

## A Guide to Retention of Records East Cheshire Area Meeting :

### Version 2a: February 2024

**This document is compiled from guides available from the Friends House Librarian and a document from Warwick and Birmingham Area Meeting.**

**Charlotte Harrison, of Disley Meeting, has worked diligently, working through all the material stored in the Wilmslow Strong Room, and compiling a catalogue. Friends in East Cheshire thank Charlotte for her work.**

**Charlotte is available to give advice to a Friend who is not sure what to store, or pass on to another role holder, or to destroy. If in doubt please contact Charlotte, you will find her contact details in the LOMA.**

**This Guidance Document was on the agenda for Area Meeting in January 2024. Friends received it positively and gave some feedback. Their amendments are included.**

**Two issues to note:- a. Electronic Storage:- see the heading with Geoff Tomlinson's advice p3- and b. Confidentiality :- will be maintained, the Wilmslow Strong Room is only opened under the supervision of the two key holders, Charlotte or myself. Marking files holding sensitive material "CONFIDENTIAL" will help ensure limited access.**

**Version 2a-February 2024. I will keep a working copy and if Friends make further suggestions, I will keep notes ready for a review of this guidance in 2027.**

**Gavin Mendham – key holder Wilmslow Strong Room – February 2024**

Advice to Clerks and convenors re the keeping of material from business meetings:-

1. Keep all minutes and Supporting Documents
2. The “ideal” storage as Friends House recommends is the use of spring-back folders, or for binding, maintain a left hand margin of 30mm. (please note that Cheshire East Archives have stated they will put documents received in to their own folders.)
3. To be realistic a variety of Files and Folders will be in use in our Meeting Houses and homes.
4. Be aware of which documents become “non-current” after a year
5. “Non-current” means records which are no longer needed on a regular basis, may be referred to occasionally, e.g. used less than once a year.

At the end of a year, ideal practice if Clerks and Convenors can follow this:-

6. Print off all Minutes and Supporting Documents. For near perfect storage, FH recommend this should be on archive quality paper, laser printer or photocopier.(Archive paper is the ideal it is not essential)
7. Cross reference minutes with their supporting documents. FH recommend putting the year and minute number in the top right corner of the first page of each Supporting Document. Minutes should indicate the presence of a corresponding supporting document.
8. Prepare a Covering Page and place an index behind it, after which the Minutes will be in date order, supporting documents can follow each set of minutes.
9. Ideally -Place in spring-back folders. The principle is that no materials which might rust or stain the paper should be in contact with it. If ring binders are used, ensure that metal fasteners, (staples, paper clips) are not in the file for long term storage.
10. If clear folders are used, ideally they should be made of polyester are advised, rather than PVC - see FH Librarian’s Guide no 7.
11. When records are no longer being consulted e.g. less than once a year, transfer the folder to the Wilmslow strong room. A folder may contain several years’ records. See in the Retention Schedule the decisions for storage:- “Permanent” “Review” “Destroy”
12. Besides committee minutes and supporting documents a LM or AM will be acquiring other documents which might be of historic or legal importance. These are treated differently and there is information in the “Retention Schedule” for such documents.

Questions:-

13. What is a supporting document? Advice given:- records which are evidence of decisions agreed, or of completed actions referred to in the minutes. Not all correspondence is needed, if it provides evidence of an outcome – yes it may be kept, whether this is a report,

email, letter, plan or procedure. E.g. permission from a committee for an activity to proceed, a builder's quote. Important correspondence should be saved outside a personal e mail account, printed and kept.

14. Confidentiality:- After printing, documents kept at a Friend's home or in the Local Meeting House, should be kept securely prior to eventual storage at the Wilmslow strong room. If kept in a Meeting House, any confidential documents are best kept locked and access controlled by a Friend in the LM.
15. **Scope: Which documents to retain :-** FH advice is "minutes of standing committees for church affairs". Quaker F & P 4.40. Consider all of the committees with AM and our LM. A committee that decides a development or change of activity may decide to keep a minute. Routines, rotas of day to day matters are not likely to merit keeping. Most or all of the following will be needed for archives minutes from:- Business Meetings – AM,LM & Trustees, Treasurer, Finance, Premises, Elders, Pastoral Friends, Children and Young People, Nominations, Peace Committee, Hiring Committees, Annual Reports.
16. Friends House Guidelines:- The link to the Friends House Library for the complete guidelines for Records Retention, Custodians and Archivists is:- <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/quaker-roles/records-custodians-librarians#heading-1>
17. Electronic Storage/digital/cloud records: - The ECAM Area Meeting laptop, stores documents on the hard drive. It is backed up regularly and there is further backup on a server in New Zealand. The FH website provides guidance on electronic storage, suggesting that one copy of all documents should be kept physically, BUT Friends who are now storing documents electronically, would be challenged to print all these off. Development Point: Where Friends store documents electronically, is there an index, which can be accessed and combined with hard copy documents?
18. Wilmslow Strong Room – 10 year Cycle : This is not a large cupboard, it is ventilated to avoid damp, has a fire proof door and strong locks, but limited shelf space. Our Archivist is pleased to receive material from Friends and ECAM Committees. The material will be stored on a 10 year cycle. As material comes to the end of 10 years of storage, there are choices to be made. It can be deemed to be of archival quality, so goes to the Cheshire Archives, it may be of such local interest it remains in the store, or it may be felt NOT to be of need of further storage and so returned to the Local Meeting, for their care or for their consent to destroy.

Records Retention Schedule for East Cheshire Area Meeting and Local Meetings in ECAM - for review when ECAM Friends decide.(GM 23 2 22)						
Local or Area Meeting Records						
Record Type	Retention period	Reason for retention	Access conditions	Format to be kept	Remarks: when consulted less than once a year	Review After 10 years : A. return to LM B. send to Chester Records C. Remain at Wilmslow.
LM minutes and minute books	Permanent	Archival	Closed to members of the public for 50 years	Margins as specified. Ideally archive paper, laser printed or photocopied, consider getting bound	Put in box labelled Permanent and transfer to Wilmslow Strong Room.	
LM rough minutes (if they are used)	Destroy: year of the meeting +1 year	Short term reference		As received	Put in box labelled "destroy (year)"	
LM supporting papers (reports, correspondence...)	Permanent	Archival	Closed to members of the public for 50 years	As received Non archive paper, any printer, index, springback folder	Put in a box labelled permanent and transfer to Wilmslow strong room	

Elders & Pastoral Friends minutes	Permanent	Archival	Closed to member of the public for 100 years from creation	Margins as specified. Print, index. Springback folders, index	Put in a box labelled permanent and transfer to Wilmslow strong-room. Label files "CONFIDENTIAL" if required. -	
Elders & Pastoral Friends rough minutes, if they exist.	Destroy: year of the meeting +1 year	Short term reference		As received	Put in box labelled "destroy (year)"	
Committee minutes	Permanent	Archival		Specified margins non-archive paper, Any printer, Springback folder. Index	Put in a box labelled permanent and transfer to Wilmslow strong-room	
Rough committee minutes (if they exist)	Destroy: year of the meeting +1 year	Short term reference		As received	Put in box labelled "destroy (year)"	
Committee supporting papers	Permanent	Archival		Specified margins non-archive paper, Any printer, Springback folder. Index	Put in a box labelled permanent and transfer to Wilmslow strong-room	

<b>Nominations Committee</b>						
Minutes	Permanent – Confidential	Archival	Label as Confidential , access to Nominations Committee	As received	Keep in a locked box within the strong room.	
<b>Clerks' correspondence</b>						
Incoming letters and documents: eg letters and reports concerning transfer of membership, reports from Area or local meeting committees, terms of reference committees	Not permanent, (need to specify how long)	Short term reference: recommended by Friends Library		Paper, locally prepared reports should have specified margins	Put in box labelled "Destroy {year}"	
Incoming letters such as apologies for absence	Destroy when no longer operationally required	Operational requirements		paper	Put in box labelled "Destroy {year}"	
Outgoing letters written by Clerks eg to appoint and release from service, letters of acknowledgements, requests	Not permanent (need to specify how long)	Short term reference		paper	Put in box labelled "Destroy {year}"	

<b>Membership Records</b>						
Registers of members	Permanent	Archival	Closed to public for 50 years	paper	Transfer to Wilmslow Strong room	
Membership correspondence	Destroy:+5 years if not relating to unusual cases, retain for possibly longer 20 years	Recommended by Friends Library		paper	Put in box labelled "Destroy {year}"	
Membership documents : reports of visits, applications for membership, details of terminations of membership, certificates of removal	Permanent		Closed to public for 100 years			
<b>Premises Committees &amp; Property Records</b>						
Premises Committee Minutes	Permanent- LM send copies to Clerk to Trustees	Archival				
Trust property deeds	Permanent	Archival		Paper	Put in box labelled permanent and transfer to W strong room	
Building plans	Permanent	Archival		Paper	Put in box labelled permanent and transfer to W strong room	

Reports	Permanent	Archival		Paper, as received put in spring-back folder with index	Put in box labelled permanent and transfer to W strong room	
Professional Inspections	Permanent	Archival		Paper, as received put in spring-back folder with index after title page	Put in box labelled permanent and transfer to W strong room	
Photographs	Permanent	Archival		Paper	Put in box labelled permanent and transfer to W strong room	
Premises Committee Building Inspections	Printed proformas - Retain with Trustees and copy at Local Meetings.	3 years	Access to Friends only	Paper- printed proformas	Destroy after 3 years.	
<b>Financial Records</b>						
Audited accounts of Meeting	Permanent	Archival	Closed to public for 50 years but see DPA 1998	Paper	Put in box labelled permanent and transfer to W strong room	
Other accounting records	Destroy:+7 years	Financial Services Act 1986 & related regulations		Paper	Put in box labelled "Destroy {year}"	
Tax Certificates and related records	Destroy:+7 years	Financial Services Act		Paper	Put in box labelled "Destroy {year}"	



		1986 & related regulations				
Cashbooks, receipts & related records	Destroy:+7 years	Financial Services Act 1986 & related regulations		Paper	Put in box labelled "Destroy {year}"	
<b>Staff Records</b>						
Staff personnel files containing pension information	Destroy: +75 years after date of employment began	Limitation Act 1980		Paper	Put in box labelled "Destroy {year}"	
Staff personnel information files not containing pension information	Destroy: Termination of employment date +6 years	Limitation Act 1980		Paper	Put in box labelled "Destroy {year}"	
<b>Legal Records</b>						
Legal Records	Retain as long as legal rights conferred in them apply, then review and retain permanently if have significant historic value	Legal rights/archival		Paper	Transfer to Wilmslow Strong room and review to identify if have historic value. Mark boxes "Review {year}"	
<b>Papers required by Satute</b>						
See Friends Library Guide 3 "legislation affecting records and record keeping"						

<b>Safeguarding Records</b>						
CONFIDENTIAL-CONSULT SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR	Permanent	Archival	Stored with Safeguarding Coordinator		NOT STORED IN STRRONGROOM	
<b>Additional Records</b>						
One set of newsletters	Permanent	Archival		Paper	Put in box labelled permanent and transfer to W strong room	
Papers which document the origin, functions and development of a committee	Permanent	Archival		Paper	Put in box labelled permanent and transfer to W strong room	
Photographs of members and attenders	Permanent	Archival		Photographic Paper	Put in box labelled permanent and transfer to W strong room	
Reminiscences of members and attenders	Permanent	Archival		Put in springback folder with an index after the title page	Put in box labelled permanent and transfer to W strong room	
Duplicate/photocopies and copies of papers	Destroy: if known to exist elsewhere	Exist elsewhere				

Other Records	Review by Archivist/Custodian	Administrative, business, financial, accounting or of historic value			Put in box labelled "review" and transfer to Wilmslow SR	
Health and Safety Risk Assessments	Retain for 3 years	For potential enquiry or challenge	Open to public	Paper	Destroy after 3 years	

Gavin Mendham- Key-holder to Strong Room – Wilmslow Meeting : February 2024: This guide follows the advice from Lisa McQuillan ( Friends' House) and Eleanor Woodward ( Birmingham and Warwickshire Cataloguing Project 2014-15). REVIEW THE GUIDANCE IN 2027.