in the parish. As mould growth can begin within 72 hours, if there are more documents than is possible to dry in that period, untreated documents should be frozen to prevent mould growth. This will require outside help from Harwell document recovery and restoration services.

The table below gives an indication on how much space it takes to dry different types and quantities of documents. This helps plan how much material can be dried in a parish within 72 hours.

Contents of Crate	**How much can be fitted on a 1.5x0.75 m table**	**Number of tables required:**
40 bound volumes	20	2
5000 individual documents	20 sheets laid singly, interleaved with blotting paper, stacked 10 layers high. 200 sheets in total.	25
5000 individual photographs	20 laid singling. Cannot be interleaved with blotting paper or stacked.	250

See: cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/wet-documents.pdf for advice on how to dry items.

Mould growth

Mould grows in areas with high temperature, high relative humidity, and low air circulation. Many people are sensitive to mould and some mould species are toxic. Mouldy items should, therefore, be handled with extreme care.

Parish staff may be able to manage a small mould outbreak themselves. The item(s) should be isolated in a cool, dry location, with plenty of air circulation, to prevent contamination of other items. The mould should be dry and powdery to the touch before treatment begins. It should be treated by airing it well with cool air. Removal should be done outside, wearing gloves and a mask, with a soft brush. For larger outbreaks or if it is deemed not safe for parish staff to treat it, outside assistance from Harwell document recovery and restoration services will be required. Do not return the records to their original location until the conditions causing the mould growth are addressed.

Fire damage

A fire can cause number of problems for records. There will be charred, sooty, fragile and usually wet material. Fire damage can be difficult to deal with, and it will usually be best to call on Harwell document recovery and restoration services in the first instance.

Pests

Pests such as silverfish, rodents and beetles can damage documents. Infestations can be treated but the aim should be to prevent pests from becoming established and causing damage in the first place. Guidance can be found in Appendix 1: Further assistance and resources.

Appendix 4: Further Advice & Resources

Catholic Archive Society

The Catholic Archive Society (catholicarchivesociety.org/home) offers support to those caring for Catholic archives, for a minimal membership fee. They have produced some useful resources including:

- Advice leaflets on keeping archives which are aimed at non-professionals. Topics include sorting, listing, retention, classification, cataloguing, preservation, access, exhibitions, disaster planning, records management and copyright. These are available to download free of charge here: catholicarchivesociety.org/advice-leaflets
- Additional Advice pamphlets which are available to purchase can be found at:
- catholicarchivesociety.org/advice-leaflets-occasional-papers

Caring for Archives

- The National Archives: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/advice-and-guidance/
- The National Archives' guide to record keeping for non-archivists, *Archive Principles and Practice: an introduction to archives for non-archivists*, at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archive-principles-and-practice-an-introduction-to-archives-for-non-archivists.pdf

Other Churches' Record Keeping Advice

Other churches and dioceses have produced record keeping advice for parishes:

- Church of England, Keep or Bin...? The Care of Your Parish Records, www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/care_of_parish_records_keep_or_bin_-_2009_edition.pdf
- United Reformed Church: urc.org.uk/your-church/guidance-support-for-churches-synods/archive-record-keeping-guidance/

GDPR

- ico.org.uk/for-organisations
- Catholic Insurance Services (CIS) resources: catholicinsuranceservice.co.uk/members-area
- National Archives Guide to Archiving Personal Data: cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management

Caring for Paintings

- collectionstrust.org.uk/resource/caring-for-paintings-and-frames-in-museums

Caring for Photographs

- www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archivesconservation_photo.pdf
- www.loc.gov/preservation/care/photo.html
- collectionstrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Museums-Galleries-Scotland-Caring-for-photographic-collections-in-museums-March-2009.pdf

Document Salvage & Restoration Services

- Harwell Restoration: www.harwellrestoration.co.uk
- Fine Art Restoration Co: fineart-restoration.co.uk/our-services/disaster-recovery

Emergency recovery and planning

- cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/memo6.pdf
- www.rapidresponsenetwork.org.uk/resources
- Salvaging library and archive collections, Preservation Advisory Centre salvaging_library_and_archive_collections-FOR-PRINT.pdf
- Mould outbreaks in library and archive collections, Collections Trust Mould outbreaks in library and archive collections - Collections Trust
- Managing Pests in Paper-Based Collections, British Library managing-pests-in-paper-based-collections-guide.pdf

Preservation resources

There are several companies which sell archival equipment such as archival standard folders and boxes. These include:

- Conservation by Design: www.cxdinternational.comr
- Preservation Equipment: www.preservationequipment.com
- Conservation Resources: www.conservation-resources.co.uk

Funding

There are various funding bodies who give funding for archive work. The National Archives has a helpful webpage giving advice on seeking funding:

- www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/finding-funding

Church inventories

- cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2018/11/inventory-guidelines.pdf
- www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/cathedral-fabric-commission/advice-and-guidance-cathedrals/cathedral-inventories
- English Scottish Irish Silver & Gold Marks From 1300 to the Present Day, Ian Pickford, Jackson's Hallmarks, Pocket edition, 2023
- Church Furnishings, Patricia Dirsztay, A National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies Guide, 1978