

collectieve KRACHT

Knowledge exchange for building the
memory of Dutch citizen collectives as part
of the CollectivePower platform

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March 2026

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Introduction to the Memory Project

Citizen collectives are the driving force behind social change. From energy cooperatives to healthcare initiatives, from food collectives to collective housing projects: together they demonstrate how community spirit can be a powerful source of change. But while they are building the future, something important is at risk of being lost: the story of how they got to where they are today.

The stories, choices, challenges and successes of citizen collectives are relevant to the citizen collectives of today and tomorrow. The history of an initiative's origins, the steps taken, the partnerships formed and the lessons learned: together, these details form an undeniable source of knowledge and inspiration. In addition, it is valuable for internal operations and communication with external relations to have this source of information in order and keep it up to date. Recording one's own history can, for example, help in accountability to members, partners and subsidy providers, in maintaining continuity when people change roles and in sharing experiences with other citizen collectives.

It is also important to carefully record one's own history at a higher level. Recording the history of the citizen collective movement offers an opportunity to identify, describe and share with others the unique character of citizen collectives as organisations. The better the diversity and uniqueness of citizen collectives are documented, the better scientists and other stakeholders can determine what is important for their functioning and how they contribute to social change. A sound, scientific comparison of citizen collectives can provide important insights into the challenges they face.

As part of the Memory Project, we want to use CollectivePower to contribute to the systematic recording and preservation of the memory of citizen collectives. In this research report, we map out how citizen collectives deal with the collection and preservation of their data and history. The aim of this research is not to map out archiving practices across the entire citizen collective movement, but to gain insight into experiences and practices surrounding data preservation. The collected data reveal trends and issues in the practices of citizen collectives and can serve as a starting point for further reflection and research. The first part of the research consists of a questionnaire on data collection, supplemented by in-depth interviews with representatives of citizen collectives.

A total of 31 representatives completed a questionnaire about data collection within their organisation. In this questionnaire, respondents indicated which data they store for each data category. In addition to the pre-filled data categories, participants could also add new categories themselves. The majority of the participants in the questionnaire are active in the healthcare and social welfare sector (15), followed by the energy sector (8). In addition, citizen collectives are represented from the sectors of housing (3), infrastructure (2), food (1), culture (1) and a multifunctional citizen collective that undertakes activities in multiple sectors (see Appendix 1, p. 21). To gain a better understanding of the practice of data collection within citizen collectives, ten in-depth interviews were conducted based on the questionnaire. The interviewees are active in the sectors of healthcare and social welfare (4) and energy (4, including one interview with two representatives), housing (2) and infrastructure (2) (see Appendix 2, p. 21 for an overview).

This document contains an analysis providing an overview of the documents that are created and stored, the issues surrounding data archiving, the methods and need for archiving within the collectives, and the expectations regarding CollectivePower.

Overview of data collected within the citizen collective movement

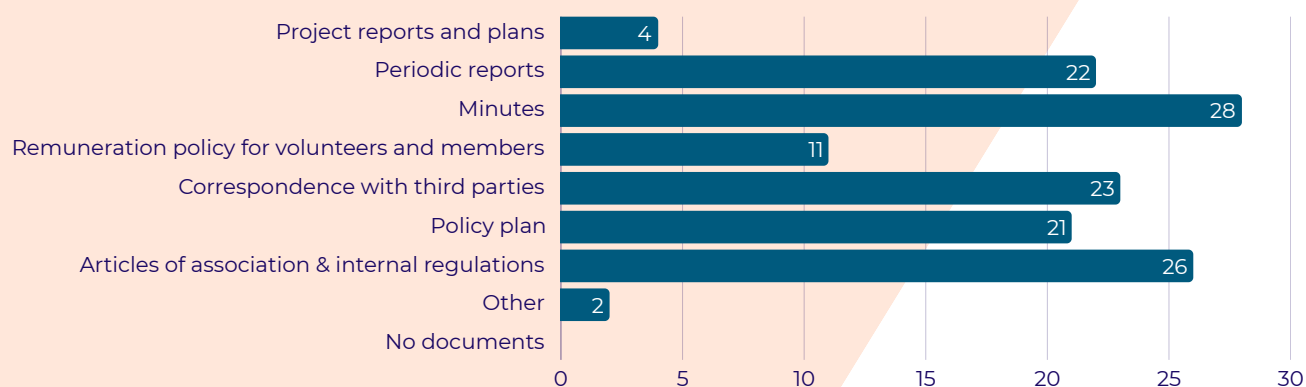
The figures below on data collection do not make a strict distinction between the storage of living documents for daily practice and the organised (digital) archiving of established documents for later consultation. Later in this research report, in the chapter 'Awareness of archiving', we will take a closer look at how respondents use their archives, both in terms of storing and editing living documents and archiving finalised documents.

Board and meeting documents

Figure 1 shows that all respondents collect board and meeting documents in their archives. Articles of association, internal regulations and minutes are most commonly retained. In addition, policy plans, communications with third parties and periodic reports are also archived to a large extent.

The categories added by the respondents themselves within board and meeting documents are source documents (official documents that organisations use as a legal or administrative basis, such as deeds) and login details.

1. Administrative and meeting documents

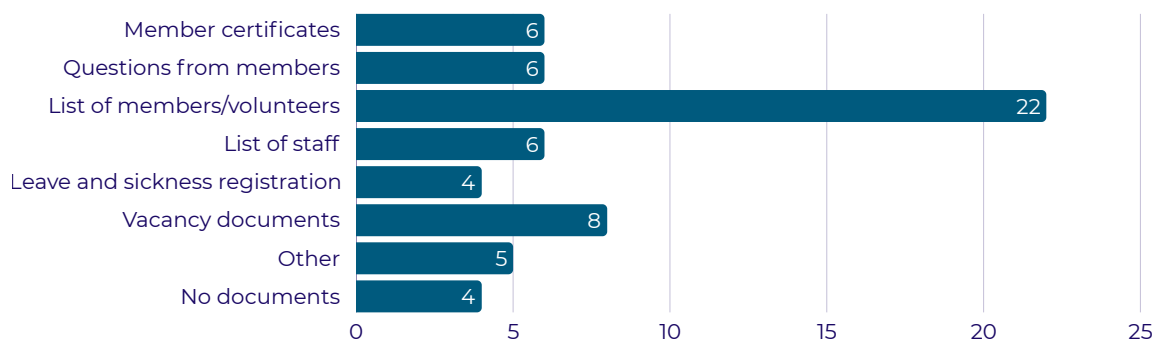


Staff, member and volunteer documents

Figure 2 shows that most citizen collectives keep and store volunteer or member lists. The nine collectives that do not collect member or volunteer lists are for the most part active as neighbourhood collectives focused on creating a liveable neighbourhood and/or serving as meeting centres.

In the interviews, a few respondents indicated that they had doubts about the correct archiving of their personal data. Although they intend to improve this, time constraints and work pressure prevent them from doing so. We will discuss this in more detail in the chapter 'Challenges' on p. 15 of this document.

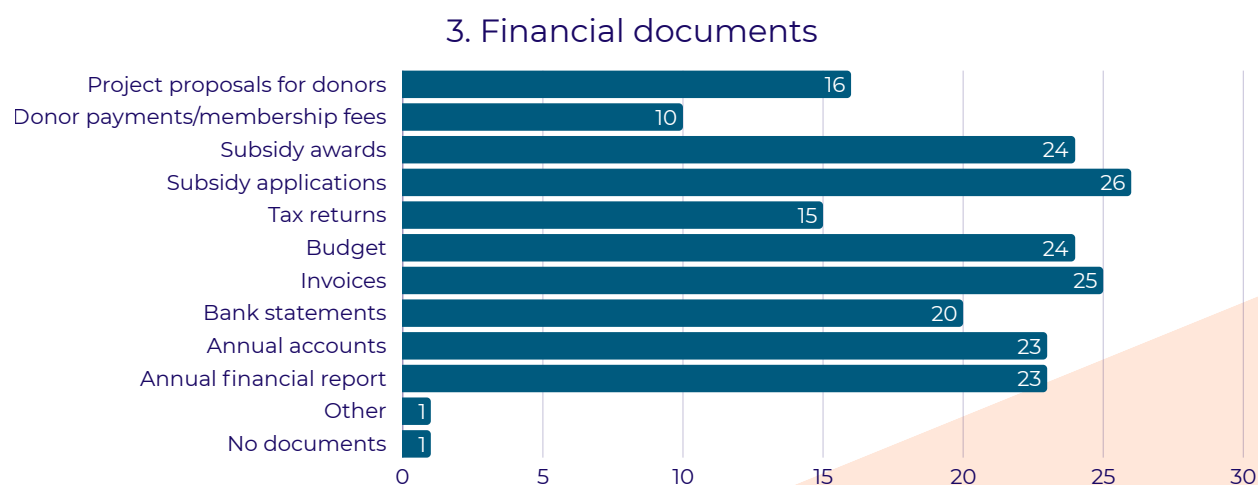
2. Staff/members/volunteer administration



Other documents mentioned by respondents include a list of newsletter subscribers, personal development plans and performance appraisal forms. The category 'Other' also includes two mentions of member or volunteer agreements.

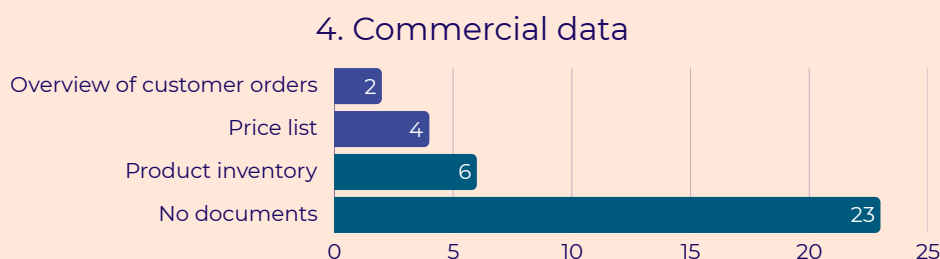
Financial documents and commercial data

Figure 3 shows that financial data is among the most commonly collected data among collectives. The interviews confirm that keeping financial data in order and well organised is considered important, and that this usually goes smoothly. One of the respondents adds that keeping financial matters in order is important for the accountability of subsidies, donations and loans. The various projects within the collective are partly financed by subsidies, with each project being responsible for its own finances and accountability to subsidy providers, donors and other financiers: "Some have made a donation, some have provided a loan. Yes, that has to be very clearly stated on paper." (Respondent 9).



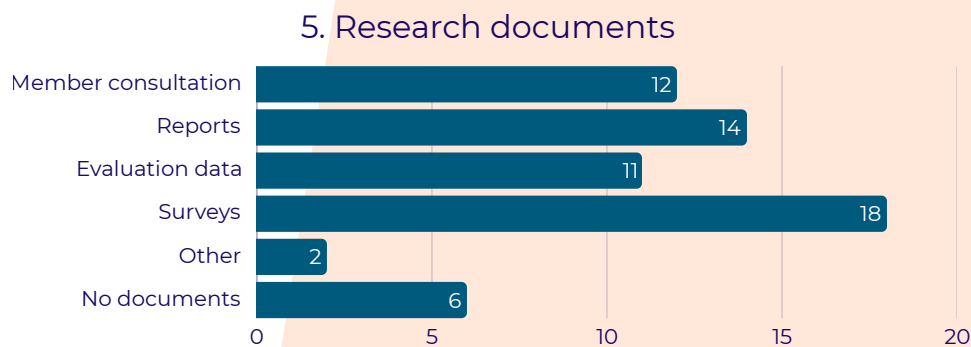
One of the respondents reports in the Other category that quarterly reports are kept.

Figure 4 shows that 23 respondents do not collect commercial data. This means that more than a quarter of the collectives surveyed do collect commercial data. Looking at the sectors in which commercial data is kept, several stand out. Energy and infrastructure collectives, but also healthcare and social welfare collectives sometimes store commercial data. Notably, almost all collectives that keep commercial data also apply for subsidies. This combination illustrates how citizen collectives sustain their activities and the different forms of financing they use to do so.



Research documents

The responses to the questionnaire (Figure 5) show that collectives collect various types of data, such as surveys (18), evaluation data (11) and member consultations (12). In addition, 14 of the 31 respondents also collect reports. The interviews indicate that these are mainly external reports (respondents 7, 9), for example as part of a knowledge base (respondent 7). Respondent 5 notes that there are still insufficient internal resources to systematically analyse their own data and convert it into internal reports.



The data stored in the Other category are impact measurements and data analysis.

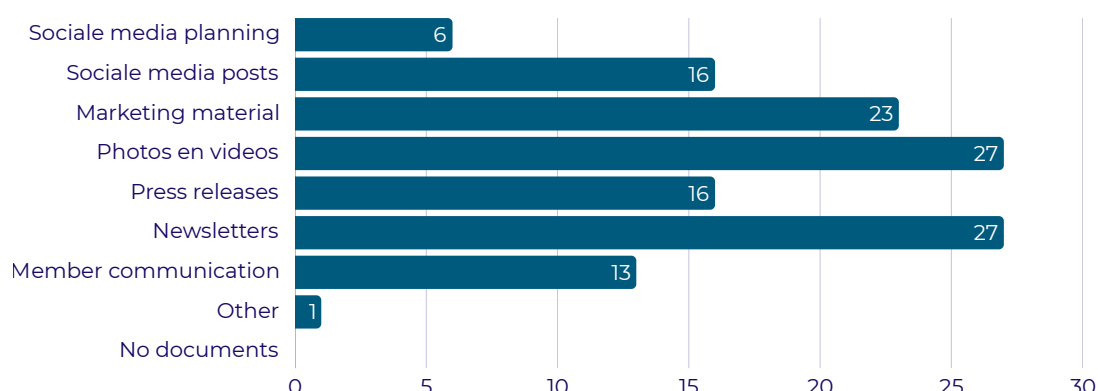
The interviews show that respondents use the collected data to reflect on the functioning of the citizen collective for operational purposes. An example of this is the systematic monitoring of marketing data. Respondent 5 describes how data from Facebook and Instagram is collected and analysed to assess the impact of campaigns, such as how much traffic an article generates on the website. This information is used to adjust marketing activities.

Respondent 7 indicates that the collective gathers data on the number of members, the available resources and the use of those resources, which is then used to document the growth of the collective. This data will be used to establish a dialogue with external parties, according to the respondent, "to be able to tell them how it is growing, which makes it easier to get support." The research documents that are kept are not solely related to the relationship with external parties, but are sometimes focused specifically on the internal functioning of the collectives. This is the case with surveys, for example on customer or participant satisfaction.

Communication and digital activities

Figure 6 shows that communications and materials are an important part of the data that collectives retain. None of the collectives surveyed retain nothing at all in this area. Furthermore, communication materials and outputs are retained in various forms. One respondent adds logos to this category.

6. Communication and digital activities

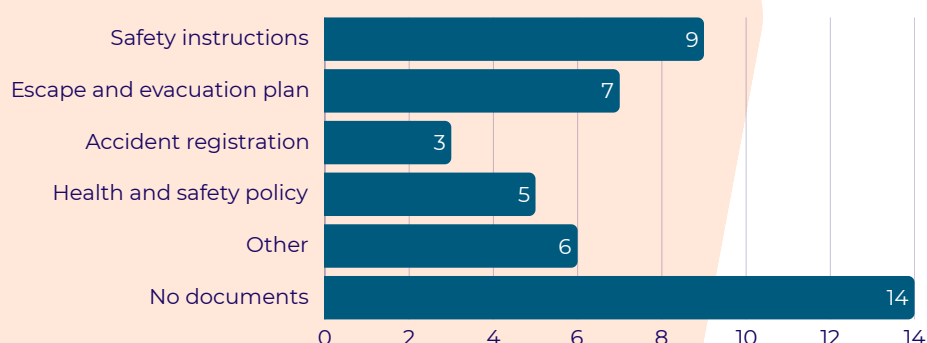


Notably, collectives regard communication and digital activities not only as a category of data that needs to be preserved, but also as a means of preservation in itself. The interviews repeatedly reveal that many collectives regard their newsletters, websites and contributions to social media such as Instagram as part of their memory or archive.

Safety documents

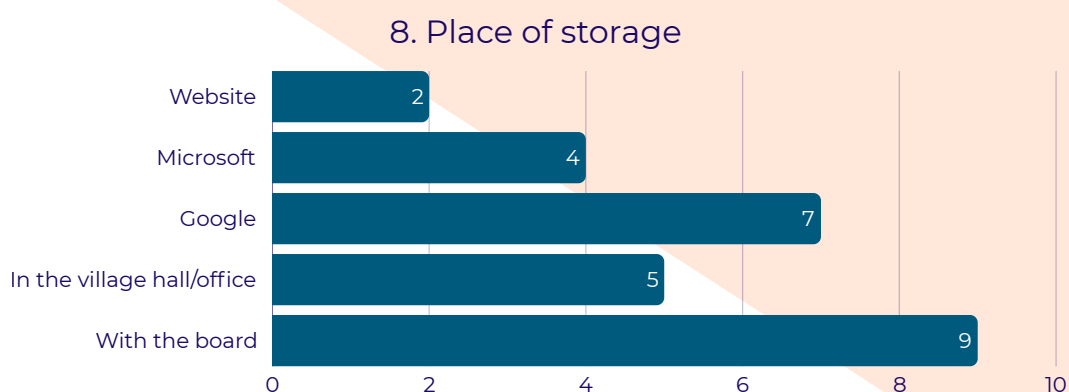
Figure 7 shows that slightly less than half of the collectives indicate that the collection of safety documents does not apply to them. This is understandable: for example, having a health and safety policy is not mandatory as long as there is no employment contract. However, associations do have a duty of care towards their members, which is reflected in the data categories added by respondents, such as club rules, COVID protocol, and emergency response and first aid documents. Two respondents also mention the appointment of a confidential advisor. In addition, one respondent mentions inspections and re-inspections, as well as the collection of maintenance reports within a housing collective.

7. Safety documents



Data storage repositories

Data is stored in various ways (see Figure 8). In some cases, documents are physically stored with a member of the board or in an office space. This applies, for example, to sensitive documents containing personal data, which "are shredded when they are no longer relevant" (respondent 11). In addition, several respondents in the interviews indicated that they do not entirely trust storing data in 'the Cloud', on servers in external data centres. For this reason, data is also stored locally on their own computers or periodically saved on an external hard drive (respondents 2 and 4).



Digital data management systems in use

The questionnaire shows that data management systems from Microsoft, Google, or Dropbox are widely used. In the interviews, however, almost all respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the use of these systems, and some explicitly stated a preference for open-source data management systems. Respondent 5, for example, said: "We are a cooperative, so we would actually prefer to work with open source. That way, we are not sponsoring those capitalist giants." According to the representatives of the citizen collectives interviewed, this issue is also of concern to many of their members. In various organisations, members have asked critical questions about the use of Big Tech, and on a personal level, members appear to be switching to other platforms (respondents 1, 3 and 10).

Despite their strong preference for open source, collectives often fall back on Microsoft and Google systems. Reasons for this include the fact that foundations receive a free Microsoft account and Google Drive is also free to use. Another reason cited is that these systems are very practical, as members are often already familiar with them and the functionalities offered are useful and accessible for the management and operation of the organisation. Respondent 7 explains that, as they are a network organisation, it is important that access to different folders in the data management system is well managed and that it enables collaboration on the same documents.

An independent data management system

Several respondents indicate a desire to move away from Big Tech. At the same time, the interviews also reveal some reluctance, because switching to another system will require a significant time investment and next to that there are concerns about data loss. It is also important to the respondents that an independent system is practical and easily accessible.

Not all respondents are familiar with workable alternatives:

"We also feel like, yes, where is the alternative that you can really connect to? And you also really need to be able to work on documents with the outside world sometimes, such as with partners. Yes, that has to be in an environment where it's possible." (Respondent 5).

This illustrates a tension between practical feasibility and collective values. There is a desire to move away from Big Tech, but the possibilities for achieving this are limited by the limited time available, additional costs, ease of use, concerns about data retention and the lack of a directly workable alternative.

Nevertheless, steps are being taken to develop alternatives. Energie Samen (the national umbrella organisation and interest group for energy communities) has now taken steps to organise a digital infrastructure outside of Big Tech, in which energy cooperatives can manage their administration, relationship management and information processing[1]. Both representatives of two energy collectives interviewed indicate that they use this system.

Respondents 3 and 4, who are both part of the same energy cooperative, report that there is a further desire within the energy cooperatives to look for other variants for data management outside of American Big Tech, in addition to the Econobis CRM system, which is not usable as a data management system. Within this cooperative, they started testing the Next Cloud data management system (respondent 4).

In addition, the citizen collective movement is also working more broadly on alternative digital infrastructures. For example, in 2025, the e-Commons association started developing an autonomous, sustainable and affordable digital infrastructure for the citizen collective movement[2]. This shows that the theme of independent data management systems is more widely embraced within the movement.

[1] [Econobis – CRM & administratiesysteem voor energiecoöperaties en gemeenten - Energie Samen](#)

[2] <https://ecommons.space/over>

Website as data storage

In addition to data management systems, a few citizen collectives use their websites to store data. These websites mainly store newsletters and information about activities and meetings (respondents 3, 4 and 6). As one respondent explains, the collective's current activities are recorded because content is often shared immediately: photos of meetings, reports and news items are published on the website. The physical newsletters also regularly refer to this online content. In this sense, the website and the newsletter archive together function as a form of archive for the collective.

Information that is not stored

The interviews show that many respondents consider the information from everyday communication via communication channels such as email and instant messaging services (such as Signal and WhatsApp) to be relevant information (Respondents 1, 7, 8, 10). Although these communication channels are used to retrieve information, this information is not stored centrally anywhere.

Awareness of archiving

This chapter examines how citizen collectives archive information, and the role archiving plays in their daily practice.

Practical use of the archive

Almost all participants in the in-depth interviews indicate that they are actively involved in archiving data. They mention that this is important for the internal functioning of the organisation, with the focus mainly on daily practical tasks. This confirms the picture that emerges from the questionnaire responses: the majority of collectives store administrative and financial documents. The storage of data is therefore primarily aimed at the efficient performance of these tasks. The data from the archive is used by the citizens' collectives, among other things, to retrieve what has been discussed in daily practice, to write grant applications and to draw up annual reports. The focus is therefore mainly on day-to-day operations and the vision for the future, while historical reflection is less of a priority (respondents 1, 7, 8, 9).

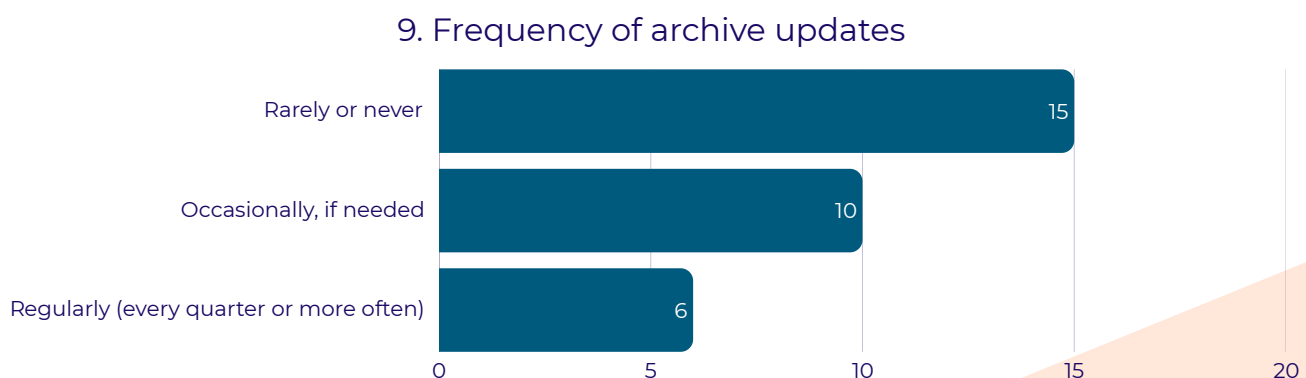
As respondent 1 indicates:

“Take the paper archive, for example. We want to keep that because it has a kind of historical component. But I think it's very practical, especially for our maintenance committee. If you want to draw up a maintenance plan, you simply need the data from previous years.” (Respondent 1).

As another respondent puts it, archiving within the citizens' collective is "more focused on transfer than on legacy" (Respondent 7). The emphasis is on being able to continue operations, with little room for historical reflection.

Updating the archive

Although the respondents indicate that they are actively engaged in archiving, some respondents report that they find it difficult to prioritise archiving and to involve the entire organisation in the process (respondents 3, 4, 6, 8, 9). According to them, daily priorities leave little time for organising and maintaining the archive (respondent 3). This is also evident from the answers to the questionnaire, as shown in Figure 8 below: only 6 of the 31 respondents indicate that they update the archive regularly, while about half (15) do so rarely or never.



In addition to a lack of time being mentioned as a reason for not having the archive fully organised, the need to archive is not always immediately apparent. Much of the knowledge is implicitly present among members or volunteers. In cases where information is missing, it is usually easy to obtain by contacting fellow (board) members who do have the missing knowledge (respondent 7). Updating the archive does happen in response to specific situations, such as when a project changes its name. Documents are then amended so that they remain easier to find for new volunteers (respondent 7). One of the respondents from the group that 'updates the archive occasionally' tries to introduce regularity by scheduling so-called 'clean-up sessions' (respondent 11). However, the respondent indicates that sticking to the schedule for these sessions is a challenge.

The interviews show that the need for archiving within the collectives varies depending on circumstances. Respondent 7 says:

'We are still so young that archiving is not even the most important thing. [...] I think you only get to that point when you have been doing this for a longer period of time. So at some point you think, okay, that drive is exploding, so then I think you start thinking about what you should keep and what you shouldn't. Yes, maybe it's still a bit early for us.' (Respondent 7)

In one of the older housing collectives (approximately 30 years old), awareness of the importance of archiving arose due to the lack of crucial information in the archive:

"We were missing things like a good long-term maintenance plan. We couldn't find in our own archive when the painting had been done. I think that also raised awareness of how important it is to archive those kinds of things properly." (Respondent 1)

In addition to differences in the need for an updated and comprehensive archive, there are also differences in the method of archiving. For example, collectives deal with document updates in different ways. Respondents use their data management system both as an archive for documents that are finished and for documents that are still being modified, known as working documents (respondent 7). The collective where respondent 7 works, for example, keeps process manuals that are continuously being developed. These manuals are edited in Google Docs, which means that older versions are not kept. According to the respondent, the usefulness and necessity of keeping earlier versions of these documents is not recognised. This is perceived differently within, for example, a collective where the internal regulations are regularly updated and older versions are retained. In this case, this is done with copies: "one document is then effectively frozen and a copy of it becomes the new working document. And so it goes on." (Respondent 1). The reason for this approach is to be able to see what decisions have been made in the past.

Awareness of the importance of archiving data can therefore arise from the experience of how a lack of information can hinder daily practice. As respondent 4 puts it: "Sometimes you only realise you're missing something after it's been thrown away." At the same time, this respondent indicates that it is also important to find a balance and not to keep everything.

The reluctance to store data, based on what at first glance appears to be a lack of immediate need (respondent 7), shows that what a collective believes it can gain from archiving also plays a role. However, the practical usefulness of storing data cannot always be determined in advance. Respondent 11 indicates that in a social cost-benefit analysis, previously stored data was essential to demonstrate the social impact of the organisation. This experience has contributed to greater awareness of the importance of careful data retention.

In summary: in daily practice, there is an awareness of archiving. Respondents mention its importance for the functioning of the collective. At the same time, several respondents indicate that it is difficult to get everyone in the organisation on board with structural and systematic archiving. In practice, archiving is mainly focused on the needs of daily operations and less on historical awareness. Reflecting on the past only becomes more important when the concrete need for it is felt.

Challenges

The interviews reveal various challenges regarding data collection and archiving. These challenges are explained in more detail in the following sections: the findability of files, knowledge retention, and GDPR-compliant storage of personal data.

Findability of files

As indicated earlier, the archive is mainly used to retrieve data to clarify what has been agreed in the past. In this context, it is considered important that the data is easy to find. Respondent 7 emphasises that there is a lot of data that needs to be dealt with, such as contracts, membership agreements and process manuals that are necessary in daily practice and need to be updated periodically. "There is so much that it is very important to know who can find what and where" (respondent 7). However, many respondents indicate that finding the right files in their archive is a challenge.

In most cases, data can still be retrieved, but some respondents indicate that this takes a lot of time (respondents 3 and 8). Other respondents (7, 10) do not experience any difficulties in finding documents themselves, but notice that other members do, which means they regularly have to refer to the location of documents. Respondent 7 indicates that this is not desirable; ideally, the structure of the archive should be designed in such a way that members can navigate it intuitively.

According to respondents 4 and 2, files are sometimes difficult to find because of the large number of folders does not always have a clear structure. Respondent 4 describes how a folder such as 'Communication' already consists of dozens of subfolders, which can make it an 'enormous search' for new members to understand where everything is located. Moreover, it is sometimes unclear in which folder a document should be stored when it could fall under multiple topics (respondent 2). To help new members find their way around, a buddy system is used to help them navigate through the data.

Another reason why documents are difficult to find is the lack of clear agreements on how they are archived (respondents 3 and 9). Respondent 9 emphasises the importance of consistent naming conventions. Different ways of dating or naming documents can also lead to confusion about which is the most recent version of a document (respondent 2).

Not every collective experiences this challenge. Respondent 11 indicates that they encounter few problems with findability. According to this respondent, this can be attributed to the fact that an employee laid a solid foundation for organising and storing data from the beginning. This working method still forms the basis of their current archive.

Knowledge retention

A challenge that comes up frequently in the interviews (respondents 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10) is the retention and transfer of knowledge within the organisation, for example when a (board) member leaves. As discussed earlier, much communication takes place face-to-face, via email or other communication channels. Respondents indicate that this means that much of the knowledge is personal and can be lost when people leave the organisation. In the interviews, several respondents indicate that they want to focus on recording knowledge and working methods to facilitate transfer (respondents 3, 6, 8). At the same time, they mention that this is difficult in practice, because daily tasks often take precedence and the preparation of transfer documents is therefore neglected (respondent 6).

However, not all respondents see the loss or transfer of knowledge as a problem. Respondent 7 indicates that the memory within the collective largely lies with the initiator. When questions arise about previous actions or working methods, the information is often retrieved from him. According to the respondent, if something is forgotten, it is 'reinvented', which is not immediately seen as a problem. Moreover, this respondent emphasises that not everything can be written down, because that would take too much time, and he wonders whether people would actually read such documents. According to this respondent, the focus of knowledge transfer is less on the complete and recording of substantive points and more on a shared understanding of core values and working methods.

Respondent 3 also indicates that not all knowledge is easily transferable. For example, the completion of and accountability for subsidies preferably remains with the original applicants because, from personal experience, this is too complicated to transfer completely.

GDPR-compliant storage of personal data

A third challenge that frequently arises in the interviews is the GDPR-compliant storage and retention of personal data. Respondents indicate that they have all looked into the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), but that this does not automatically mean that they feel confident about the way in which personal data is stored in practice. Some respondents indicated that they are up to date with GDPR regulations and are confident that they store personal data correctly. Others are unsure whether they are truly GDPR-compliant or fear that they are now lagging behind again.

The interviews also indicate that limited access to membership records is considered important in order to ensure GDPR-compliant storage of personal data. Most respondents therefore indicate that they restrict access to personal data to those who actually need it.

Expectations of CollectivePower

When asked about their expectations of CollectivePower regarding the topic of archiving, respondents mentioned the following points:

- Providing tools and information about secure data management and alternative data management systems outside of Big Tech.
- Raising awareness of the importance of archiving and building one's own memory.
- Support to save time in data management.

Respondent 3 reports that it would be desirable to have an accessible point of contact or helpdesk regarding GDPR where people could obtain answers to their questions. In addition to a point of contact, the need for practical formats is also mentioned. Respondents 3 and 4 indicate that a roadmap and checklists would be useful to get an overview of what is already in order and what could be improved. Other respondents mention that it would be good to have a better understanding of what is minimally required and what the current state of affairs is, for example with regard to privacy legislation and document retention.

Data management & alternatives outside Big Tech

Respondents indicate that they would like to be informed about possible systems and working methods, including possible alternatives outside of Big Tech. One of the respondents expresses these needs as follows:

"It would be nice if there were tips on how we, as citizens, can form collectives. [...] How can we organise things in such a way that we are not dependent on the tech giants? And anything that can help you keep your data hygiene in order. [...] And this is recommended from a GDPR perspective. So that you don't have to reinvent the wheel there either. It ensures that your decision-making is archived properly in this and that way." (Respondent 7).

This information and guidance are desirable to know whether one is complying with the legislation and to get archiving hygiene in order in a practical way.

Raising awareness about archiving

Another theme that emerges from the interviews is the importance of creating and maintaining an archive as a way of recording the 'memory' of citizen collectives. Several respondents indicate that this can be valuable because collectives go through different phases and learn a lot along the way (respondents 1, 3, 8, 9). At the same time, it was also mentioned that this does not automatically become a priority in daily practice and that it can be difficult to get members on board. Not everyone immediately sees the relevance of recording the history or development of the collective, especially when the focus is mainly on what needs to be done now.

Respondent 9 illustrates this tension:

"The phases we have gone through and what we have learned from them are interesting, but they are hardly ever recorded on paper... perhaps more stories need to be captured... There is a lot to do, so that is more... something we don't have time for." (Respondent 9)

In that light, this respondent sees CollectivePower as a party that can help to record these kinds of stories and lessons, precisely because collectives themselves do not always have the time or space to do so.

In addition, two respondents mention that a webinar on data management and alternatives outside Big Tech would be interesting. A webinar can not only provide tools, but also stimulate discussion about archiving and the importance of recording data within collectives.

Time

Lack of time investment is a recurring theme in the interviews. Respondents indicate that this is also an important point of attention in the support that CollectivePower can offer: the emphasis is on saving time, not on asking volunteers for extra time. Respondents therefore mainly need practical support that can be applied immediately, such as clear guidelines, checklists or formats that collectives can use without having to figure everything out for themselves.

An example of a practical approach is a manual such as [Records Management in Charities: A Toolkit for Improvement](#). This toolkit explains why good document management is important, what types of documents organisations have, who is responsible for what, what laws and regulations apply (such as the GDPR) and how long certain documents must be retained. In addition, the toolkit offers a step-by-step plan for improving document management, including self-evaluation and drawing up an improvement plan. A similar toolkit within the Memory Project could support citizen collectives in their data storage and be combined with the possibility of sharing data for an archive of the citizen collective movement.

Building an archive

To preserve the memory of the citizen collective movement, CollectivePower is investigating the possibility of permanently storing data from citizen collectives in an archive. In the interviews, respondents were therefore asked whether they would be willing to share data with CollectivePower to contribute to preserving their memory. Some respondents are in principle open to this, because they already work (partly) 'open source': annual reports, newsletters, photographs and other communication materials are often already public. Respondent 3 also mentions a 'social responsibility to contribute to this'. Document types that respondents consider appropriate to

share include photographs, annual reports, annual plans, vision statements and tone of voice (the tone and style in which communication takes place).

At the same time, respondents also have reservations about sharing data. One point of concern is ownership: respondent 7 indicates that the data they collect is not, in principle, "theirs". This respondent also emphasises that data must always be read in context, otherwise conclusions will quickly be drawn that do not match the story behind it. In that light, it is considered important to know who is doing what with documents and data, and how they are being used, so that interpretation does not become detached from the practice in which the data originated. Reciprocity is another point of attention: sharing knowledge is valuable, but one of the respondents also mentions that it is important to them that knowledge sharing takes place within a community in which parties not only take but also give back.

The comments made by respondents show that willingness to share data is not a given but depends on a number of important considerations. The first consideration is ownership. In this context, it is important that citizen collectives are well informed about what data sharing means and what data they can and cannot share. In addition, data sharing remains optional and collectives can decide for themselves which documents they do or do not share. Reciprocity is a second important point of attention. In the proposed toolkit, this reciprocity takes shape in two ways. Firstly, collectives receive practical tools to improve their data storage. Secondly, data sharing can contribute to recording the history of the citizen collective movement. By better documenting the diversity and uniqueness of the citizen collective movement, more insight is gained into what characterises this form of organisation, the challenges collectives face and how they contribute to social change. This means that data sharing is not only valuable for scientific research, but also for the citizen collective movement itself.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows that archiving is, to a certain extent, part of the daily practice of citizen collectives. Many respondents indicate that they are actively engaged in this. Awareness of archiving seems to be primarily practice-oriented: archiving is mainly approached as something that is necessary for business operations, while long-term data retention and the preservation of knowledge are less explicitly mentioned. Respondents experience various challenges when building an archive. For example, it has been indicated that awareness of archiving for daily practice is not necessarily widely shared within the organisation. It appears to be difficult to involve members in the daily practice of archiving. In addition, respondents mention challenges relating to the findability of files, lack of time, knowledge retention, and GDPR-compliant data storage.

CollectivePower can offer support as a knowledge platform in tackling these challenges by introducing a toolkit. A toolkit that enables self-evaluation and improvement planning can raise awareness of the importance of archiving by providing practical tools and information. In practical terms, it can help citizen collectives to identify bottlenecks in their processes, improve their internal data storage operations and save time in the long term, for example by making data easier to find and enabling clearer archiving policies to be established. In addition, such a toolkit can be combined with the possibility of sharing data for the purpose of building the memory of the citizen collective movement. In this way, CollectivePower supports the building of separate archives of citizen collectives for their internal operations and, at the same time, can also work collectively to build the memory of the citizen collective movement.

This publication is part of the project Building a Unified Theory for the Development and Resilience of Institutions for Collective Action for Europe in the Past Millennium (UNICA; project number VI.C.191.052) and the project Knowledge Brokering to Build the Memory of Dutch Citizen Collectives as part of the CollectivePower platform (project number IMP.EXP.23-24.062). Both projects are funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

Appendix

Appendix 1: Distribution of participating collectives (questionnaire) by sector

Energy: 8

Infrastructure: 2

Food: 1

Healthcare and social welfare: 15

Multifunctional: 1

Culture: 1

Housing: 3

Appendix 2: Distribution of participating collectives (interview) by sector

- Housing (2)
 - Respondent 1 - Housing collective housing phase
 - Interview conducted on: 10-12-2025
 - Respondent 2 - Housing collective design phase
 - Interview conducted on: 1 December 2025
- Energy (3)
 - Respondent 3/4 - Energy cooperative 1
 - Interview conducted on: 27 December 2025
 - Respondent 5 - Network organisation of energy cooperatives
 - Interview conducted on: 07-01-2026
 - Respondent 6 - Energy Cooperative 2
 - Interview conducted on: 1 December 2025 & 17 December 2025
- Infrastructure (2)
 - Respondent 7 - Infrastructure collective 1
 - Interview conducted on: 25-11-2025
 - Respondent 8 – Infrastructure Collective 2
 - Interview conducted on: 04-12-2025
- Healthcare and social welfare (3)
 - Respondent 9 – Neighbourhood collective 1
 - Interview conducted on: 24 November 2025
 - Respondent 10 – Neighbourhood collective 2
 - Interview conducted on: 21 January 2026
 - Respondent 11 – Care collective
 - Interview conducted on: 15 December 2025