Parish Archives

Approved by: The Perth Diocesan Trustees

File #423(a)/608

Also refer to Records and Archives Statute 1996

Introduction

Archives in the Diocese of Perth

The Diocese of Perth has a Diocesan Archives Committee which is charged with ensuring that the records and archives of the diocese are looked after and made available to all who want to use them, subject to any agreed access restrictions.

There is an Archives area on the 10th floor of the Law Chambers Building. The archives are processed and arranged by the Archivist.

The Diocesan Archives and parish records

The Diocesan Archives can store and look after parish records. However, there is no pressure on parishes to transfer their records to the Archives as long as they are properly cared for in the home parish. Parish archives stored at the Diocesan Archives can be returned to parishes for events such as exhibitions.

Parishes SHOULD NOT transfer records to the Archives without first consulting the Archivist.

Contact details

Archivist, Annie Q. Medley
Email: archives@perth.anglican.org
(Wednesday, Thursday, Friday)
Open for research by appointment:
1pm-4pm
Direct Line 9425 7243
Diocesan Office 9325 7455

Why are your parish records important?

Parishes keep records for two quite separate but equally important reasons:

1. to satisfy the requirements of running an efficient organisation, including legal and financial responsibilities;
2. to leave a record of what we did and how we lived and worshipped for future generations to research.

Why are parish archives a problem?

Those running parishes often have problems with records.

- There may be nowhere suitable to keep records and parishioners may not know how to care for them.
- Parish officers may not know what records they ought to keep and how they should keep them.
POLICY GUIDELINES – No. 43.1

The diocese also has a concern that the proper records should be retained.

- There is a worry when parish officers keep records at home or do not pass them on to their successors.
- Concerns is also felt when there does not seem to be anybody in a parish who cares for the records as this means they may be disposed of indiscriminately.

What is the purpose of this booklet?

This booklet is designed to help those who run parishes enjoy the jobs they undertake without having to worry too much about decisions concerning records. It will help them to understand:

- what records to keep and who is responsible for them;
- how records are best stored;
- when material can be disposed of;
- when it might be best to transfer the material to the Diocesan Archives for safe long-term storage.

Records kept in parishes

The records kept in parishes usually fit into the following broad categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of record</th>
<th>Person responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registers of services, baptisms etc.</td>
<td>Rector or Priest-in Charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence, parish council minutes</td>
<td>Parish Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial records</td>
<td>Parish Treasurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs, memorabilia, newsletters</td>
<td>Archivist*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records of parish organisations</td>
<td>Secretary, Convener of Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*It is desirable that parishes have a designated honorary archivist. This may be the parish secretary.

Action you can take:

1. Identify the records kept in your parish, especially older records and records of parish groups. Ask parish members if they have anything at home
2. Discuss your parish records at a parish council meeting and decide who should be responsible.

How long should records be kept?

The Diocese has a detailed list of categories of its records and how long they need to be kept. If the table below does not help you to decide whether something can be disposed of, contact the Diocesan Archivist for advice.

In general, you should try not to throw materials away unless you are certain that they will not be useful to historians of your parish in the future.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of record</th>
<th>Dispose or archive?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Records of individual financial transactions (bank statement, receipts, cheque stubs, etc.)</td>
<td>Dispose of seven years after the end of the financial year to which they refer. (Do not send to Diocesan Archives).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual financial statement presented at Parish AGM.</td>
<td>Keep indefinitely and archive (may be archived as part of the records of an AGM or as a separate series of accounts).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes of committee meetings, correspondence of a non-personal nature including correspondence with Diocesan Office.</td>
<td>Keep until ready to transfer to the Diocesan Archives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal or sensitive correspondence.</td>
<td>If there is any concern about such correspondence, consult the Diocesan Archivist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorabilia, pew sheets, bulletins, newsletters, posters and orders of service for special events in the parish and at the church.</td>
<td>Keep until ready to transfer to Diocesan Archives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>Identify persons and events if possible and write in 2B pencil only on back of photograph. (See next page for advice on storage). Keep until ready to transfer to Diocesan Archives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulars, trade literature, notices of events elsewhere (e.g. other parishes, diocese, non-church organisations), etc.</td>
<td>Dispose of at any time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registers of services, baptisms, marriages and funerals.</td>
<td>Keep until ready to transfer to Diocesan Archives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Action you can take:**

Look at the paperwork stored in your parish and dispose of any material which it is not necessary for you to keep. The motto is: **Fewer and Better Records.**
# POLICY GUIDELINES – No. 43.1

How should records be stored?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of record</th>
<th>Preferred Storage Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registers</td>
<td>Store flat on a shelf preferably inside a cupboard with doors. Do not place anything else on top of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>Place in manila folders in proper filing cabinets or boxes/expandable files especially designed for the storage of documents. Where possible use plastic coated paper clips not staples. It is best not to use lever arch files stored on a shelf like a book as the weight of the paper inside them can damage the documents. Correspondence which has been dealt with should be stored at the parish office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial records</td>
<td>Storage will probably be that which suits the Treasurer best but a box file will help to keep cheque books and receipt books together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>Do NOT use albums unless they are of archival quality. It is preferable to keep photographs unmounted inside a closed box than to put them in an unsuitable album. If you have photographs in an album which covers the photo with a transparent sheet which adheres to the page below, try gently to remove them. If this is not possible consult the Diocesan archivist or take the album to a photographic shop and have them copied digitally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General memorabilia, including historic artefacts (such as trowels used to lay foundation stones).</td>
<td>Store in boxes with lids which are not too large. It should be possible to remove the materials easily to find something at the bottom of the box.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do not try to repair records which are damaged. In particular, never use commercial sticky tape for repair. It is better to wrap very damaged items in paper and tie loosely with string not elastic bands.

See Appendix for a list of suppliers of storage materials for archives.

**Action you can take:**

Examine the way your records are being stored at present and decide whether better forms of storage are needed.
Transfer to the Diocesan Archives

The Diocese of Perth would prefer that older records from parishes be stored at the Diocesan Archives where they are less likely to be damaged or inappropriately disposed of. However, there is no obligation on parishes to transfer materials.

You should consider transferring material when:

1. records are over 25 years old.
2. records are too bulky to store at your parish
3. records are in danger from damp, etc.
4. the parish is to be merged or closed.

The stages of transfer are as follows:

1. Obtain agreement of Parish Council and contact the Diocesan Archivist to discuss your intentions.
2. Dispose of any materials which are not of historical interest, keeping any about which there is any doubt.
3. Box the records and label the outside with a list of what is in the box (this need not be very detailed).
4. Take the records to the Diocesan Offices. Contact the Diocesan Archivist on 9325 7455 if temporary parking under Law Chambers will be needed.

If there are serious doubts about what records should be transferred, contact the Diocesan Archivist and make an appointment for the records to be appraised.
Appendix

Suppliers of archival storage materials

**Albox Australia Pty Ltd**
56 North Terrace
Kent Town, SA 5067
Telephone: 1300 555 717
Facsimile: 08 8362 4066
email: [albox@albox.com.au](mailto:albox@albox.com.au)
Perth Contact: Tony Connelly
Mobile: 0417 934 624
Facsimile: 08 9408 1257

**Conservation Resources**
31-33 Chifley Drive Preston Victoria 3072
Telephone: 1300 132 570
Facsimile: 1300 132 571
e-mail: [sales@conservationresources.com.au](mailto:sales@conservationresources.com.au)

**Zetta Florence**
187 Gertrude Street (PO Box 109)
Fitzroy VIC 3065
Telephone: 1300 555 124
Facsimile: 1300 555 024
E-mail: [info@zettaflorence.com.au](mailto:info@zettaflorence.com.au)