



# **SUFFOLK LOCAL HISTORY COUNCIL RECORDERS' SCHEME**

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## **INFORMATION PACK**

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# INTRODUCTION

The origins of the Suffolk Local History Council (SLHC) date to 1953. An increasing interest in local history, combined with an initiative of the Suffolk Rural Community Council, to encourage villages to mark the 1951 Festival of Britain with exhibitions by illustrating their parish histories, led to the official formation of SLHC.

With the general aim of fostering and encouraging an interest in local history, the SLHC began by developing a wide range of activities, many of which continue to the present day. The Recorders' Scheme was an early initiative that continues to flourish and is recognised nationwide.

Its purpose was to establish volunteers across Suffolk to ensure the survival of valuable material for future local historians. To do this, we ask Recorders to ensure that the 'present' is adequately recorded at local level and to be on the lookout for items of historical interest that might otherwise be overlooked, or lost forever.

Local historians often become Recorders because of their interest in the aims of the scheme, but you *do not* have to be a historian to take on this task. The *primary* aim of a Recorder is to keep a record of 'today'. A *secondary* aim would be to keep your eyes and ears open for unrecorded items of the past.

How much you do, as a Recorder, will depend on the time you have at your disposal. We do not expect you to cover every idea suggested in the following pages but everything that is recorded or saved will be worthwhile, and much appreciated by future historians.

We ask you to start by writing an Initial Report, to describe the parish and so set the scene, and then an Annual Report, which summarises some of the events and changes that have taken place in your parish during the past calendar year.

It is a valid point, in this age of digital media when everything appears to be 'in the news' and seemingly widely available, that the more traditional means of recording history may no longer be applicable, and that future historical research is already well catered for. However, local history at parish level is not always the subject of widespread reporting. It is the local aspect of history: events, customs, changes to the parish landscape which continue to form the basis of an appreciation of how life within our communities develop.

You are not required to join SLHC to become a Recorder, but we would encourage you to do so – you would then receive The Review (magazine of history articles related to Suffolk); the Calendar of Events (which lists the local/family history meetings taking place in Suffolk) and the opportunity to attend all our other events, but as a Recorder you will only receive the Newsletter and an invitation to the Recorders' Conference. A membership application form can be downloaded from the website – [www.slhc.org.uk](http://www.slhc.org.uk)

***A Recorders' role in their community is as important today as it has ever been.***

## STARTING OUT

Firstly, it should be made clear that a Local Recorder is not appointed by, or responsible to their Parish Council, or any other parish organisation. A Local Recorder is a volunteer who works under the auspices and is supported by the SLHC to further the aims of the Recorders' Scheme. With over 500 parishes to administer we do contact Parish Councils for help to find a Recorder, and we are very grateful for their support, but the Recorders' Scheme is administered by SLHC.

There are many aspects to covering your local history that we can mention in this guide, but it is entirely up to you as to how you approach the role, and how much or how little is recorded. Though we mention, for example, photographic surveys and/or recording oral history, these subjects, like others, are not mandatory but choice.

Please take the precaution, at the start, of attaching a note to your Recorders' collection stating that, in the event of anything happening to you, the SLHC Recorders' Secretary is to be contacted to ensure that your valuable work is not dispersed or lost.

**PUBLICISING YOUR ROLE** - As a new Recorder, you will need to make yourself known to the parish as being the Local Recorder. Writing occasional notes for your local newsletter, or contacting other parish organisations, can be ways of making yourself known. Some Recorders create a poster for the parish noticeboard/website with their photo, contact details and a description of their role – see Appendices for an example. It is important to gain people's interest and goodwill.

It is advisable to liaise with the Clerk of the Parish Council as they can keep you informed of impending changes (new houses, removal of old telephone boxes, closure of a business, a road improvement project etc.) thus giving you the chance to record the situation 'before' and 'after'. You may wish to attend Parish Council meetings or Village Hall Committee meetings as a 'member of the public'. With your permission we will introduce you to the Parish Clerk by e-mail.

In some parishes, there may be a local history group/society. It is important that the Recorder and the local history organisation co-exist and work together to achieve the twin aims of recording past and present history.

**RECORDING THE PRESENT** - It is important to remember, as the Recorder, your primary aim is to keep a record of *today* for *tomorrow*. The general aim of recording is to build up a picture of the parish and to record the changes that take place over time. Initially 'the picture' could take various forms such as a Parish Survey or a Photographic Record.

By listing, and briefly describing the buildings and amenities in your parish, and how they contribute to your community, you will be able to build up a picture of your parish as it is today. This will help you become more aware of the area and will provide an interesting document – a valuable piece of history – for the future.

Your principal aim is to record events and changes that take place in your parish week by week, month by month. Life may be much slower in a small rural parish than in larger villages and urban areas, so what is included could be expanded or merely mentioned, depending on the size of the parish. You are not expected to be constantly recording – we all have lives to lead! Also, you could gather a team together to help you – we only ask that we liaise with one person.

Day to day happenings in your parish can be recorded in a variety of ways: by saving items that so often get discarded after their initial usefulness (parish magazines, newsletters, programmes, notices, posters, electioneering leaflets and other ephemera that comes through our letter boxes), by keeping the occasional bill from a local garage or shop, collecting newspaper cuttings and photographs (not just of special events, but of ordinary everyday life as well) and so on. Remember to add the date to those items where it is missing, and newspaper cuttings should also include the name of the paper. Some Recorders arrange to collect discarded notices from the parish noticeboard or local shop.

Do parish organisations such as the Village Hall, School, Sports Club, W.I., produce leaflets, programmes or newsletters for their meetings and events? Is it possible to obtain a copy to save it?

Many Recorders keep a diary/notebook, noting the significant happenings during the year, but unless you feel that another viewpoint should be recorded, there is no need to spend time duplicating what is already being recorded in Minute Books or Newsletters. You should, however, ensure that such records are going to survive. All this material will help build up a valuable picture of a living community.

**PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR PARISH** - A photographic record would be invaluable. This can be done using a digital camera and transferring the images onto PC storage media such as a memory stick. You might wish to print out your images for an exhibition – this is discussed later in this document. Please insert some of your images into your reports.

Perhaps you might consider identifying all the ‘old’ cottages, houses and buildings in your parish, and photographing these buildings. Consider asking another person in your community to help with either the photography or the transfer of the images to a computer.

**RECORDING CHANGE** - As a Recorder, you need to be aware of the changes taking place in your parish. Memories can prove to be extremely short when it comes to recalling what the street looked like before ‘those houses’ were built or how the landscape was altered when ‘the new road’ went through. Such events can be recorded with ‘before’, ‘during’ and ‘after’ photographs accompanied by commentaries and/or newspaper cuttings.

Social change should not be forgotten. The effect of the school, village shop or pub closing, the re-organisation of your benefice or changes in employment opportunities in your community. All these changes need to be recorded. Updating your survey will also, over the years, reflect many of these changes, as will your collection of newspaper cuttings and ephemera, and your Annual Reports.

Recording change is particularly important – how often do we hear the question “*Now when did the \*\*\*\* close down?*” It may not be a shop or the village pub, it might be an old cottage that has been left vacant or demolished, or even the loss of an ancient tree.

**USE OF LOCAL PUBLICATIONS** - Every parish will be different but there will probably be some form of community newsletter e.g., Parish Magazine, Benefice News. These publications will be a good source of information as to what is happening in your community and saving each edition will be useful and interesting in the future. The publication that you receive today might look totally different to the one produced in 5 or 10 years’ time. We do ask that these are deposited into Suffolk Archives (perhaps on an annual basis), but if your parish shares a publication, do check that they aren’t already being deposited as Suffolk Archives don’t want duplicates. With your permission, we will introduce you to your adjacent parish recorders by e-mail.

**STORING MATERIAL** - There are many ways of storing the various materials that you might collect. Much of your material, such as single sheets, event programmes, newspaper cuttings etc., should be photocopied and the copies can be mounted on A4 paper and put into ring binders. The advantage of a simple ring binder system is that you can easily add to it, re-arrange, sub-divide, or even temporarily remove things for display.

Mounting original items on paper should preferably be done without using Sellotape, glue or staples but perhaps using photo mounts, or the originals could be protected in A4 transparent plastic sleeves. If the originals have been photocopied, the copies can be mounted using Sellotape or glue into ring binders/scrapbooks. This allows the use of your material for public displays whilst preserving the integrity of the originals.

Some people like to file their material in subjects – church, houses, school, organisations, people etc., and others prefer to put everything together in date order while some Recorders produce an annual folder that contains all the above for deposit into Suffolk Archives. Choose whatever method suits you best but let it be simple, so that keeping it up to date does not become a burden. Do ensure everything is dated and that the source is given e.g., record the name of the newspaper from which a cutting is taken.

Indexing the contents of your archive is advisable as your material accumulates. This will be valuable when your collection comes to be deposited into Suffolk Archives.

When considering how to keep your archive, large transparent boxes are a perfect way of keeping binders, books and other bulky materials. Storage boxes cost money, as do all the other materials that a Recorder may require. For further advice on storing material is available from the Suffolk Archives. Contact details are given later in this pack.

**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE MATERIAL YOU COLLECT?** Some Recorders create Annual Folders and deposit these into Suffolk Archives a year later, others like to keep everything collected for future reference, *but* we do ask that everything is deposited into Suffolk Archives when you resign so it is available for future historians. If you have scanned everything and deposited the originals into Suffolk Archives, then the scanned copies can be forwarded onto your successor, or temporarily placed with the Parish Council Clerk so it remains in the parish.

**FINANCE** - It may be pertinent here to suggest that a small amount of funding for storage boxes and other stationery might be available from your Parish Council as most are very supportive of their Recorder. Alternatively, there may be scope within a County Councillor's Locality Budget for a small grant towards these costs. Many of our Recorders, past and present, make their own arrangements for archiving and storage, using their own funds. This is a very generous, and much appreciated effort on the part of those Recorders as SLHC does not have funds to grant each individual Recorder.

**ENCOURAGING YOUR NEIGHBOURING PARISHES** – you may discern that one or more of your neighbouring parishes does not have a Local Recorder. Being close to that (or those) parishes, and perhaps knowing some people in the parish, you may be able to encourage someone to take on the role of Local Recorder. Whilst SLHC is continually striving to fill the vacancies in the Scheme, it is common sense that local people have a better opportunity to help fill a vacancy. We would therefore strongly encourage you to spread the word about the Scheme. The Recorders' Secretary can supply a small poster with the name of the relevant parish, by e-mail, on request.

**RESIGNING AS A RECORDER** - The time will come! You may be leaving the district, feel you have 'done your bit', ill-health or age is affecting your ability to carry out the role sufficiently or you may have lost interest. Whatever the reason, it is **vital** that you inform the Recorders' Secretary as soon as you have made your decision, so that arrangements can be made to find a replacement. Please do not resign to the Parish Council as they don't run the Recorders' Scheme. Arrange to deposit all that you have collected in your role of Recorder into Suffolk Archives. It would be extremely helpful if you could find your successor, and if this is possible, please pass their e-mail address on to us.



## WHAT WE OFFER YOU

The SLHC Recorders' Scheme is administered by a Recorders' Secretary, who is appointed and supported by the SLHC Executive Committee.

**HELP AND ADVICE** - Help and advice is always at hand by e-mailing [recorders@slhc.org.uk](mailto:recorders@slhc.org.uk). Alternatively, you can phone or write to the current Recorders' Secretary on the telephone number or address given in the latest edition of the SLHC newsletter. He or she will always be willing to listen to you.

**NEWSLETTER** – You will receive a copy of our Newsletter, free of charge. This is published bi-annually and consists of reports from Officers of the Society, notices of forthcoming events, book reviews etc. (The other publications by SLHC – The Review and the Calendar of Events are only available to members.)

**FACEBOOK PAGE** – You are invited to join the Suffolk Local History Recorders Group Facebook page (assuming you are on Facebook!). This is restricted to currently registered Recorders and you would need to send a request. Membership of this page gives you the opportunity to liaise with the other Recorders, to ask questions, to offer ideas, to advertise a relevant event etc.

**BUSINESS CARDS** – Some Recorders find it useful to offer a business card as a form of legitimacy. These are blank, to enable you to write your name and contact details. A few will be sent to you when you first become a Recorder. Further supplies can be obtained from the Recorders' Secretary at SLHC events (if attending), and the branches of Suffolk Archives also hold a box of them behind their counter.

**CONFERENCE** – A conference is arranged specifically for our Recorders and is free to attend. It is held on a Saturday towards the end of April and takes place at the Blackbourne Centre at Elmswell, which is just off the A14, opposite Woolpit. The event begins at 10.00 a.m. and finishes about 3.30 p.m. Tea/coffee is available at various times during the day, but you will need to bring a packed lunch, or drive to the nearby Co-op. There are always new Recorders attending for the first time and you are welcome to bring someone else along if they are helping you with the role of recording – we just ask that we are notified of all attendees so a name badge can be prepared in advance. Most of the short talks are given by volunteer Recorders and there is the opportunity to have a table to do a display about your parish. The Recorders Conference is always a good day as it gives you the chance to meet other Recorders and exchange ideas. Everyone goes home buzzing and, as with all SLHC events, it ends in tea and cake!

# REPORTS

## INITIAL REPORTS

All new recorders are asked to write an Initial Report. The purpose of this is to describe the parish as you see it, and so 'set the scene' for your Annual Reports. Imagine describing the parish to someone who has not visited – is it rural, coastal, industrial – is it a town or a village – is it a ribbon development, concentric or very spread out? What is the housing stock like – traditional, modern, estate; where do people work or shop, what type of work is there locally; what facilities do you have: church, village hall, school, shop – and what activities take place: WI, Zumba, Men's Shed etc. These are just a few ideas. One Recorder noted all the post boxes in her parish, another listed all the business in her small parish. Two websites that could be useful for statistical information are [www.getthedata.com](http://www.getthedata.com) and [www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/eastofengland/admin/](http://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/eastofengland/admin/) (*insert your parish name*). A more in-depth suggestion list of topics you could include are in the Appendices.

A few images will enhance your report and are very much appreciated. These should be of the relevant places in your parish – church, village hall, pub, shop, school, village green. If you require help to do this, please contact the Recorders' Secretary who will be pleased to advise you.

We ask that you submit the Initial Report, within 6 weeks, to the Recorders' Secretary – please let us know if this is not possible. We are happy to send you some recently submitted reports on request. Please see below for details on submitting reports.

## ANNUAL REPORTS

Recorders are asked to write a report at the end of *each* calendar year to note the activities within their community and the changes that have taken place. A few images to enhance the report would be much appreciated. The Annual Reports become a valuable source of information for anyone researching your parish or life in Suffolk generally and their value for future historians will increase.

Some of our Recorders have been in situ for over 40 years, so you can imagine the value of their Annual Report, for what is often a minor parish. Change is occurring all the time, sometimes it is not obvious but nowhere is the same as it was a few years ago.

If you are a Recorder who covers more than one parish, please write each report separately and if some activities are shared between your parishes, please copy them into both reports so that there is a *complete* report for each parish.

Please note that these reports are to show what has been happening in the parish – not what you yourself have been doing as the Recorder.

We are often asked about the format and content. The most popular formats are by 'subject' e.g., Parish Council, Church, School, Village Hall or 'monthly'. There are no hard and fast rules for the content of your reports each parish is different. Included in the Appendices are suggestions of content, and examples of recent Annual Reports can be sent to you on request.

**SENDING REPORTS** - If sending the report by e-mail, please send it as an attachment to the e-mail, and *not within* the text of the e-mail, as the Recorders' Secretary does not have time to retype and organise your report. Please also send it as a .doc format and not as a .pdf - this is so we can make amendments if we spot a typo or the vital information such as the name of the parish, date or your name has been left off. It has happened many times! We do not re-write your report.

Please check that you have put your parish name as the main title at the top of the page and whether it is an Initial Report or Annual Report, also the year that it covers. Please don't forget to put your name at the end of the report as well as your title – Local Recorder for (parish name).

Your report should be sent to the Recorders' Secretary by e-mail or post, who will administer receipt of the report and arrange to deposit it into the appropriate branch of Suffolk Archives. Your reports will be filed under the appropriate parish and become a Public Document available for future researchers.

# PHOTOGRAPHS

Recording the Past – An important and interesting aspect of the Recorders' work can be the collecting of old photographs. It is surprising how many there are still tucked away in shoe boxes or at the back of drawers. There can be a wealth of information and interest in those stiffly posed Victorian and Edwardian portraits and family groups. Photographs of street scenes and houses can be especially valuable to contrast with those taken of the same area today.

Naturally, most people don't wish to part with their photos, but they will usually lend them to a Recorder for the images to be scanned and copied, and then returned to them. Scanning of an image is the best means of copying images, and the copies can be held on a computer memory stick or other storage device. Scanning also has the advantage that the image can be re-sized and enhanced. For the purpose of exhibitions, it is probably better to print a digital image onto plain paper rather than use an original.

Care should be taken to record as much information about the subject as possible, for without details of place, date, names of people etc., photographs lose much of their historic value. When writing information on the back of the photograph itself, a soft pencil should be used as this is less likely to do permanent damage than pen or biro.

Some of the photographs you collect will be of interest to the Suffolk Photographic Survey, which is held at the Ipswich branch of Suffolk Archives. The survey was begun in the 1950s to help preserve a photographic record of Suffolk. There are now over 20,000 prints and negatives in the collection. Suffolk Archives welcomes the opportunity to add new material to the survey by copying items of special interest. They will also give advice on storage and care of photographs. Recorders, in their turn, can often help the archivists by identifying prints already in the collection.

Recording the present has been briefly mentioned in the preceding pages. Taking photographs of events and changes in your parish is a very useful way of recording these changes. Please liaise with Suffolk Archives yourself if you have a quantity of photographs to deposit of your parish.

The idea of photographing every dwelling in your parish and mounting the photographs in albums for display has many good points. It has also been suggested that the above should be attempted with the residents of each dwelling standing outside the front door. Even more interesting would be for the exercise to be repeated after say, 10 years to see the many changes that have occurred to the property and the change of residents. Some Recorders have carried out the above exercise to photograph every building, green space and street furniture in their parish, and have published it in book form.

**STORAGE AND HANDLING OF IMAGES** - In this digital age, most people now use a digital camera. These images can be downloaded onto some form of computer hardware such as a memory stick. It is still advisable to keep albums of images for exhibitions using copies rather than the original, in case of accidents (please do not use the albums with sticky covered pages). The images can be printed onto copier paper rather than photographic paper – it is your choice.

Original images should be stored electronically as well as in albums. Care should always be taken to obtain the owner's permission before using their photographs, particularly in publications, and the complicated laws of copyright must be considered. Written permission from the owner, signed and dated then filed in your record, is usually sufficient.

## **EXHIBITIONS AND DISPLAYS**

Though a very good way of gaining interest of your community, this may not be something you are interested in producing. It is your choice. Or it may be something carried out in conjunction with, say, the Parish Council or Village Hall. You may be limited in what you can offer to exhibit unless there are parishioners who hold material such as old photo albums and documents that they are prepared to offer for display. However, if you have taken over from a previous Recorder, you might have 'inherited' a great deal of scanned archive material.

To start with, it might be a good idea to have a table with a display board at a larger event. The intention would be to show the visitor/parishioner what is possible (if more display material were available) and therefore persuade them to bring out their own archive, photographs and documents to be loaned for display at a future event. You could offer to scan the document for the archive and return the original to them. You could also request donations of material by advertising on your local noticeboards and via the parish newsletter or website.

Start by deciding on a theme, for example, the school, church, buildings, people. If there is relevant organisation e.g. Parochial Church Council it would be beneficial to approach them beforehand and undoubtedly reap benefits towards the success of an exhibition.

There can never be enough advance publicity. The traditional methods can still be the best – notices placed in prominent places within your parish and the surrounding parishes are still effective in alerting people to an event. Coverage of the proposed event in the parish newsletter or benefice magazine (at least a month in advance) will also be of great advantage. Other forms of media publicity suggested are via the parish website and social media such as Nextdoor or Facebook.

You are mainly appealing to your fellow parishioners to visit your exhibition and one of your aims should be to encourage these friends to bring their own 'memories' of the parish to the exhibition. Consider setting up a few tables for people to come and display their own material – advertise this fact and you might be surprised at the response.

If you are experienced in manipulating computer software, you could display images as a 'rolling' Powerpoint presentation via a projector and screen at an exhibition.

Always provide a warm environment with continuous refreshments (tea and coffee plus biscuits) and a separate seating area for visitors to be able to chat and consume their refreshments without spilling onto the exhibits.

Display boards can be borrowed from SLHC, if you are unable to obtain some locally. Contact the Secretary of SLHC, well in advance of the date to make a booking.

**Helpful Tips** – Visit other exhibitions to see how they create the event and displays to pick up some useful ideas. Allow plenty of time for thought and preparation. Don't be too ambitious the first time – there will be other opportunities as you collect more material and don't cover the display boards with too much to read. Be concise. Encourage volunteers to help with refreshments, and to be at the door to make visitors welcome or to collect an entrance fee if you are charging to cover some of the costs.

# RECORDING ORAL HISTORY

**RECORDING PEOPLE'S MEMORIES** – There is an amazing amount of local history locked up in people's memories. It is not only the highlights of their lives and unusual incidents that need recording but also the pattern of everyday life when they were younger.

The ideal method of recording these memories is with a digital voice recorder (DVR), but it is best NOT to take it along when first approaching someone. You should reserve this first meeting for explaining the purpose of your work (i.e., the preservation of their memories for research by students of local history) and obtaining their goodwill.

Before any recordings are made, the need for copyright exemption must be explained. The form of words can be found under 'COPYRIGHT AND PERMISSIONS' below. In raising this essential point, always remember that consideration must be shown to the personal wishes of the interviewee. If he or she is NOT prepared to give this exemption, even with a time restriction, there is little point in making the record.

**CHOICE OF EQUIPMENT** – Today, the popular means of recording speech involves utilising a digital voice recorder. These devices are small, compact and relatively straightforward to use – read the instructions! The days of using a cassette tape recorder have long gone. The DVR has the advantage of allowing you to organise the recordings under different titles and most will have a 'pause' button, a 'recording level control' and a 'memory display counter'. There are also recording facilities on smart phones. DVRs are available for purchase on-line and the High Street.

**POINTS TO REMEMBER WHILST RECORDING** – You may be able to use mains electricity but if using batteries, do ensure you have a spare set with you. Choose a location or room with minimum hard surfaces – a carpeted, furniture filled room makes a better 'studio' than a quarry-tiled kitchen. Position the DVR as close to the interviewee as possible. Make a note of the date, time and interviewee's name for archiving purposes on the recording. The interviewee's address should not be recorded on the DVR other than the name of the parish, without their permission.

Be aware of other noises which will intrude on the recording such as the ticking of a clock, a budgerigar in its cage, clinking cup and saucer or passing traffic. See if you can find ways to minimise these. Try to set your interviewee at ease and remember that too many comments can spoil the recording. Constant repetition of 'yes' or 'how interesting' should be avoided. Having worked out in advance your general approach to the subject, restrict your questions to those which you feel will encourage detailed memory. Should your interviewee 'dry up', stop the DVR and have a few minutes informal chat before continuing. It could be useful to have a sign saying 'STOP' for either of you to point to, and therefore cut out unnecessary chatter.

**COPYRIGHT AND PERMISSIONS** – It is imperative that at the end of the interview, you ask the interviewee to speak the following copyright exemption.

*“I confirm that I have no objection to the retention of copies of this recording by the Record Office of Suffolk County Council and to their use for public record, educational and research purposes. I am willing for members of the public to have access to it by means of a recording or transcript”.*

If the interviewee insists, add after the word ‘transcript’, additional words *“after, but not before (month, year)”*. Then announce, *“That is the end of (repeat the subject title) recorded in (month, year)”*.

You should ask the interviewee to sign and date a written document which basically repeats the verbal permission given at the end of the recording.

Above all, ensure that your recording cannot be deleted accidentally. It is probably a good idea to download it onto another device as a back-up.

Finally, you should arrange to make a transcript of the recording as soon as possible after the session and offer a copy to the interviewee.



## USING DIGITAL STORAGE DEVICES FOR ARCHIVING

**PAPER vs DIGITAL MEDIA** - Digital media could mean a PC laptop, a PC notebook, a portable hard drive, CD Rom, DVDs and memory sticks. This new technology can be confusing and overwhelming at first for some of us. However, digitisation is the way forward. This does not preclude you from relying solely on paperwork, ring binders, storage boxes and shelves to store material that you collect during the course of any year.

However, it is becoming increasingly preferable that any paper records are scanned and stored onto digital media. This may be done with the help of someone in your parish who is familiar with the manipulation of digital media.

The advantage of scanning materials onto digital media is that, at some point, this material will be submitted to the Suffolk Archives for archiving, and digitising the material may help them. Obviously, digital storage takes up a minimal amount of space and the risk of losses by a fire may be ameliorated.

**SCANNING DOCUMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS** - It almost seems as if a home computer and a good quality scanner are becoming part of the furniture in the home these days. All that can be said about this is to read the scanner manual. A good scanner should come with easy to understand software. Ensure that the scanner glass is clean and free of dust and foreign material. Scanning documents correctly can be by trial and error initially but generally speaking it is not too arduous or difficult a task.

**BACKING UP DISCS AND MEMORY STICKS** - This is a very important aspect of storing digital media and files on your day-to-day computer. If you surf the Internet with the same computer, it is almost impossible to have a virus-free virtual life! Anti-virus software is, of course, essential but there is always a chance that a computer could be seriously compromised by viruses or Trojans with the possible consequence of losing much of the data on your computer. A **regular** back-up procedure is **vital**, so back-up, back-up, back-up.

## RECORDERS NAMES AND ADDRESSES

Suffolk Local History Council considers it to be a matter of importance that the personal details of a Local Recorder are kept in a confidential way. This has to be balanced with the ability of the general public to contact a Local Recorder. How much of your contact details you make available to your parish is your choice, but we would suggest your name, e-mail address and/or telephone number would be adequate. It is important that you are contactable.

Please read <https://slhc.org.uk/slhc-privacy-policy>

**SLHC RECORDERS DATABASE** – Recorders' names and addresses are stored electronically on our databases, of which there are two – one held by the Recorders' Secretary and the other by the Membership Secretary. If you agree to becoming a Recorder you must agree to this information being kept on computer, so we may contact you easily.

We do ask that you give us permission to introduce you officially to your Parish Council Clerk and your adjacent parish Recorders. Once permission is received, we will make the introductions by e-mail, but only your name and e-mail address will be given.

If an enquiry is received for a Recorder, the relevant Recorder will be contacted by the Recorders' Secretary, who will pass on the enquiry and the enquirer's contact details, and ask the relevant Recorder to contact the enquirer themselves. In other words, the Recorders' Secretary will not pass on your contact details to the enquirer. Whether or not you respond to such requests is entirely up to you. You may have the information that has been requested, or you may know someone who has. On the other hand, you may know nothing useful regarding the request. We would not want you to think that you are obliged to go to a lot of trouble to do research in response to such a request – that is your choice. It would be polite to respond, even if the response is negative. On the other hand, this may be an opportunity for reciprocal information from the enquirer.

When the time comes that you resign from the role, and have notified us directly i.e., not to the Parish Council Clerk, all your contact details will be removed from both databases, unless you are a member of SLHC, in which case your details will remain on the Membership Secretary's database only. In some cases, a written note of your e-mail or phone number may be retained, but only in paper format by the Recorders' Secretary – this may be because you have asked to be introduced to your successor, when appointed.

# THE COUNTY RECORD OFFICE

**AN OVERVIEW** – Suffolk Archives holds an amazing range of information about the history of Suffolk and its people. Its brief is to continue to locate and preserve the documentary heritage of the county, ranging in time from the distant past to the present day. Local history studies depend on a variety of documentary sources such as: letters, maps, account books, diaries, title deeds, parish and manorial records. These are just a few examples, but the range is limitless.

Printed material, including books, pamphlets, newspapers, parish and village magazines and all kinds of printed ephemera, are also very important. Documents can relate to families and individuals, trades and professions, churches and chapels, clubs and societies, schools, charities, units of local government and so on. There are very few areas of human activity that are not illuminated by documents and there are very few documents that cannot be used to extend our knowledge of the past in some way.

Preserved documents, ancient or modern, are taken to one of the Record Office's two branches at Ipswich or Bury St. Edmunds, (Lowestoft is a research facility only). They are sorted and if necessary, cleaned and repaired before cataloguing and indexing. The catalogues and indexes are kept on open shelves in the search rooms where any member of the public can consult them. The records themselves are stored in fireproof strong rooms where temperature and humidity are constantly monitored.

Suffolk Archives holds literally thousands of documents but, even though records are constantly being deposited, there are still huge gaps in documentary evidence. Suffolk is a large county, and the record office depends very much on local contacts to bring chance finds to its attention. **This is an area where Recordors can help.**

**HELPING TO RECORD THE PAST** – Though you are primarily concerned with the records of the present, you are well placed to hear of documents in the parish, which have recently come to light or might be in danger of destruction. If you do hear of such documents, discuss the matter of their preservation with the owner, and encourage them to ask the relevant record office for advice. The branch addresses are given below.

If you or the owner is unable to take them into Suffolk Archives, an Archivist can visit to inspect them – this is on the basis that it is a large amount of material. They will advise as to whether they are historically important. Ideally, they would prefer the material donated or deposited on loan. Even if the owner wishes to retain the documents, the record office should still be informed, as they need to know where the raw material of Suffolk's history is located, and whether local historians can consult it. Sometimes it can be arranged for a photocopy or scan to be made for consultation by the public in the record office.

**DEPOSITING MATERIAL AT SUFFOLK ARCHIVES** – The SLHC’s policy is that Recorders’ material should be deposited at some point, usually when the Recorder resigns. The following notes deal with the material you will have carefully collected in your capacity as a Recorder. This will probably include files, photographs, surveys, special projects and perhaps diaries and recordings – the evidence of tomorrow’s history.

Additionally, while you are the Recorder for your parish, you may want to deposit some of your material, for instance, if storage space is limited at your home. Some Recorders do this on any annual basis, but you may do so at any time you wish. However, when you give up being the Recorder for your parish, your collection should be deposited in the branch of the Record Office for your area. We would always encourage originals to be scanned, the originals deposited into Suffolk Archives and the scanned copies used as a working document by yourself and your successor.

**HOW TO MAKE A DEPOSIT** – It is important when you make a deposit that you follow the method given below. This will ensure the safety of your work and allow for the withdrawal of material on a temporary basis from the record office. There may be occasions when you or your successor may want to use some deposited material for a parish exhibition or for research. You will be asked to complete a form listing all the items you are depositing and your contact details.

1. Please state clearly on the form that your material is to be deposited ON LOAN in the name of SUFFOLK LOCAL HISTORY COUNCIL.
2. Include your name as compiler of the records in your capacity as the Local Recorder for (parish).

For parishes in the former East Suffolk County Council area, (except Waveney District):

Suffolk Archives  
The Hold  
131 Fore Street  
Ipswich IP4 1LR  
Tel: 01473-296666 / E-mail: [archives@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:archives@suffolk.gov.uk)

For parishes in the former West Suffolk County Council area, (except Waveney District):

Suffolk Archives  
77 Raingate Street  
Bury St. Edmunds IP33 2AR  
Tel: 01284-741212 / E-mail: [archives@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:archives@suffolk.gov.uk)

For parishes in the Waveney District:

Suffolk Archives  
Lowestoft Library  
Clapham Road South  
Lowestoft NR32 1DR  
Tel: 01502-674680 / E-mail: [archives@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:archives@suffolk.gov.uk)

# APPENDICES

## INITIAL REPORT

As noted earlier, we are happy to send you some examples of recently submitted Initial Reports, you only have to ask. Please include some images in your reports.

Please start off your report with the title - **Initial Report for (your parish name)**

Please conclude your report with: **Your name, Recorder for (your parish name), date**

**SOME IDEAS:** *(Note - the extent of information is dependent on the size of your parish.)*

Position - ? miles from (nearest main town) and ? miles from (nearest significant town).

Geography – main roads, rivers, acreage of parish, footpaths.

History – Roman, Viking, Domesday Book.

Population - [www.getthedata.com](http://www.getthedata.com) *(and there are other sites online).*

Community Buildings – Church, Village Hall, School, Noticeboards.

Housing – Conservation area, Listed Buildings, Important houses e.g. Manor House.

Farms – Their names, size, product (arable, pastoral, mixed).

Parish Council – No. of meetings, parish councillors, precept, village sign, war memorial.

Education – no. of pupils, age of pupils, where do older children attend school?

Local Businesses – shops, services, business listed at Companies House? Where do people go to shop?

Amenities – Village Hall – what facilities does it have e.g. playground, football field, defibrillator, recycling. Theatre, cinema, library.

Public transport – Where is the nearest train station, do you have buses or community transport?

Other facilities – where is the nearest doctor's surgery, dentist, vet?

Communication – Parish newsletter, websites, Facebook, Nextdoor, Twitter

Clubs & Societies – WI, History Group, Mens' Shed, Yoga, Youth Club, Book Club

Events – Firework Display, Annual Fete, Jumble Sale, Flower Festival, Fundraising

Miscellaneous – Postcode, dialling code, post boxes, telephone box, wildlife, parish charities, notable residents.

## ANNUAL REPORT

As noted earlier, we are happy to send you some examples of recently submitted Annual Reports, you only have to ask. Please include some images in your reports.

Please start off your report with the title - **Annual Report for (your parish name)**

Please conclude your report with: **Your name, Recorder for (your parish name), year covered by the report.**

**SOME IDEAS** – You may prefer to write your Annual Report monthly, but if it is written by subject matter, you could create a template with the subjects you wish to cover such as is suggested below:

PARISH COUNCIL

CHURCH

SCHOOL

COMMUNITY CENTRE

WI

FOOTBALL CLUB

YOUTH CLUB

TUESDAY FELLOWSHIP

HOME START

FLOWER & PRODUCE SHOW

VILLAGE FETE

OVER 65s XMAS PARTY

HATCHES, MATCHES & DISPATCHES

SPECIAL EVENTS

DISASTERS

BUSINESSES

HOUSES SOLD

## SUGGESTED ADVERT FOR PARISH NOTICEBOARD

**Your Parish Name**

**PHOTO**

**PARISH RECORDER**

**OF YOU**

My name is *(your name)* and I am your Local Recorder.

This is a voluntary role, overseen by the Suffolk Local History Council, who have Recorders in many Suffolk parishes. One of our tasks is to keep a record of day-to-day life and note changes in the parish. This will be available for future historians to understand what it was like to live in our villages during our life-time. Each year I write and submit an Annual Report, which is deposited in the Suffolk Archives.

Recorders are often people who are interested in local history and who appreciate how important old documents, records and photographs are for research purposes. If you are having a clear-out of any *(your parish name)* related items, no matter how old or new, do get in touch. I can arrange for them to be re-homed with the Suffolk Archives (or any other appropriate archive).

*(Your contact details: phone number and/or e-mail address)*

## USEFUL E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Nextdoor – <https://nextdoor.co.uk>

*Join your parish page to receive information, give and get help, get things done, and build connections with those nearby – neighbours, businesses and public services.*

Facebook – [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

*Online social media & networking site – users are individuals, parishes, local groups & interests.*

**Suffolk Local History Council Recorders Group** has its own Facebook page – you will need to send a request to join. It is limited to currently registered Recorders.

City Population – [www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/eastofengland/admin/](http://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/eastofengland/admin/)

*Find your parish, which is listed in alphabetical order under each Local Authority District.*

*You will find statistical information on your parish e.g. population (est. 2020), pop. Density, annual pop. Change, area of parish, local dialling code & postcode.*

*Click on the icon with three dots (...) for further statistics e.g. breakdown of gender, age groups, age distribution, no. of passport holders, country of birth, ethnic group and religion.*

Get the Data – [www.getthedata.com](http://www.getthedata.com)

*Enter your postcode to find out a variety of information e.g. maps, photos, open data, schools, electoral roll, flood risk, crime statistics. Info collated from datasets of Office of National Statistics, Police Crime, Food Standards Agency & Companies House.*

Google Alerts – [www.google.co.uk/alerts](http://www.google.co.uk/alerts) - then type in your keyword e.g. parish name

*This is a free tool that sends e-mail updates based on your keyword, usually articles in newspapers.*

East Suffolk Town & Village Profiles – (sorry have not found equivalent for West Suffolk)

[www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-planning/town-and-village-profiles](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-planning/town-and-village-profiles)

*For profile on towns/villages that have produced a profile – includes population, houses, ages, gender, ethnicity, households, employment, tenure etc.*

Our Property – [www.ourproperty.co.uk](http://www.ourproperty.co.uk) – register with e-mail and password, then enter your postcode.

*Find out the prices of properties sold within 500 yards of your postcode.*

Rightmove – [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk) – click on BUY, then enter your parish name

*Find list of all properties for sale in your parish, with image, details and estate agent.*

*You can also see the price houses have sold, and when, as supplied by The Land Registry.*

Historic England – <https://historicengland.org.uk>

*Enter your parish name in the search box to receive a list and full details of all listed buildings in your parish.*

British Listed Buildings – [www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/suffolk/](http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/suffolk/)

*Enter your parish name to receive a list and full details of all listed buildings in your parish.*

Roll of Honour – [www.roll-of-honour-com](http://www.roll-of-honour-com) then click on England, then Suffolk, then on your parish name which is at the bottom of the page.

*Image of War Memorial and full details of those listed on the war memorial and information about the war memorial itself e.g. date of unveiling.*



Churches – [www.suffolkchurches.co.uk](http://www.suffolkchurches.co.uk) – click on ENTER, then click on ‘see full index’  
Find your parish name in the index and click to find an excellent description of the church with excellent photographs.

Wikipedia – <https://en.wikipedia.org> – enter your parish name in the SEARCH box  
Description of your parish, check out the sources at the bottom of the article.

Wikimedia Commons – <https://commons.wikimedia.org> – enter your parish name in the SEARCH box.  
Find images of your parish.

Don’t forget to check your own parish website, local history society website and many parishes have an Archive website.

Please let us know if you have any suggestions of useful websites for Recorders.

**AND FINALLY** - here are a few comments from a few Recorders:

*I'd also like to say how interesting it has been and how useful the role has been in getting to know people in Saxmundham. I've got to know several of the local councillors who have been a useful source of information! I've also ended up on the Management Committee of Sax Museum having met the lovely Richard Crisp.*

Kevin Gale – January 2017

*Welcome to the elite group of historians! It's an amazing entry to all village events - it is extremely interesting to see how a year pans out - all the ups and downs of politics and the joys and sorrows. I complain about people who send Christmas letters - and yet I compose one for the Records Office!*

Margaret Streeter – June 2018

*So glad we had the talk and photographs about the building in Bramford, recently gutted by fire, by Kelvin Dakin at Recorders Day 2018. It emphasises just how necessary the recordings of such buildings are for posterity.*

Janet James – May 2019

And we leave the very last word on the history of the scheme to the Recorder for Polstead in 1979, Kate Riddlestone, who memorably wrote: *‘One imagines the ideal Local Recorder to be an energetic retired historian with private income and car, an excellent amateur photographer with very good knowledge and irresistible charm. Unfortunately, this type of person is a rarity. Instead, there are the rest of us!’*

*Updated August 2022*