

# Retention schedules for Methodist Churches, Circuits, Districts and Connexionally Owned Properties

## 1. Introduction

### a. What this document covers

This document is a revision to the existing 'Retention schedule for Methodist Records' and is prompted by the Data Protection Act 2018 which incorporates the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) 2018. This revised and updated version is intended to provide some brief practical notes and guidance to be used by ministers, church officers, and volunteer archivists who are involved in managing records on behalf of Local Churches, Circuits and Districts. The Data Protection Officer and the Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives can provide advice and guidance on the care of church records and archive material ranging from old to modern; contact details are given in the final section of this guide. Standing Order 015 in CPD provides a very useful introduction to Methodist Archives.

### b. The importance of caring for our Church records

Local Churches, Circuits and Districts have a duty of care for their records; not only are they a valuable historic, financial, missional and social resource, but often contain the personal data of individuals who also expect the Church to protect their data efficiently.

Some of the reasons why the Methodist Church should care for our records include:

- Without proper organisation the sheer volume of paper and electronic information can become overwhelming. Well managed and organised records ensure that the right information is available to the right people at the right time.
- It forms part of the way the Church fulfils its responsibilities under data protection legislation. Many areas of Church activity are subject to external regulation. This includes safeguarding, finance, human resource management, Health and Safety to name but a few which makes it essential to maintain proper records.
- Good record keeping helps demonstrate that Local Churches, Circuits and Districts and the Methodist Church collectively cares about protecting individuals and their personal data as well as compliance with current data protection legislation.
- It ensures that records that will have archival or historical value in future, and which help tell the story of the Church locally, regionally and nationally, are identified and preserved.
- Our records tell the story of the people called Methodists – who we were, who we are and who we might become; they are a very important part of our Methodist heritage.

## 2. Records retention: how long do we need to keep records for

Records should be kept for as long as they are required for operational, legal, historical etc purposes. Records which are no longer required should be destroyed. Additionally,

under data protection legislation personal data<sup>1</sup> must only be retained for as long as is necessary to prevent a build-up of obsolete records taking up valuable storage space.

The schedules set out the necessary retention periods for the Church. The retention periods take into the consideration the requirements of data protection and other legislation. The retention schedule contained in this document indicates how long the different types of record at Local Church, Circuit and District level should be kept to meet business, statutory, fiscal and heritage requirements and when they can be disposed of.

Guidance is also given on which Church records should be deposited in local authority record offices for local and district archiving purposes on behalf of the Methodist Church.

**Please Note:**

- a) Further and more detailed information and guidance on best practice in managing Methodist records (print and electronic) to accompany this document will be issued in due course.
- b) For clarification, where 'Archive' is the final action, this indicates that the records should be deposited in the local authority record office. 'Destroy' means shredding securely paper records or permanent deletion in the case of personal data held on computers, which includes all backup copies.
- c) Start of a retention period – for correspondence files and where records are maintained in some form of a ledger or listing, the retention period should start from the date of the last entry.
- d) 'Weeding' is the technical term used to decide which documents should be archived and kept and those which are duplicates or are no longer relevant and do not need to be kept for historical, statutory, operational, and/or informational use can be destroyed.
- e) Title Deeds to Methodist Church Property. The current policy relating to the retention of Title Deeds is given in SO 903. Deeds currently required for Church purposes should be retained securely in the relevant local church or Circuit safe.
- f) Current safeguarding guidance is given in each of the sections dealing with Church, Circuit and District Archives. Where safeguarding records are concerned, it is the responsibility of the person archiving material with an external body to ensure that the retention period has been confirmed with that body.
- g) Please always refer to your District Archivist for advice. Further advice is available from the Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives and the Data Protection Officer.

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<sup>1</sup> personal data' means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person

## Church Objects and memorabilia

Objects are not archives but it is important that a full inventory of all Church objects is maintained as good practice and as a historical record. All Local Churches will have collections of objects and memorabilia which have been lovingly collected over many years and include church silver, memorials, banners, musical instruments and often unique furniture. These items are not normally accepted for deposit by local authority record offices. When a Local Church or a Methodist institution has been identified for closure the future of church objects and memorabilia should be discussed initially with the District Archivist. Further information is available from the Methodist Heritage website:

<http://www.methodistheritage.org.uk/artefacts.htm>

**War Memorials in Listed Church Buildings.** Please note that War Memorials should not be removed from churches which are listed. If in doubt, please contact the Conservation Officer for advice ([conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk))

## Oversight (Church Membership)

With reference to Church membership records and the different types of membership records maintained including Members, Adherents, Pastoral Lists and Community Roll; further guidance will be forthcoming. Managing Trustees should always check with their Superintendent Minister if in doubt.

# Section 1. Individual church records

| 1.1 Church meetings                                  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Type of record                                       | How long to keep it for  | What to do with it  |
| Church Council meeting minutes                       | Current connexional year then refer to District Archivist (DA) | DA to archive pursuant to Standing Order 015 anything deemed worthy of permanent preservation |
| Other committee meetings reporting to Church Council | Current connexional year then refer to District Archivist (DA) | DA to archive pursuant to Standing Order 015 anything deemed worthy of                        |

|                                 |  |   |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
|                                 |  | permanent preservation  |
| Meetings of youth organisations | Current connexional year then refer to District Archivist (DA) | DA to archive pursuant to Standing Order 015 anything deemed worthy of permanent preservation |

| <b>1.2 Employment</b>                     |  |                                 |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Type of record</b>                     | <b>How long to keep it for</b>   | <b>What to do with it</b>       |
| Employee tax and insurance records        | Current tax year +6<br>Statutory responsibility / retain for the duration of the employment contract | Destroy                         |
| Insurance records: employer liability     | Current tax year + 40  | Destroy                         |
| Pension contribution records              | Current tax year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980   | Destroy                         |
| Contracts of Employment                   | Current tax year +6  | Destroy                         |
| Annual tax return                         | Current tax year +6  | Destroy                         |
| Expenses claims                           | Current Tax year +6  | Destroy                         |
| Equality, Diversity and Inclusion records | Refer any data collected to Connexional Team   | Destroy after sending over data |

| <b>1.3 Finance</b>            |  |                           |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Type of record</b>         | <b>How long to keep it for</b>                     | <b>What to do with it</b> |
| Annual Accounts               | Current connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Archive                   |
| Cash books                    | Current connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Destroy                   |
| Cheque Book / Paying in slips | Current Connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Destroy                   |
| Financial statements          | Current connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Destroy                   |

|                                     |  |   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Accounts of reporting organisations | Current connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980   | Archive if not found in church accounts |
| Accounts of youth organisations     | Current connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980   | Archive if not found in church accounts |
| Rent ledgers                        | Current connexional year +6  | Destroy                                 |
| Standard Form of Annual Accounts    | Current year +6  | Destroy                                 |
| Gift Aid Declarations               | 6 years after the end of the year or accounting period that includes the last donation to which they relate. | Destroy                                 |
| Trust Deeds                         | Permanent retention  | Keep securely in Church safe            |

| <b>1.4 Membership</b>  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Type of record</b>  | <b>How long to keep for</b>  | <b>What to do with it</b>  |
| Church membership lists or directories including databases, mailing and contact lists <sup>2</sup> | Current year only<br>CPD SO 015 and SO 054   | Destroy non-current lists  |
| List of adherents including databases, mailing and contact lists                                   | Current year only<br>CPD SO 015 and SO 054   | Destroy non-current lists  |
| Pastoral Lists   | Current year only  | Destroy non-current lists  |
| General pastoral records, to include minutes of dates, venue and content of discussions            | If no safeguarding aspect to the content – retain for 1 year<br>If there is safeguarding content then pass to DA to review and pass to safeguarding for further guidance on retention as they may need to retain on file for longer. | Destroy after 1 year if no safeguarding aspect.<br>Pass to safeguarding for further guidance on destruction if there is a safeguarding aspect. |
| Baptism registers  | Permanent retention whilst register or church is in use CPD SO 015   | Archive to Local Record Offices. 75 years closure period   |

<sup>2</sup> Where consent is required, evidence should be retained as long as the person is a member (or withdrew consent) then deleted.

|                    |  |         |
|--------------------|--|---------|
| Marriage registers | Permanent retention. New arrangements for marriage registration in force from May 2021. One copy of Marriage Register to be retained by Church | Archive |
|--------------------|--|---------|

|                                   |   |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Church Directory                  | Review annually.                            | Superseded copy to Archive.                              |
| Sunday School rolls and registers | Permanent retention                         | Archive to Local Record Offices. 75 years closure period |
| Preaching plans                   | Permanent retention for historical purposes | Archive  |

| <b>1.5 Property</b>  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Type of record</b>  | <b>How long to keep it for</b>  | <b>What to do with it</b>  |
| Title Deeds including Title Registration, Deeds of Covenants, Deeds of Release, Memorandum of Overage, Deeds of Easements etc. | Permanent retention in Circuit Safe when property is owned by the Church, and for 12 years after the property is sold | Retain until a church building is sold, and for 12 years thereafter                            |
| Burial grounds Title documents   | Permanent retention   | Keep securely in the Circuit Safe  |
| Insurance policies   | Retain for 40 years, Commercial practice  | Destroy  |
| Claims correspondence  | 3 years after last action   | Destroy  |
| Property agreements and leases   | 6 years after end of agreement. Commercial practice   | Archive  |
| Licences for use   | 3 years after end of agreement. Commercial practice   | Destroy  |
| Records of lettings and use by external bodies   | 3 years. Commercial practice  | Destroy  |
| Methodist property logs  | Retain whilst log or church is in use.  | Archive any logs containing copies of listed building and conservation area works. Destroy non |

|  |                       |   |
|--|-----------------------|---|
|  |                       | listed or conservation logs.                  |
| Quinquennial inspection reports                                    | Hold in property log, | Destroy if property no longer owned by church |
| Records of building schemes  | Last action + 5 years | Archive                                       |
| Burial Registers / Records of graveyards including plans of graves | Permanent retention   | Keep securely in Circuit Safe                 |

### 1.6 Health and Safety

| Type of record  | How long to keep it for   | What to do with it |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Accident reporting sheets or book – for adults                                | Date of incident plus 3 years. SI 1995/3163                         | Destroy            |
| Accident reporting sheets or book – for reporting COSHH or asbestos accidents | 40 years from date of report  | Destroy            |
| Accident reporting sheets or book – for children                              | Date when the child attains the age of 21 plus 3 years SI 1995/3163 | Destroy            |
| Records documenting external Inspections                                      | Date of last inspection + 3 years. Good practice                    | Destroy            |

### 1.7 Safeguarding

As part of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, there is currently a legal requirement under Section 25 of the Inquiries Act for churches and other relevant organisations in England and Wales to retain documents relating to child protection and allegations of child abuse made against individuals or the organisation. This also includes child protection policy documents. The legal requirement not to destroy such material has precedence over retention requirements under the Data Protection Act 2018 for the duration of the inquiry.

| Basic record description                               | Retention Policy                                  | Final Action |
|--|---|--------------|
| Clear Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate | Retain for 6 months from the recruitment decision | Destroy      |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Risk Assessment Recommendations and a management plan in the event of an unclear or blemished DBS disclosure   | Retain for 75 years after appointment / employment ceases / confirmation of blemished DBS details                                 | Destroy  |
| Records of other safeguarding adult or child protection concerns either within the church, church related activity, or within a family by an individual where the church was the reporting body or involved in care or monitoring plans that is any sex offender risk assessments and monitoring agreements<br>Please see Standing Order 010 | Retain for 75 years after the conclusion of the matter  | Destroy  |
| Records of any children's activities, Sunday School/Junior Church/youth club registers and related general safety risk assessments. Any communication from parents or other parties in relation to the above   | Retain for 75 years after the conclusion of the matter  | Destroy  |
| Personnel records of individuals with contact with children and vulnerable adults including all documentation concerning any allegations and investigations regardless of the findings   | Retain for 75 years after the conclusion of the matter  | Destroy  |
| Safeguarding meeting minutes   | Ensure minutes relating to individual files are kept within that file.<br>General meeting minutes should be referred to local DSO | DSO to decide whether to archive or destroy depending on content |
| Records of complaints made through the Discrimination and Abuse Response Service   | Retain for 6 years after the conclusion of the complaint  | Destroy  |

|                         |                                |                           |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>1.8 Publications</b> |                                |                           |
|                         |                                |                           |
| <b>Type of record</b>   | <b>How long to keep it for</b> | <b>What to do with it</b> |



|  |                           |   |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| Church guides / significant anniversary publications                                     | Replace with new editions | One copy sent to the British Library. If deemed to be of Connexional value or significance, archive with the Connexional archive at The John Rylands Research Institute and Library |
| Church magazines   | Date of issue + 2 years   | Archive   |
| Miscellaneous and/or ephemeral literature (scrap books, photographs, newspaper cuttings) | Last action +2 years      | Archive   |

### 1.9 Legal Documents

| Type of record   | How long to keep it for                                     | What to do with it |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Local Ecumenical Partnership Agreements  | Retain for the duration of the Local Ecumenical Partnership | Archive            |
| Trustee Declarations   | Retain while person is in office                            | Archive            |
| Data Protection records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data Subject Access Requests</li> <li>Right to Rectification</li> <li>Right to Erasure (to be forgotten)</li> <li>Right to Restrict Processing</li> </ul> | 7 years after the last contact with the individual          | Destroy or delete  |
| Data Protection Consent Record   | End of the Connexional Year plus 2 years                    | Destroy or delete  |
| Data Consent Forms and Data Collection Forms   | End of the Connexional Year plus 2 years                    | Destroy or delete  |
| Data Processor Record  | End of the Connexional Year after it has been updated       | Destroy or delete  |
| Church Copyright Licenses  | Current Connexional year + 6                                | Destroy            |

| <b>1.10 Minister, Probationer and Candidate Records</b>             |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Type of record</b>   | <b>How long to keep it for</b>  | <b>What to do with it</b>   |
| Successful Candidate – no complaints made                           | Until death of Candidate (now Minister)   | Destroy   |
| Minister Records – no complaints made                               | Until death of Minister   | Destroy   |
| Non recommended candidates record (name and examiner retained only) | Until end of application process  | Destroy   |
| Probationer records   | Until death of Probationer  | Destroy   |
| Supervision records   | To be held, retained and or destroyed as per the Policy and Guidance note on handling Supervisory files | To be held, retained and or destroyed as per the Policy and Guidance note on handling Supervisory files |

Please note – it is unlikely that Section 1.10 will apply to individual churches. Any notes made by individuals are a record and covered by Section 1.10

| <b>1.11 Miscellaneous / General records</b>                          |  |                           |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Type of record</b>  | <b>How long to keep it for</b>   | <b>What to do with it</b> |
| General Correspondence   | Conclusion of matter + 1 year  | Destroy                   |
| Records of anniversaries and commemorations                          | Date of event plus 10 years  | Archive                   |
| Ministers’ papers relating to major church developments, audits etc. | Last action plus 5 years   | Archive                   |
| Visitors’ books  | Last entry plus 5 years<br>GDPR Privacy Notice required                                      | Destroy                   |
| Photographs and videos of events                                     | 5 years after the event – selected items retained for historic purposes and consent obtained | Archive                   |
| CCTV images  | A maximum of 90 days or such shorter period as is set out in the local CCTV policy           | Destroy                   |

|  |                     |   |
|--|---------------------|---|
| Certificates for Public Worship and Registration for Marriages | Permanent retention | Keep secure in Circuit Safe. If church is closed, Certificates to Local Record Office |
|--|---------------------|---|

**Please note.** This is not an exhaustive list of miscellaneous or general records which a Local Church, minister or office holder may use but seeks to cover all main areas of activity. As general guidance, records not covered by this schedule should be retained until the conclusion of the matter/end date plus one year. If in doubt, please contact your District Archivist.

## Section 2. Circuit Records

| 2.1 Circuit meetings                                   |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Type of record   | How long to keep it for  | What to do with it  |
| Circuit meetings                                       | Current Connexional year then refer to District Archivist (DA) | DA to archive pursuant to Standing Order 015 anything deemed worthy of permanent preservation |
| Other committee meetings reporting to Circuit meetings | Current Connexional year then refer to District Archivist (DA) | DA to archive pursuant to Standing Order 015 anything deemed worthy of permanent preservation |
| Records relating to ecumenical partners                | Current Connexional year +2                                    | Archive   |

| 2.2 Employment |
|----------------|
|                |

| Type of record                                     | How long to keep it for  | What to do with it              |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| Employee tax and insurance records                 | Current tax year +6<br>Statutory responsibility  | Destroy                         |
| Insurance records: employer liability              | Current tax year plus 40.<br>Statutory responsibility  | Destroy                         |
| Pension contribution records                       | Current tax year +6 Limitation Act 1980  | Destroy                         |
| Contracts of employment                            | Current tax year +6 Limitation Act 1980  | Destroy                         |
| Annual tax return                                  | Current tax year +6<br>Statutory   | Destroy                         |
| Expenses claims                                    | Current tax year +6 Limitation Act 1980  | Destroy                         |
| Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training records | No collection as yet but if it is collected (as envisaged) then this is a Connexional project and all data to be sent to the CT and then destroyed | Destroy after sending over data |

### 2.3 Finance

| Type of record                      | How long to keep it for                            | What to do with it                      |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Annual accounts                     | Current Connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Archive                                 |
| Cash books                          | Current Connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Destroy                                 |
| Cheque Book / Paying in slips       | Current Connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Destroy                                 |
| Financial Statements                | Current Connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Archive if not Inc. in Circuit accounts |
| Accounts of reporting organisations | Current Connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Archive if not Inc. in Circuit accounts |
| Accounts of youth organisations     | Current Connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Archive                                 |

|                           |  |                                  |
|---------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Standard Form of Accounts | Current year 6                                     | Destroy                          |
| Missionary accounts       | Current Connexional year +6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Archive (Weed)                   |
| Trust Deeds               | Permanent retention                                | Keep securely in<br>Circuit safe |

## 2.4 Membership

| Type of record   | How long to keep it for                             | What to do with it     |
|--|---|------------------------|
| Circuit Directory including databases, mailing and contact lists | Review annually. Apply GDPR policy on consent forms | Destroy after one year |
| Circuit register of baptisms                                     | Retain while register is in use<br>CPD SO 015       | Archive                |
| Preaching plans  | Permanent retention for historical purposes         | Archive                |

## 2.5 Property

| Type of record   | How long to keep it for   | What to do with it  |
|--|---|---|
| Title Deeds including Title Registration, Deeds of Covenants, Deeds of Release, Memorandum of Overage, Deeds of Easements etc. | Permanent retention in Circuit Safe when property is owned by the Church, and for 12 years after the property is sold | Retain until a church building is sold, and for 12 years thereafter |
| Burial grounds Title documents   | Permanent retention   | Keep securely in<br>Circuit safe                                    |
| Insurance policies   | Retain for 40 years Commercial practice   | Destroy   |
| Claims correspondence  | 3 years after last action<br>Commercial practice  | Destroy   |
| Property agreements e.g. leases  | 6 years after end of agreement<br>Commercial practice   | Archive   |
| Licences for use   | 3 years after end of agreement<br>Commercial practice   | Destroy   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Records of letting and use by external bodies                      | 3 year. Commercial practice                     | Destroy   |
| Methodist property logs  | Retain whilst log or church is in use.          | Archive any logs containing copies of listed building and conservation area works. Destroy non listed or conservation logs. |
| Quinquennial inspection reports                                    | Hold in property log.                           | Destroy if property no longer owned by Church   |
| Records of building schemes  | Last action + 5 years                           | Destroy if property no longer owned by the Church   |
| Chapel registration certificates                                   | Retain permanently                              | Keep securely   |
| Records of church closure and sale of premises                     | Current Connexional year +6 Limitation Act 1980 | Archive after weeding   |
| Records relating to manse inspections                              | Hold in property log CPD SO 954 and 965         | Destroy if property no longer owned by the Church   |
| Burial Registers / Records of graveyards including plans of graves | Permanent Retention                             | Keep securely in Circuit Safe   |

## 2.6 Health and Safety

| Type of record  | How long to keep it for   | What to do with it |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Accident reporting sheets or book – for adults                                | Date of incident plus 3 years. SI 1995/3163                         | Destroy            |
| Accident reporting sheets or book – for reporting COSHH or asbestos accidents | 40 years from date of report  | Destroy            |
| Accident reporting sheets or book – for children                              | Date when the child attains the age of 21 plus 3 years SI 1995/3163 | Destroy            |
| Records documenting external inspections                                      | Date of last inspection + 3 years                                   | Destroy            |

## 2.7 Safeguarding

| <p>As part of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, there is currently a legal requirement under Section 25 of the Inquiries Act for churches and other relevant organisations in England and Wales to retain documents relating to child protection and allegations of child abuse made against individuals or the organisation. This also includes child protection policy documents. The legal requirement not to destroy such material has precedence over retention requirements under the Data Protection Act 2018 for the duration of the inquiry.</p> |   |                    |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Type of record   | How long to keep it for                                   | What to do with it |
| Clear Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate   | Retain for 6 months from the recruitment decision         | Destroy            |
| Risk Assessment recommendations and a management plan in the event of an unclear or blemished DBS disclosure   | Retain for 75 years after appointment / employment ceases | Destroy            |
| Records of other safeguarding adult or child protection concerns either within the church, church related activity, or within a family by an individual where the church was the reporting body or involved in care or monitoring plans that is any sex offender risk assessments and monitoring agreements<br>Please see Standing Order 010   | Retain for 75 years after the conclusion of the matter    | Destroy            |
| Records of any children’s activities, Sunday School/Junior Church/youth club registers and related general safety risk assessments. Any communication from parents or other parties in relation to the above   | Retain for 75 years after the conclusion of the matter    | Destroy            |
| Personnel records of individuals with contact with children and vulnerable adults including all documentation concerning any allegations and investigations regardless of the findings   | Retain for 75 years after the conclusion of the matter    | Destroy            |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Safeguarding meeting minutes   | Ensure minutes relating to individual files are kept within that file.<br><br>General meeting minutes should be referred to local DSO | DSO to decide whether to archive or destroy depending on content |
| Records of complaints made through the Discrimination and Abuse Response Service | Retain for 6 years after the conclusion of the complaint  | Destroy  |

### 2.8 Publications

| Type of record | How long to keep it for | What to do with it |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
|                |                         |                    |

### 2.9 Legal Documents

| Type of record  | How long to keep it for                                   | What to do with it |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Data Protection records in relation to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Subject Access Requests</li> <li>• Right to Rectification</li> <li>• Right to Erasure (to be forgotten)</li> <li>• Right to Restrict Processing</li> </ul> | 7 years after the last contact with the individual        | Destroy or delete  |
| Data Protection Consent Record  | End of the Connexional Year plus 2 years                  | Destroy or delete  |
| Data Consent Forms and Data Collection Forms  | End of the Connexional Year plus 2 years                  | Destroy or delete  |
| Data Processor Record   | End of the Connexional Year after it has been updated     | Destroy or delete  |
| Local Ecumenical Partnership Agreements   | Keep for the duration of the Local Ecumenical Partnership | Archive            |



| <b>2.10 Minister, Probationer and Candidate Records</b>              |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Type of record</b>  | <b>How long to keep it for</b>  | <b>What to do with it</b>   |
| Successful Candidate records – no complaints made                    | Until death of candidate (now minister)   | Destroy   |
| Minister records – no complaints made                                | Until death of minister   | Destroy   |
| Non recommended candidates records (name and examiner retained only) | Until end of application process  | Destroy   |
| Probationer records  | Until death of probationer (now minister) Destroy or delete   | Destroy   |
| Supervision records  | To be held, retained and or destroyed as per the Policy and Guidance note on handling Supervisory files | To be held, retained and or destroyed as per the Policy and Guidance note on handling Supervisory files |

| <b>2.11 Miscellaneous / General Records</b>                                |  |                           |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Type of record</b>  | <b>How long to keep it for</b>   | <b>What to do with it</b> |
| General correspondence   | Conclusion of matter +1 year   | Destroy / delete file     |
| Records of anniversaries and commemorations                                | Date of event plus 10years   | Archive after weeding     |
| Circuit newsletters, notices, publications and Circuit Plans               | Date of issue + 2 years  | Archive after weeding     |
| Copies of replies to District and Connexional questionnaires and circulars | Last action plus 5 years   | Destroy / delete file     |
| Visitors' books  | Last entry plus 5 years<br>GDPR Privacy Notice required                                      | Destroy                   |
| Photographs and videos of events   | 5 years after the event – selected items retained for historic purposes and consent obtained | Archive                   |
| CCTV images  | A maximum of 90 days or such shorter periods as is set out in the local CCTV policy          | Destroy / delete          |

**Circuit Plans. Please Note: Local Authority Record Offices will generally not accept Circuit Plans.**

### Section 3. District Records

| <b>3.1 District Meetings</b> |  |  |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Type of record</b>        | <b>How long to keep it for</b>   | <b>What to do with it</b>                                  |
| District Committees          | Current Connexional year +3<br>Good practice   | Archive  |
| Synod                        | Current Connexional year then review pursuant to SO 415 (until no longer required for current reference) | Archive or destroy if not worthy of permanent preservation |

| <b>3.2 Employment</b>                              |  |                                      |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of record</b>                              | <b>How long to keep it for</b>               | <b>What to do with it</b>            |
| Employee tax and insurance records                 | Current tax year + 6 Statutory requirement   | Destroy                              |
| Insurance records: employer liability              | Current tax year + 4 Statutory requirement   | Destroy                              |
| Pension contribution records                       | Current tax year + 6 Limitation Act 1980     | Destroy                              |
| Contracts of employment                            | Current tax year + 6 Limitation Act 1980     | Destroy                              |
| Annual tax return                                  | Current tax year + 6 Statutory               | Destroy                              |
| Expenses claims                                    | Current tax year + 6 Limitation Act 1980     | Destroy                              |
| Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training records | Refer any data collected to Connexional Team | Destroy once data has been sent over |

| <b>3.3 Finance</b> |
|--------------------|
|--------------------|

| Type of record                      | How long to keep it for                             | What to do with it                                     |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Annual accounts                     | Current Connexional year + 6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Archive  |
| Cash books                          | Current Connexional year + 6<br>Good practice       | Destroy  |
| Cheque book / paying in slips       | Current Connexional year + 6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Destroy  |
| Financial statements                | Current Connexional year + 6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Destroy  |
| Accounts of reporting organisations | Current Connexional year + 6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Archive (if not already included in District accounts) |
| Accounts of youth organisations     | Current Connexional year + 6<br>Limitation Act 1980 | Archive (if not already included in District accounts) |
| Trust Deeds                         | Permanent Retention                                 | Keep securely in Circuit Safe.                         |

### 3.4 Membership

| Type of record   | How long to keep it for   | What to do with it  |
|--|---|---|
| Synod Directory including databases, mailing and contact lists | Review annually<br>GDPR compliance required –<br>Consent forms required for all<br>new Synod appointees | Superseded copy to<br>Archive, Consent<br>forms destroyed<br>when no longer<br>valid. |

### 3.5 Property

| Type of record   | How long to keep it for   | What to do with it  |
|--|---|---|
| Title Deeds including Title Registration, Deeds of Covenants, Deeds of Release, Memorandum of Overage, Deeds of Easements etc. | Permanent retention in Circuit Safe when property is owned by the Church, and for 12 years after the property is sold | Retain until a church building is sold, and for 12 years thereafter |
| Insurance policies   | Retain for 40 years Commercial practice   | Destroy or delete   |
| Claims correspondence  | 3 years after last action<br>Commercial practice  | Destroy or delete   |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Property agreements and leases                                     | 6 years after end of agreement<br>Commercial practice | Archive  |
| Licences for use   | 3 years after end of agreement                        | Destroy if property no longer owned by the Church  |
| Records of lettings and use by external bodies                     | 3 year. Commercial practice                           | Destroy  |
| Methodist property logs  | Retain whilst log or church is in use.                | Archive any logs containing copies of listed building and conservation area works.<br>Destroy non listed or conservation logs. |
| Quinquennial inspection reports                                    | Retain for as long as required for current business   | Destroy if property no longer owned by the Church  |
| Records of church closure and sale of premises                     | Current Connexional year + 6<br>Limitation Act 1980   | Archive after weeding  |
| Burial Registers / Records of graveyards including plans of graves | Permanent Retention                                   | Keep securely in District Safe   |

| <b>3.6 Health and Safety</b>  |   |                           |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Type of record</b>   | <b>How long to keep it for</b>                                      | <b>What to do with it</b> |
| Accident reporting sheets or book – for adults                                | Date of incident plus 3 years. SI 1995/3163                         | Destroy                   |
| Accident reporting sheets or book – for reporting COSHH or asbestos accidents | 40 years from date of report  | Destroy                   |
| Accident reporting sheets or book – for children                              | Date when the child attains the age of 21 plus 3 years SI 1995/3163 | Destroy                   |

|                         |
|-------------------------|
| <b>3.7 Safeguarding</b> |
|-------------------------|

| Type of record   | How long to keep it for   | What to do with it   |
|--|---|--|
| Clear Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate   | Retain for 6 months from the recruitment decision   | Destroy  |
| Risk Assessment recommendations and a management plan in the event of an unclear or blemished DBS disclosure   | Retain for 75 years after appointment / employment ceases   | Destroy  |
| Records of other safeguarding adult or child protection concerns either within the church, church related activity, or within a family by an individual where the church was the reporting body or involved in care or monitoring plans that is any sex offender risk assessments and monitoring agreements<br>Please see Standing Order 010 | Retain for 75 years after the conclusion of the matter  | Destroy  |
| Records of any children's activities, Sunday School/Junior Church/youth club registers and related general safety risk assessments. Any communication from parents or other parties in relation to the above   | Retain for 75 years after the conclusion of the matter  | Destroy  |
| Personnel records of individuals with contact with children and vulnerable adults including all documentation concerning any allegations and investigations regardless of the findings   | Retain for 75 years after the conclusion of the matter  | Destroy  |
| Safeguarding meeting minutes   | Ensure minutes relating to individual files are kept within that file.<br><br>General meeting minutes should be referred to local DSO | DSO to decide whether to archive or destroy depending on content |

|  |  |         |
|--|--|---------|
| Records of complaints made through the Discrimination and Abuse Response Service | Retain for 6 years after the conclusion of the complaint | Destroy |
|--|--|---------|

### 3.8 Publications

| Type of record | How long to keep it for | What to do with it |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
|                |                         |                    |

### 3.9 Legal Documents

| Type of record  | How long to keep it for  | What to do with it |
|---|--|--------------------|
| General correspondence  | Conclusion of matter +1 year   | Destroy            |
| District newsletters and publications   | Date of issue + 2 years  | Archive            |
| Copies of replies to Connexional questionnaires and circulars   | Last action +5 years   | Destroy            |
| Local Ecumenical Partnership Agreements   | Duration of the Agreement  | Archive            |
| Data Protection records in relation to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Subject Access Requests</li> <li>• Right to Rectification</li> <li>• Right to Erasure (to be forgotten)</li> <li>• Right to Restrict Processing</li> </ul> | 7 years after the last contact with the individual                                 | Destroy or delete  |
| Data Protection Consent Record  | End of the Connexional Year plus 2 years   | Destroy or delete  |
| Data Processor Record   | End of the Connexional Year after it has been updated                              | Destroy or delete  |
| CCTV images   | A maximum of 90 days or such shorter period as is set out in the local CCTV policy | Destroy            |

### 3.10 Minister, Probationer and Candidate Records

| Type of record | How long to keep it for | What to do with it |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
|                |                         |                    |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Successful candidate records – no complaints made | Until death of candidate (now Minister)   | Destroy or delete   |
| Minister records – no complaints made             | Until death of Minister   | Destroy or delete   |
| Non recommended Candidates                        | Until end of application process  | Destroy or delete   |
| Probationer records                               | Until death of probationer (now Minister)   | Destroy or delete   |
| Supervision records                               | To be held, retained and or destroyed as per the Policy and Guidance note on handling Supervisory files | To be held, retained and or destroyed as per the Policy and Guidance note on handling Supervisory files |

### 3.11 Miscellaneous / General Records

| Type of record  | How long to keep it for  | What to do with it |
|---|--|--------------------|
| General correspondence  | Conclusion of matter plus 1 year   | Destroy or delete  |
| District newsletters and publications                         | Date of issue plus 2 years   | Archive            |
| Copies of replies to Connexional questionnaires and circulars | Last action plus 5 years   | Archive            |
| Photographs and videos of events                              | 5 years after the event – selected items retained for historic purposes and consent obtained | Archive            |
| CCTV images   | A maximum of 90 days or such shorter period as set out in the local CCTV policy              | Destroy            |

### Section 4 – Connexional Property Owned by the Methodist Church

Connexional properties owned by the Methodist Church are also required to devise retention schedules relevant to the needs of individual properties, taking account of Standing Orders and specific jurisdictions.

It was last reviewed on 1 Sept 2023 by Laura Kent Legal Counsel (Governance) and Data Protection Officer, Methodist Church in Britain Email: [dataprotection@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:dataprotection@methodistchurch.org.uk), Jon Purcell, Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives [Archives@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:Archives@methodistchurch.org.uk), Jean Haynes [conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:conservation@methodistchurch.org.uk) and TMCP Legal Team [dataprotection@TMCP.org.uk](mailto:dataprotection@TMCP.org.uk).