

Minutes and accounts

Background

The vestry ran the parish, dealing with an increasing amount of local administration. The first heavy duties were laid on it under the Tudors, most importantly administration of the [Poor Law](#), while local needs such as charity administration, the administration of the parish constable and various officials, ranging from the surveyor of the highways to the dog whipper, took up much of its time. Throughout this time the vestry meeting kept minutes of its activities (the survival of which can be erratic), while the churchwardens kept a note of expenditure on the parish's behalf and presented their accounts to the vestry at the end of each year's office. These records can give a picture of day to day life and concerns in the parish.

In 1919, PCCs (Parochial Church Councils) were formed. They took over many of the responsibilities of the vestry and churchwardens, including church fabric and finance. In the 20th century, both vestry and PCC minutes exist for many parishes.

Where are these records?

Many parishes have transferred their records to Oxfordshire History Centre. The records themselves are not online.

Where is the catalogue?

For most parishes, a collection catalogue can be viewed online on [Heritage Search](#).

All parish collections have the prefix **PAR**. A list of parishes can be browsed within our catalogue list [here](#), in section Parishes (Ecclesiastical).

The few parish catalogues not yet on Heritage Search are accessible in pdf form via the [Digital resources for Oxfordshire History website](#).

More information

- Oxfordshire History Centre [catalogues](#)
- [Visiting](#) Oxfordshire History Centre
- [Contact us](#) to book a visit to consult archive documents