

Somerset County Council Records

Introduction

Somerset County Council was created in 1889 and took over the administrative functions exercised since the Middle Ages by the Quarter Sessions. The Somerset Heritage Centre is the official place where records created by the County Council are kept. However, documents are only taken to the Heritage Centre when the department that creates them is no longer using them. If we do not have something, it may be worth contacting the relevant section of the Council to see if it is still in use.

All County Council records have the reference prefix C/* followed by a letter code indicating the section that created them. Because of frequent reorganisation, you will often find similar types of records under several different codes. The main series are explained below.

Children's and Social Services (C/CHI, C/SS, C/SS*)

Records of the former Children's Committee, chiefly made up of admission registers, log books and other papers about children's homes, and minutes of the Children's Committee and area sub-committees. The records cover the period from about 1930 to 1985. (See also C/PA and C/WS below). Records naming individuals may not be available for study.

Civil Defence and Emergency Planning (C/CD, C/EP)

This is a collection that chiefly reflects civil defence activities, from 1939 to 2000, including:

- Second World War records of bombing incidents, evacuation schemes, air raid precautions and emergency transport;
- later Cold War defence records, minutes of the Public Protection Committee and records about today's defences.

Cooke Hurle Collection (C/CH)

This is an artificial collection created by Mrs. Norah Cooke Hurle of Kilve Court. Mrs. Cook Hurle became the first woman member of Somerset County Council in 1918 and was very active in the fields of education, health and social welfare. The collection is mainly made up of copies of County Council and other papers about those subjects and covers the period 1900 to 1960.

Coroners' Records (C/CR/*)

Coroners' inquest and natural causes files. Please see the separate leaflet 'Coroners' Records' for more details.

County Architect (C/CA)

A collection of nineteenth and twentieth century plans of schools, social services establishments, civil defence premises, magistrates' courts, police houses and police stations. Some of these plans are unavailable because of their sensitive nature.

County Council (C/CC and C/Min)

These are the signed minutes of meetings of the County Council from 1889 to the present. They also include committee reports, agendas, attendance books and seal registers.

District Nursing Association (C/DN)

This is a collection of minutes, accounts and midwifery case registers of the thirty District Nursing Associations covering the whole county, from 1900 to 1970. Records naming individuals may not be available for study.

Education Department (C/E, C/ED*)

This is a large collection containing minutes and reports of the Education and related committees, and school records such as log books, admission registers, attendance registers and managers' minutes, from about 1890 to 1990.

Finance Committee (C/F)

This contains accounting and budgetary records of the County Council, from 1889. It also includes minutes of the Finance and related committees and annual accounts from external bodies.

General Purposes Committee (C/GP)

This includes records of the former Clerk's Department and its successors, the County Secretary and Solicitor's Department, all of which were responsible for the committee functions of the Council. Records include committee minutes, reports and agenda papers, diversion, stopping up and other council orders, and other related records.

Motor Taxation (C/MT)

Vehicle licensing (registration) books for vehicles registered in Somerset, from 1899 to 1974. The Somerset licensing letter is Y.

Planning Committee (C/PL)

This is mainly made up of minutes and reports created by various planning and related committees from 1935 onwards. It includes the minutes of the Exmoor National Park Committee from 1957.

Public Assistance (C/PA)

This is mainly the minutes of the Public Assistance Committee and its sub-committees, along with records of Public Assistance Institutions, including registers of inmates, masters' journals and relief registers, mainly from 1930 to 1948. (It is also worth looking under D\G, as some records are stored under that code.)

Public Health and Housing (C/PHH) This is mainly minutes of the Sanitary Committee, the Public Health and Housing Committee and the Midwives Act Committee, along with reports of the County Medical Officer of Health and reports about Isolation Hospitals

Surveyor's Department (C/S)

These are minutes of the Works Committee and associated committees, from 1889 to 1974. They also include inherited plans and other records about road and bridge maintenance and extensive papers about:

- civil defence during the Second World War
- Underwood Quarry, Wells
- Dial Quarry, Barrow Gurney
- Rights of Way.

Smallholdings (C/SH)

There is a miscellaneous collection containing minutes of the Diseases of Animals Committee, Somerset (War) Agricultural Executive Committee, Small Holdings Committee and related agricultural committees. It also contains deeds of County Council farms and smallholdings from the seventeenth to the twentieth century.

Treasurer's Department (C/T)

This collection contains mortgages of the Local School Boards for building schemes, registers of salaries and pension files.

Welfare Services (C/WS)

This is Minutes of the Public Assistance Committee, Welfare Services Committee, Children's Committee, Vagrancy Committee, Social Services Committee and other related bodies. It also contains papers and reports about children's homes and public assistance institutions. (See also C/CHI and C/PA)

Some County Council records are unavailable because of the Data Protection Act; these are marked as being closed on the relevant catalogue. Please ask our staff if you wish to access them.

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