

Town Clerk | Swaffham Town Council

From: Town Clerk | Swaffham Town Council
Sent: 24 April 2019 16:40
To: Palfrey, Ian; su ga; David Ormerod
Subject: RE: Swaffham UDC records

Good afternoon,

Sorry to be a little late joining in the conversation, but I have either been preparing for meetings, at meetings, actioning decisions taken at meetings or on annual leave, as well as dealing with our annual audit and preparing for a new Council coming in next week, with the small matter of our Town Assembly this evening. However, I do think that we are pretty much all on the same page with this.

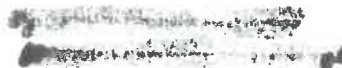
Ultimately the intention is to move the records to the Norfolk Records Office, but in the interim period the Swaffham Heritage (Museum) is better placed to look after the records so that they are available locally. The Town Council will work with Swaffham Heritage to digitalise these records, and perhaps we can work on a small grant scheme to achieve this. In order to have a complete digital record, it would be nice to include those UDC records already stored at the Norfolk Records Office, as this could provide instant access to the Town Council when needed, and similarly to Swaffham Heritage for research purposes.

Is this something that the Norfolk Records Office would join in with the Town Council and Swaffham Heritage, for a joint funding bid or act as a sponsor or supporter in assisting us in our quest to make these records more accessible? We are not against using the Norfolk Records Office, but the time saving advantage has to be seen for accessing the records of a predecessor Council in our own Town. Travel both ways to Norwich and researching at the Records Office would be a minimum of half a day, and as nice as it is to escape from the Town Hall on occasion, Councillors might have a dim view of this, if we can't find the information we need in a reasonable timeframe.

Unfortunately we will not be able to move this project forward for a few months now, until the new Council are settled into their tasks and have prioritised their projects. It would be good to target the July Finance meeting on the 24th, for an in principle decision re- the scanning project. I think anything earlier, would be too soon, but I would welcome your thoughts on this – many thanks.

Best regards,

Richard Bishop
Town Clerk



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From: Palfrey, Ian [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 April 2019 12:56
To: su ga <swaffhamheritage@gmail.com>; David Ormerod [REDACTED]; Town Clerk | Swaffham Town

Council <townclerk@swaffhamtowncouncil.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Swaffham UDC records

Dear All,

Thanks to you both for keeping me in the loop. Perhaps I ought to interject at this point before we go any further with this.

I think we are all starting from the same point of view; that is, these documents are worth keeping for the long-term and we all want to ensure they are preserved intact and are accessible now and in the future. Although they would be better off stored in the NRO repository (environmental control, fire suppression system, re-united with the rest of the archive, etc.), they are currently stored securely at Swaffham Town Hall and are being used locally. We're not going to challenge this, especially as the UDC records are likely to come here eventually.

Relieved to read about scanning rather than microfiche. If it's of any interest to you, the NRO will be running some digitisation training sessions possibly this, but probably next, year.

As regards, the photography permits here, we are prepared to waive the charge for users working on behalf of the depositor though we expect a letter of authority to be supplied and it only applies to the records belonging to that depositor.

Sue, I'm interested to see you have a list. Is it possible to have a copy re the Swaffham UDC items please?

Regards,

Ian

Ian Palfrey
Senior Archivist

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From: su ga <swaffhamheritage@gmail.com>

Sent: 04 April 2019 09:44

To: David Ormerod <do@ormerod.com>; townclerk@swaffhamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Cc: Palfrey, Ian <i.palfrey@norfolk.gov.uk>; colin@houghtom789.plus.com; Les Scott <lesbscott@yahoo.co.uk>

Subject: RE: Swaffham UDC records

Good morning David

I was not a little annoyed by your email which you copied me into yesterday. Mostly because there were errors in it and also because, although you hold me responsible for the decision the Town Council made, you did not have the courtesy to talk it over with me but merely copied me into a correspondence. I am glad however, that you labelled me the Town's Historian, a responsibility to which I attach considerable importance.

First, I have never said they should be microfiched (it is not an important point) but I have always said that they should be scanned. We have a volunteer who is happy to scan them, despite the time it will take to do, and we are currently negotiating to either have loan of or purchase, with the help of a grant, a suitable scanner. This is an

important step for Swaffham Heritage and one in which we are working with the Town Clerk who also sees the advantage of scanned documents available to the public. For us it is another and sorely needed income stream.

Once scanned, I have said to both the Town Council and to you, I don't mind where the books are. I am only interested in information. If researchers wish to see the actual books I have no problem with them being lodged at the Record Office.

Second. I am not sure what you mean when you say I, the Town Historian, did not know they were in the Town Council offices. I have known they were there for 25 years or more. I have David Butters' list of Town Council holdings. I may not, I concede, have known at precisely what location they were stored within the offices.

Third. My present interest is not the Great War but I am very well aware that those records are in Norwich. I and other volunteers went to the Record Office to research them. That is my point. It is interesting, however, to hear from you that the photographic charge might be waived. In the thirty years I and previous Town Historians and researchers have been using the Record Office, that has never been either permitted or known. It would be useful to know the criteria.

I take issue with your statement that "I should imagine no one in the last 50 years has thought to look at the Swaffham UDC volumes in the safe. They contain very little that is germane to the modern day functions of the Council" and you continue later that in your research on lost pathways you have found nothing that is "of current relevance to Swaffham Town Council activities." I beg to disagree. Several town councillors do look at the records in the safe and they are still very pertinent. They are certainly germane to modern day functions of the Council. I need only to point you to The Antinghams, Day's Field and rights of way – currently very topical – and it is extremely important to unearth exactly what was said at the time in minuted meetings.

You say " a non-selected, small tranche of a much larger lode is much less useful than a comprehensive record that is kept and maintained under archival conditions." Should Swaffham Heritage then, on that basis, turn over its whole archive to the Record Office? I have given you considerable information from the archive we hold; records of much more knowledgeable town historians than I. One of my aims for Swaffham Heritage is to have as complete a town archive as possible, made up of documents and images that have been either scanned, or at least catalogued on a searchable database. In this way we not only help local researchers but also provide the town with a comprehensive and evidenced history. It also saves time, as we don't have to search and research. It also conservation as we can view images rather than original documents. It is an urgent and vital part of my work.

Once we have the books scanned, I would be very happy to see them deposited at the Record Office.

Regards

Sue

Dr SE Gattuso, volunteer manager Swaffham Heritage

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [David Ormerod](#)

Sent: 03 April 2019 17:15

To: townclerk@swaffhamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Cc: [Palfrey, Ian](#); colin@houghtom789.plus.com; [Swaffham Museum](#); [Les Scott](#)

Subject: Re: Swaffham UDC records

Dear Richard,

The last I heard formally was that Swaffham Town Council had agreed to permit the transfer of the old Swaffham Urban District Council Minute Books (a very partial record) that have been "lost" in the Swaffham Town Council safe since the changes in local governance in 1974 yp the Norfolk Record Office..

I have subsequently heard on the grapevine that at a subsequent meeting, the Council entirely changed its mind in favour of retaining the 20 Volumes or so (that originate primarily from the 1930's, 50s, and 60s). The argument was

made by Sue Gattuso, the town historian, that these records should be retained in Swaffham as they could be later microfiched. There was also concern that a town historian was expected to pay the customary fee of 10-50 GBP at each visit to the Norfolk Record Office to photograph any of the old town records.

I have discussed the issues with Sue, in which I believe there may be some misunderstanding.

As someone who has been through almost all the Swaffham Urban District Volumes and previous local Board Minutes available at NRO and who is currently tackling the Swaffham Rural District Council minutes, I perhaps know my way around the Minute Books as well as anyone.

The whole purpose of establishing Norfolk County Record Office is to collect, protect, and encourage the study administrative and government documents on behalf of all Norfolk citizens, and as a national resource. It is quite unremarkable therefore to want the Swaffham town minutes accumulated now over two centuries and more similarly collated and protected on into the future. At the changeover of local governance in 1974, all old records were supposed to be collected at the NRO. Most Swaffham records did find their way there, but some became marooned in the Town Clerk's safe, This presents serious problems to those looking to undertake study or scholarship in those documents as they became effectively "lost" from the national archival data bases so that they could not be found by anyone. Their conditions of storage was also informal, without climate control or exclusion from corrosive materials, and have always been vulnerable to fire in an old building, also with possibly suboptimal security. Sue Gattuso, the Town Historian did not even know they were there!.

The argument that they are needed in Swaffham and that they can be microfiched is very doubtful. I should imagine no one in the last 50 years has thought to look at the Swaffham UDC volumes in the safe. They contain very little that is germane to the modern day functions of the Council. I am sure that Sue may have some interest in certain historical issues, but a non-selected, small tranche of a much larger lode is much less useful than a comprehensive record that is kept and maintained under archival conditions. Sue's present interests, for example, surround events in the Great War and all these records are all in Norwich. Furthermore, I am advised by Ian Palfrey that if official representatives of Town Councils apply to examine their town records that the 10-50 GBP daily charge for taking photographs would be waived - if application was made in advance. In the first instance, Sue should apply to him.

I use these records searching for evidence of Council support for old "lost" highways. There is just nothing in these very large files of current relevance to Swaffham Town Council activities! Sue has expressed a wish that all Swaffham UDC records be microfiched. I see no absolutely interest from the perspective of the Norfolk Record Office in having such records copied as there are many so much more urgent requirements for their protective, social, and academic resources. My own impression is that it would be a colossal waste of money, even though it might help my research a bit. I do not believe that they would help your own job at Swaffham Town Clerk at all; have you ever looked at them - in any depth?

May I therefore ask the Council to re-engage this issue and consider whether, in their current realities it would indeed be better to house this segment of the old Swaffham UDC minute books at the NRO - to complete the collection under their protection, and complete the national archival record of where they can be found. Could the results of Council deliberations in this matter please be forwarded to Dr. Ian Palfrey at the NRO, and to myself.

I have forwarded this letter also to the Mayor, to Sue Gattuso, and to Les Scott as interested parties.

With Best Wishes,

David Ormerod

On Thu, Nov 22, 2018 at 10:55 AM Palfrey, Ian <ian.palfrey@norfolk.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear Mr Bishop,

I am pleased to hear from Mr Ormerod that Swaffham Parish Council has agreed that the Swaffham UDC records in its possession should be re-united with the Swaffham UDC records held here at the record office. Attached is a list of the documents we don't have, if that helps.

Mr Ormerod has kindly offered to transport them from Swaffham to Norwich. I am happy with this arrangement if you are. We'll issue a receipt for the documents to Mr Ormerod which he can then forward to you to complete the transaction.

If there is anything you would like to discuss my direct line is 01603 222687.

Regards,

Ian Palfrey

Senior Archivist

Norfolk Record Office, The Archive Centre, Martineau Lane, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 2DQ

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