

## **QUICK GUIDE CHURCH RECORDS**

### Introduction

When a church closes, and when the congregation form part of a new union, this becomes a new congregation and therefore the Kirk Session should start a new set of records to reflect the business of this new Church. Old church records are deposited in National Records Scotland in Edinburgh as this is the official archive for the Church.

This guidance is to help congregations decide which records need to be retained as part of the archive and which items can be disposed of.

Items to be retained as part of the official archive include:

- Kirk Session Minutes
- Board Minutes (Deacons' Court/Congregation Board)
- Financial Records (Cash Books/Accounts/Seat Letting Registers)
- Communion Rolls
- Baptismal Registers
- Proclamation Registers (Banns)
- Marriage Registers
- Commemorative Records (orders of service/inductions/anniversaries)
- Organisation Records (Women's Guild/Sunday School)
- Photographs
- Kirk Session Correspondence
- Maps and Plans

Items which can be disposed of

- Bank Statements/cheque books and stubs/bank books/receipts (because these figures should all be represented in the church accounts)
- Statistical Returns (because this information is provided in the Church of Scotland year books)
- Bibles/hymn books/prayer books (because these are not unique documents and will probably be available elsewhere)
- Large framed photographs of Ministers (local museums or the National Portrait Gallery may be interested in these)
- General Church of Scotland printed and published books/leaflets\* (as published material is mostly available in libraries and bookshops)

The exception to this is histories of congregations/anniversary material/orders of service that refer to a specific congregation.

All church archive material which is deposited with NRS is assessed by their conservation branch as close to its arrival as possible. This is to assess any issues that would affect either short or longer term record storage, such as items affected by damp or mould. Any conservation work that is deemed necessary is carried out as soon as practical. The records are then re-packaged in acid free folders and boxes before their cataloguing. Therefore, while it is not necessary for congregations to take material out of folders or boxes before depositing, it is helpful if the material is reasonably securely packed and in some semblance of order. It is sensible to pack each type of record separately and provide a list of what is in each box.