

CORSCOMBE, HALSTOCK AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

Supplementary records - about 10 boxes in Corscombe Village Hall cupboard.

When I was Parish Clerk I kept several documents, important correspondence, local authority policy statements, etc as reference material.

On handing over, I spent time explaining the system but the boxes were stored in the village hall as the new clerk could not accommodate them.

The present clerk is the fourth since myself. The handovers, I believe, have not included any understanding of the useful source of information in the boxes.

RETENTION GUIDELINES FROM DAPTC

This is a very useful but lengthy and detailed guide. Certain documents must be put in the Dorset History Centre “when no longer regularly consulted”. Recently bound copies of minutes have been lodged, hopefully with full appendices. Receipt and payment books are also to be stored there.

For other material “clerks should be best placed to judge.....about which more detailed information should be preserved”. This is then offered to Dorset History Centre who decide whether or not to store it.

There are specific suggestions on how to treat other categories – policy documents, title deeds, correspondence on important local issues, tenders, playground assessments etc etc, sometimes with time limits for keeping.

WHAT IS IN THE BOXES?

Some of the material is obviously **out of date** e.g. ‘Design and Sustainable Development Planning Guidelines draft for consultation Oct/Nov 2008’ from West Dorset District Council. In any case such tomes are accessible from the county archives. However they are of real interest from a historical point of view to anyone studying local planning evolution.!

Correspondence with the local authorities about their services, roads and rights of way for example, also can illuminate present endeavours. (I have some such letters from previous eras too from an earlier clerk.) The annual playground reports are helpful too. These are not expected to be kept, but as a researcher I value them (and they can amuse current clerks).!!

Parish surveys have been undertaken with resulting parish plans. The reports should obviously be kept, and probably copies lodged with the Dorset History Centre.

However, again, the background materials, completed forms, demographic data, etc might be good to keep at hand in case of future such action.

WHERE TO KEEP THE PAERS?

I have not yet sifted through the whole set of boxes because I would like to be advised on what would benefit the Council and Clerk.

Dorset History Centre. Documents sent there and accepted by them are stored in perpetuity. However though they may be read on site they cannot be withdrawn. A visit to Dorchester is needed. It is advised that the clerk should keep copies of anything sent there.

Clerk's files. The clerk should have quick access to reference documents and anything of current "administrative requirement". The files would be accessible to council members. But as I found, this means possibly considerable storage space.

Reference cupboard. Peripherally interesting documents could be held, as now, in clearly classed boxes. The clerk and councillors would have regularly updated lists and have access to these as and when they needed. Corscombe Village Hall or Halstock Community Room? (I used to prepare a folder of useful documents and correspondence for councillors which was updated each month and left in the Halstock Community Room for perusal.....)

Freda's files. I would like to keep anything not of further interest to Council because I still am doing research on the history of the villages and their governance.

Bin. There will be several leaflets and duplicated documents which need not be kept. I would like to take advice however before binning anything.

ACTION?

Could I please suggest that the whole mass of paperwork be gone through in detail. Decision on what to do with each bit of paper could be decided by a **working group of Clerk, one or two councillors and myself?**

It will take I estimate a total of about four hours to sort. **A report would be made to Council for ratification of what is to be done, where/if the local 'store' is to be, and how knowledge of and access to the material will be made to councillors.**

Or the position of 'archivist' could be created? The Clerk would be the obvious candidate, but I would be willing to take this on, working with the clerk to create a **useful reference bank** wherever it is stored; responsible and reporting to Council regularly.

I just feel that this store of knowledge and information should not be left to languish unknown and untapped any longer. (Besides, the Village Hall committee want the mouse-proof cupboard currently in use to store Big Breakfast food!) Also, should the 'archive' be perpetuated beyond 2017.....?

Freda Hennessy 19.03.2025