

**Scotland General Meeting
Archive Group**

Archiving policy for Scotland's Meetings

This policy derives from the recommendations made to General Meeting (minute 8, March 2010) and which have been available on the General Meeting website since then.

Specific practices adopted under this policy should be based on the detailed advice and guidance provided by Friends House in *Meetings' Records* (these replace the earlier publication, *Your Meeting's records* and are available to download as PDF files from <http://www.quaker.org.uk/meeting-libraries-and-records>). Reference to the appropriate guide(s) is given at the end of each paragraph, but archivists should be familiar with the detailed guides.

1. Each Local and Area Meeting, together with General Meeting, should appoint an archivist whose role will be to carry out this policy in a manner appropriate to his/her Meeting. (Guide no.1)
2. GM should maintain a list of Friends willing to advise on archival matters who can help any Meeting which is unable to appoint an archivist. (Guide no. 1)
3. The archivist must be aware of the relevant legislation governing documents, their retention and storage and access to them. (Guide no. 3)
4. Paper records which are to be kept permanently should be on acid-free paper and kept in archival quality containers. If this is not feasible, good quality paper should be used and documents filed in ring binders. Plastic pockets and folders, if used, should be made of polyester. (Guide nos. 4 and 7)
5. Supporting documents (e.g., correspondence) should be attached to the relevant minutes. Loose documents, i.e., those not associated with a minute, should be stored in archival boxes or folders, with an index or contents list. (Guide no. 5)
6. All files of documents should be indexed appropriately and to at least a basic standard which will act as a finding aid for specific documents. This will be the job of the Archivist (or whoever is willing to advise). (Guide no. 5)
7. Once a suitable number of paper documents have accumulated, they should be bound as a single volume, together with an index and a clear label of the contents. "Suitable number" will take into account the number of pages and the size of such a bound volume. Springback folders are preferable to ring binders, but neither is especially secure, and binding is preferable. (Guide nos. 4 and 5)
8. Files, records, etc. should be stored in suitable accommodation which is dust- and damp-free. Confidential records should be stored in a locked filing cabinet. (Guide no. 4)
9. Records can also be digitised and stored on computers, CD-ROMs or USB memory sticks. These must also be stored properly, preferably with back-up

copies which are held in a different location. There must be a clear back-up policy for digital records (i.e., how frequently a back-up is made). (Guide nos. 4 and 6)

10. Archivists should keep in mind the need to transfer digital records to new technologies as they become available. (Guide no. 6)
11. If it is considered appropriate (e.g. for a small Local Meeting which does not have the facilities for long-term storage), that Local Meeting's records should be sent triennially to the relevant AM, where they will be accumulated and transferred after 10 years to the National Archives of Scotland (see below).
12. A retention schedule for documents which meets legal requirements should be developed and held by the archivist and the Meeting Clerk. It will list the records produced and the length of time for which they must be retained by the Meeting. It will also list the action to be taken once the retention period has passed. A decision to destroy documents should not be taken lightly: it might be better to consider also depositing such documents with the National Archives of Scotland. If they are to be destroyed, confidential documents must be shredded or pulped. (Guide no. 2)
13. Area Meetings must decide which records can be made available to researchers (whether Friend or non-Friend) and under what the conditions. This will include the closure period, i.e., the period within which access to records is not permitted, questions of copyright, etc.. Requests to use records should be made to the archivist. The closure period and conditions relating to closed records must be included when documents are deposited with the National Archives. (Guide no.8)
14. Documents more than 10 years old should be deposited with the National Archives of Scotland, at which point Meetings can consider whether they need to retain copies. Before documents are deposited, they should be bound (i.e., not deposited in ring binders) in sets of between 10 and 15 years worth. This will ensure that documents are not lost. (Note: Currently, the National Archives of Scotland prefers not to accept digital records. Archivists should monitor this situation until the National Archives announce that digital copies can be deposited). (Guide no. 8)

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