
Club Resource:

Managing your club records and setting up a club archive

Summary

This document covers best practice and tips for clubs wanting to manage their records and how to set up, maintain and grow an archive collection.

Why should I organise my records?

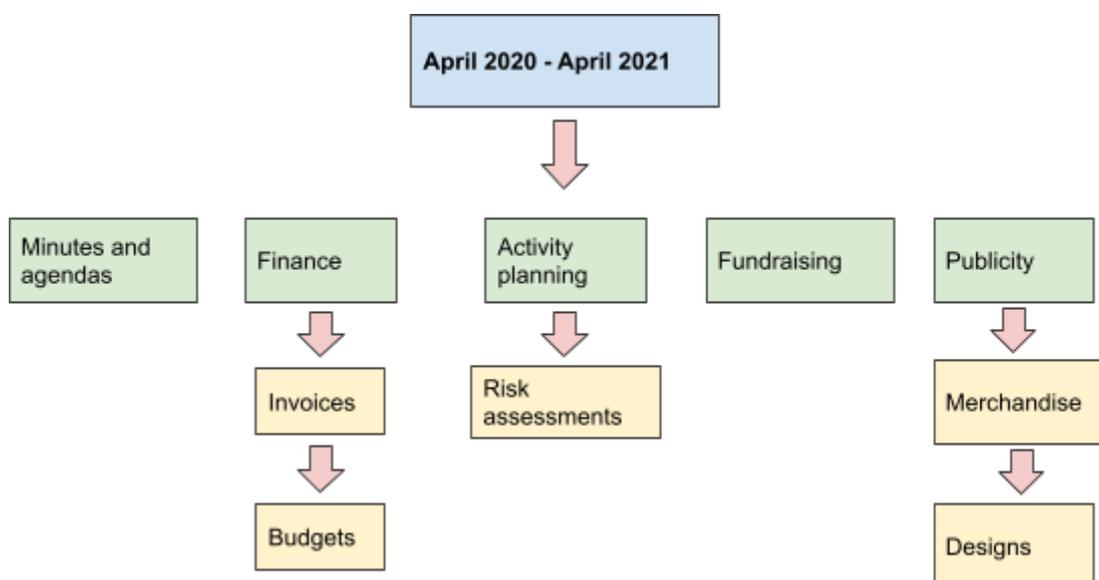
Looking after our digital and physical records can both help us now and for future committees.

- Help you find what you are looking for easily and quickly
- Make the right decisions with the right piece of information
- Keep track of progress and work loads
- Preserves the club history and its members

Structuring your digital records

Create a main folder for each new club committee dating it YYYY-MM, e.g. April 2020 - April 2021. This will make it easier to look back on previous records both from a historical and operational need.

The following is how we would recommend to organise your subfolders starting with the top level going down into subfolders.



By organising your folders into functions and activities instead of by committee roles, we are able to keep the same types of records together. All users of the folder can find what they need without having to second guess or hunt around.

Naming conventions

It is good practice to have consistent and clear naming conventions for your folders and files, this will help everyone find what they need and know what the file contains. Small things like capitalising the first word and no other words unless there is a dash will also help to keep things consistent and clear.

The name of a file or folder should:

- Be short, consistent and accurately reflect the content
- Be specific and meaningful - do not use terms such as "general" or "miscellaneous"
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms - if they are used they must be meaningful and consistent e.g. we all know what SSAGO stands for
- Avoid non-alphanumeric characters - do not include symbols (e.g. %, £, @) in the title of a document
- Contain enough information to identify it if it becomes removed from the context of its folder. For example, if emailed a document called "2016 minutes" - this may not make sense to others and could cause confusion

E.g. 2019-06-02 Committee meeting minutes

E.g. 2015-03-02 Development fund proposal for club tent

Keeping the momentum going

Once you have arranged your files and folders and you've done the ground work, it's time to consider how to keep the momentum going once you have left your club.

One easy approach is to delegate this specific task to one or two more people within the committee. You may want to delegate the records management aspects to the secretary such as following naming conventions, making sure files are stored in the right folders and training the incoming committee.

You could create an archivist role as part of the club committee whose responsibilities may include:

- Managing your physical archive
- Keeping a club log book - e.g. writing stories and taking photos of weekly socials and camps
- Managing the club photo album
- Managing the club alumni social media channels

- Working on outreach opportunities such as sharing club photos and stories and engaging with past members
- Running an evening each year where things can be made for the archive (and other things brought in to be taken to the archive) and look into the possibility of being able to take a small group to view the contents of the archive.

What if I want to set up a physical archive?

Some universities will already hold information about your club, this is usually stored in the University Library as part of their special collections. Most universities will be keen to store materials relating to the club because it is a good representation of the students and their social activities.

You will need to get in contact with your University library to see whether they hold anything and if they are able to help you store your collection.

From there, it can be as simple as selecting items from your digital collection to print and deposit into the archive, do this on an annual basis and in no time your collection will be big.

Some general guidelines to consider:

1. Arrange your collection in academic years, rather than by topic. This will be a better representation of your club and its functions.
2. Speak to your university archive about packaging materials, they might be able to give you archive quality boxes and sleeves. You store paper in the sleeves and tie them off with unbleached cotton. If this isn't available to you, consider speaking to the SSAGO Archivist for a potential dev fund bid.
3. Consider depositing a range of items from pictures, meeting minutes, club reports and stories.
4. Make sure your agreement with the university is a deposit - nothing else. This means that you will keep the rights of the materials whilst they look after them on your behalf. The other options, like gift and loan, relinquish all rights and the ownership is given to the University.
5. Consider making notes, e.g. on the back of photos, to detail when and where it was taken and who is in it. It will be useful when looking back, for example if you are at a reunion event.

What if my University library can't store physical materials?

In some instances University libraries do not have the capacity to store physical materials, this is generally the case for ex-polytechnic universities. You can create a digital archive by adding an archive folder to the top level of your folders, make sure you title documents accurately and use folders appropriately. If you decide to make a

physical collection that is kept within the club and handed down committees think carefully about the logistics, why you think this is a good idea and have some clear guidance on what should go in it, avoid creating a box full of tat that has no contextual meaning to it.

Some things to consider when adding to your archive

Particularly when looking at creating a physical collection, think about how you can tell the stories of your members. You can do this in a number of ways, including:

1. Ask members to fill out a short questionnaire detailing who they are, and their memories of being in the club.
2. Many members will volunteer, either with groups on a weekly basis, or at large scale events. Do they have any photos (obviously bear in mind GDPR in terms of photos of youth members, but most people will have at least one image that's child free)?
3. Hold an archive night each year where members can bring along anything they'd like to put in the archive and where members can make a poster etc about being in SSAGO, and arrange to deposit items soon afterwards. This will help you to build a collection relatively quickly and easily.
4. Remember to collect archive copies of things produced by the club - this can include copies of flyers from freshers fairs, or any hard copies of things produced for events ran by the club, including badges!
5. If you're printing photos, make sure they are decent quality - you can get these done cheaply on a wide number of apps. The same thing goes for any promotional materials you wish to add - if you've got a spare of a high-quality print (for example if you've had flyers professionally printed), it's always nicer to have one of these rather than running off a copy on the library printer!

Utilising your alumni

1. If you have alumni contacts, do they have anything to contribute? This may be easier at a face to face event, but do use these connections if you have them. This can also be as simple as either interviewing former members, or asking them to complete a short questionnaire.
2. It may also be worth looking on social media pages or groups that you have, to see if there's anything from previous years you'd like to add to your collection (particularly in terms of photos). You could also share a post on social media asking alumni to get in touch - some of them may well still follow you!

3. Could you put something in the SAGGA newsletter to ask alumni to get in touch? It may also be worth asking local Scouting and Guiding if they have any contacts among alumni who used to volunteer.
4. If you are having a physical reunion event, it may be worth pulling together a collection of items from the archive as a small exhibition to show people, this will help you to publicise the fact that you have an archive, and previous members there may know more about an item than you do! Just remember to bear in mind where you'll be holding the exhibition, as you don't want original copies of things to get damaged, for example by damp if you're going to be in a marquee. It may be worth considering photocopying items for use (particularly paper based items!)

Collection care

We can extend the life and mitigate risks of our physical collection by following basic conservation practices.

- Store your files in archive quality boxes such as these ones [here](#). You can use [folders](#) to keep files together such as all the files relating to the 2002-2003 academic year, then use [tying tape](#) to stop the paper from falling out. The tying tape is unbleached which will keep the folders in good condition.
- Avoid using store bought paper/metal clips or staplers, the metal will corrode the paper, instead use [brass paperclips](#).
- Your University library might be able to provide these materials, speak to them first. If not, you can put in a development fund bid to SSAGO.
- Unfortunately, there is little we can do with our digital collections, you can read more about digital preservation [here](#).

Where can I find out more information about my club's history?

Some clubs can trace their history as far as the early part of the 20th century, some are a bit younger. Discovering how the club was set up, what did the badge look like and what did they get up to can be a really rewarding experience.

Here are some ways in which you can find out a bit more about your club history:

1. Using the [wayback machine](#) (the digital archive of the internet) you can search the old SSAGO website (ssago.org.uk), this might reveal some basic information such as dates when the club was active. Note - you may need to play around with it, some links can lead to dead ends whereas others wont and you can use the dates at the top to access it at different points in time.
2. Use the current website to explore the [club reports](#), we have reports going back as far as the 1950s. Note - just because your club is not listed doesn't mean it wasn't active! It's possible that the club didn't submit anything at the time.

3. Speak to past members either through existing alumni social media groups, through SAGGA or using the main SSAGO group. You'll be surprised how much can come from social media.
4. Use opportunities such as a club or SSAGO reunion to connect with past members, ask questions about their time in SSAGO and in the club and document this somewhere.
5. Contact the archivist in SSAGO to search the national collection on your behalf, we have pockets of information where we can bring up intriguing documents. For example, we have a lot of publications, we can search these to see whether your club or someone from your club is mentioned and share this with you.

What should I do if my club folds?

Clubs will sometimes unexpectedly fold and close down, the most important thing we can do is save the documents. This will preserve the history of the club, and eventually when the club restarts they can use the materials as direction and guidance.

You can send us a copy of all the files your club has to date, to archivist@ssago.org where we will look after them on the club's behalf.