

# Caring for Parish Records



### The Measure

The Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978, passed by the General Synod of the Church of England, was intended to ensure the long-term care and preservation of, and access to, parish records. It was a response to the interest and use of parish records in historical research, recognition that church employees did not necessarily have the skills or appropriate storage conditions to care for parish records, and the development of archival services in the country.

## How this affects you

It is our duty to carefully preserve our records to help those in the future to understand contemporary concerns at different times in the history of a church and parish. The records contribute to a picture of life in the past and are useful for those researching social history, genealogy, etc.

# The Role of the Records Officers

The Diocese has appointed a team of Records Officers who will

- visit a parish to examine the records currently held there;
- prepare the paperwork listing the records presented to them;
- suggest the archiving of materials not in current use;
- provide a report for the appropriate Archdeacon.

The Records Officers aim to visit parishes at least once every 5 years, usually in association with a parish visitation by the Archdeacon. Such visits will be arranged by the Officer, in liaison with the Archdeacon's PA, prior to the Archdeacon's visitation. However, visits can be requested by parishes, e.g., when it would be helpful to organise and archive accumulating records.

The Records Officers will help the parish to ensure that records are kept in good order and in the correct conditions. They will advise on how and where they are kept and which materials should be archived.

The Officers will also encourage parishes to start collecting materials relevant to church life today, for example parish magazines, details of special events, etc. which will begin to form the basis of the 'future history' of parishes. Anything which illustrates how the parish adjusted during the covid pandemic should also be sampled and stored: digital materials are particularly at risk of being lost.

## What you need to do in preparation for the visit

If possible, the visit should be with the incumbent or a churchwarden, but the incumbent may delegate to someone else in the parish.

You should organise somewhere comfortable to meet together, with space to examine each set of documents and to write lists of items seen.

Please read the parish copy of *Keep or bin...?* This is available at <a href="https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/care">https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/care</a> of parish records keep or bin - 2009 edition.pdf

You must gather as much documentation as possible, e.g.:

- inventory, terrier, major faculties;
- registers for baptisms, funerals, wedding services;
- graveyard plans, signed PCC minutes, Annual Report & Accounts;
- parish magazines and other records of parish life.

Please organise the materials according to the visit pro-forma which the Records Officer will send you. (You should also know where other records are kept.)

## What to expect on the day

A visit should last around 1½ to 2 hours, but may be longer if there are a lot of documents to examine.

At this meeting you should discuss:

- a) what has to go to Archives;
- b) what could go to Archives;
- c) what the Parish would like or would prefer to keep;
- d) who is to be responsible for taking the records to the Archives.

# Follow Up

We will: send a paper with the agreed list for archiving; ensure that archiving has taken place;

report the action that has been agreed, and copy to the Archdeacon, Parish Officers and the Archives.

You should: report the visit and its result to the PCC;

ensure archiving has taken place;

maintain a folder listing all parish records deposited at the

Archives to be kept with the inventory.

# **Useful Telephone Numbers/Websites/Email Addresses**

**Records Officers:** (all addresses below are @leeds.anglican.org)

Bradford	Charles Wilson	charles.wilson	01535 653 523
	Gillian Wilson	gillian.wilson	01535 653 523
Huddersfield	Diane Freeman	diane.freeman	07870 349 065
Leeds (North)	Lynne Barber	lynne.barber	01943 466 493
	Ian Cowling	ian.cowling	0113 250 6792
Leeds (South)	lan Rex	lan.rex	0113 263 8656
Ripon	Maggie Morris	maggie.morris	01833 627 084
	Jenny Thompson	jenny.thompson	07815 796 004
Wakefield	Paul Harris	paul.harris	01977 707 056
& coordintor			

The officers are assigned to an Episcopal Area but may work across boundaries, depending on their home base and availability.

#### **Archives:**

#### The Diocesan Archive is the West Yorkshire Archive Service:

http://www.wyjs.org.uk/archive-services

[with links to 5 district offices in Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and the West Yorkshire History Centre, Wakefield].

## Archives serving other parts of the Diocese:

North Yorkshire https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/county-record-office

Lancashire http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-

archives/archives-and-record-office

North East http://www.durhamrecordoffice.org.uk/

For more information about church records:

#### Church of England Records Office

15 Galleywall Road, South Bermondsey, London, SE16 3PB

https://www.churchofengland.org/more/libraries-and-archives/records-management-guides

**Diocesan Links** 

Diocese of Leeds: Church House, 17-19 York Place, Leeds, LS1 2EX

http://www.leeds.anglican.org 0113 200 0540

**Diocesan Registrar:** David Whitaker

david.whitaker@luptonfawcett.law 0113 280 2102

**Diocesan Secretary:** Jonathan Wood

jonathan.wood@leeds.anglican.org 0113 353 0272