



Guidelines for Family History Research and Access to Parish Registers in the Diocese of Elphin

There is an understandable interest in accessing family history information from parish registers. The diocese is very aware of the importance of parish registers in this area and wishes to alert family members and researchers to the following:

- Parish registers ***are not public documents.***
- *Direct access to parish registers is not permitted to anyone outside the parish clergy and staff because the registers contain sensitive personal data.*
- *For data protection reasons, only information which is over 100 years old can be made available from Parish Registers for genealogical purposes.*
- *Parish registers are not centralised. They are maintained in their original format in the individual parishes.*
- *The parishes in the Diocese of Elphin have information for their own parishes only and do not maintain the registers for other dioceses.*
- *Parish clergy and staff cannot understandably give priority to Family History enquiries but they do their very best to facilitate people.*
- *Taking into account their pastoral priorities, parishes will only be able to offer a limited service. The more accurate the information you provide, the easier it will be for them to help you.*
- *While parishes may have a list of parishioners who died in any calendar year, there is no formal process for registering deaths in a parish.*
- *While there is no set fee for the provision of genealogical information, a contribution to parish funds would be always welcome.*
- *Researchers are asked to have patience as it takes quite some time to go through the individual registers.*
- *www.roscommonroots.com and www.sligoroots.com offer genealogy services which may be of assistance to family researchers.*
- *Researchers should also be aware that microfilm copies of parish registers and digital versions of them, are held in the National Library of Ireland (see <https://registers.nli.ie> for the digital copies). The National Library also has some helpful genealogy advisory web pages showing what's available online and how to go about your family history search (see www.nli.ie/en/genealogy-advisory-service.aspx).*
- *Researchers should also note that the National Archives, Bishop's Street, Dublin 8, offers a free genealogical advice service for those tracing family history.*